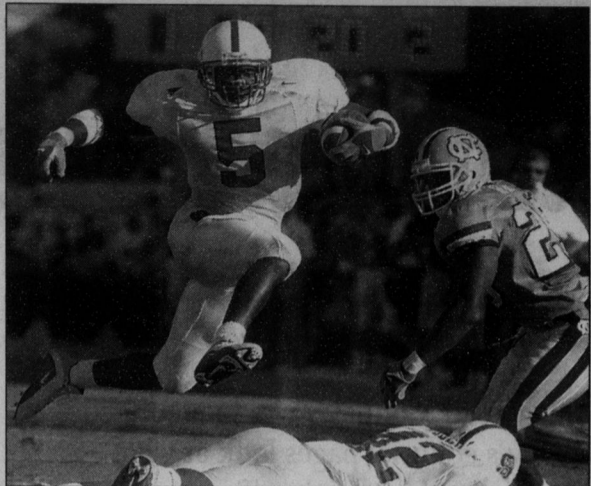


Running Game Carries Wolfpack Past Tar Heels

With UNC geared up to stop its passing attack, N.C. State rushed for a season-high 171 yards on 46 attempts.

By WILL KIMMEY Sports Saturday Editor

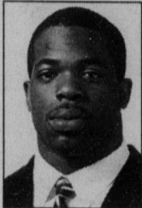


N.C. State tailback Ray Robinson sails over his lead blocker, Derek Roberts, on one of his 23 carries. Robinson tallied 110 rushing yards and a TD.

N.C. State quarterback Philip Rivers entered Saturday's game against North Carolina leading the nation in passing yards per game.

The Tar Heels knew they had to slow down the Wolfpack's passing attack if they wanted to have a chance to win.

UNC held Rivers, ranked second nationally with 16 touchdown passes, to just one scoring strike. Robinson grabbed just two balls for 41 yards.



N.C. State tailback Ray Robinson didn't play until the fourth quarter but still finished with 94 yards and two TDs.

The Wolfpack powered the ball past the Tar Heel defense, which was more focused on stopping the pass.

"We knew that was what they were going to do," UNC defensive tackle Ryan Sims said. "We were in kind of like a pass mode, and that set us up for the run a lot of the time."

"Try 46 times for 171 yards and three touchdowns. N.C. State's biggest game on the ground before Saturday came in its season opener against Arkansas State, when the Wolfpack picked up 142 yards on 35 carries.

"That's the way it goes," said Rivers, whose 202 yards passing on 25 attempts marked his lowest totals of the year. "When they're worried about the pass so much, you've got to run it."

Tailback Ray Robinson did most of the early running, toting the ball 23

times for 110 yards and a TD.

He left the game with a sprained foot after the first play of the fourth quarter and did not return.

But the N.C. State ground game was not about to be derailed. In stepped sophomore Cotra Jackson to keep the train on track. Amato told the young back it was his turn to make plays.

Jackson followed directions well, registering 94 yards and two touchdowns on 13 carries in the fourth quarter.

"The o-line did a great job," Jackson said. "They didn't stop just because Ray got hurt, they just kept fighting and making blocks. They gave me a chance to make a debut I guess."

"I really didn't expect it. I still really haven't had the chance to sit down and think about what I did."

Amato did. "Jackson did an outstanding job," the coach said. "How many yards did he have? Ninety-six yards in the fourth quarter? Shows you how smart we are."

UNC's defensive players gave the Wolfpack backs their credit but also blamed themselves for allowing so

many yards.

"I think mainly it was just a lot of missed tackles," UNC linebacker Sedrick Hodge said. "If you look mainly at the big plays, we missed a tackle when we had them in the backfield on the running plays."

"That really hurt us a lot." The poor tackling, combined with the dominance of N.C. State's offensive line, made the Wolfpack's play calling easy down the stretch.

Rivers handed Jackson the ball 10 consecutive times on N.C. State's final possession. Jackson produced 75 yards, the final three of which took him into the end zone with 49 seconds remaining.

"That's what they were giving us, and that's what we were taking," Koren Robinson said. "Why go to the pass when you're running it so good?"

