

Last Second Pass

The Right Man for the Job

Clemson coach Tommy Bowden has resurrected the Tigers' program after doing the same at Tulane.

Tommy Bowden's name was mentioned as a candidate. Not a likely one, but an intriguing one nonetheless.

Mack Brown had decided to flee Chapel Hill, and the North Carolina football team needed a new leader.

Georgia's Jim Donnan was an oft-mentioned candidate because of his ties to the state. And there were whispers that Bowden would be a good choice. He had only one year of head coaching experience, but his bloodlines were overflowing with it.

Bowden was beginning to resurrect the Tulane program, just like Brown had done more than a decade before. In Bowden's first season, the Green Wave went 7-4.

But Bowden was a major gamble, a coach with one winning season at a mid-major university.