The Sports Editor can be reached at sports@unc.edu.

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scored to put the Wolfpack (5-1, 2-1) ahead 31-20.

"You hit him, and you just kind of swipe it all in one motion," said Riggs, who came around the end to hit Curry from the blind side. "I was just lucky enough that it did pop out."

Jackson's touchdown would not be his last. Jackson, who racked up 94 yards on 13 carries in the fourth quarter, iced the game with a 3-yard TD run with 49 seconds left. Robinson had amassed 110 yards on 23 carries before going out with a sprained foot.

The N.C. State offense, averaging 75.2 yards per game on the ground coming in, finished with 171 rushing yards.

"They put our defense in the pass mode," UNC defensive tackle Ryan Sims said. "They come out and they throw the ball, and then they sneak a run in there. When you've got your pass rush on, those runs will kill you."

But the run defense was only part of the problem. For the second game in a row, the UNC special teams failed in punting situations.

There was Marcus Jones jumping off-side late in the fourth quarter on fourth-and-two to give N.C. State a first down that ultimately turned into its final touchdown.

There was the kick-catch interference call in the third quarter against Dexter Reid that negated a roughing-the-punter penalty against the Wolfpack.

There was the personal foul in the second quarter that negated a block-in-the-back call against N.C. State. Koren Robinson returned the ensuing punt 36 yards to set up the Wolfpack's third touchdown, a 2-yard run by Ray Robinson.

There was also the unsuccessful fake in the second quarter that resulted in punter John Lafferty being tackled for a 12-yard loss. The Wolfpack took over on the UNC 27 and scored three plays later, when Rivers found wideout Bryan Peterson for a 10-yard score and a 17-7 lead.

The various mistakes gave the Wolfpack a short field to travel all day long. N.C. State's first five scoring drives averaged just 35.6 yards in length.

"It's really tough on the defense when the special teams mess up," UNC linebacker Sedrick Hodge said. "We're taught not to worry about their mistakes and just play for the next play, and that's what we have to do."

Rivers and Peterson hooked up in a different way to give the Wolfpack a 7-0 lead on its first drive. Koren Robinson took a handoff from Rivers on an end around and pitched it back to Peterson, a former high school quarterback. Peterson then threw to a wide-open Rivers for a 19-yard touchdown.

The Tar Heels never really could respond with any big plays of their own. Allen lost 8 yards when he tried to run on a reverse, and UNC completed just two passes of more than 15 yards.

It was not exactly what offensive coordinator Mike O' Cain, who was fired as N.C. State's head coach last year, had in mind for his first meeting with his former players.

"It was not a fun game for me at all," O' Cain said. "There's a lot of players over there who I care an awful lot about. It was very difficult. But at the same time, it's a lot worse afterward when you just don't feel like you played as well as you could have played on the offensive side of the ball."

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Table with N.C. State 38, UNC 20. Includes Scoring Summary, Individual Statistics, and Attendance - 59,000.

Subs Miami Grill advertisement. Features late night dining, free delivery to UNC, and a list of menu items like subs, pitas, chicken, salads, burgers, and platters.

The Lumina advertisement. Lists showtimes for 'GET CARTER', 'CROUPIER', 'PERFECT STORM', and 'NURSE BETTY'.

The Exorcist advertisement. Promotes the movie 'The Exorcist' with showtimes: DAILY 7:10, 9:45; SAT/SUN 1:50, 4:20.

Morgan Stanley Dean Witter advertisement. Includes the slogan 'Anything Is Possible' and contact information for careers in investment banking.

The Tannery advertisement. Offers \$5 OFF on tanning packages with coupon. Includes phone number 967-6633.

Eastern Federal Theaters advertisement. Lists various theater productions like 'Lost Souls', 'Ladies Man', and 'The Cell' with showtimes.

Classified Advertising

Large classified advertising section with categories: Wheels for Sale, For Rent, Pets/Livestock, Sublets, Roommates, Travel/Vacations, Announcements, and Lost & Found. Includes a 'Thinking about coming out?' advertisement.

The Daily Tar Heel website advertisement. Promotes the website www.dailytarheel.com and offers a free email account registration.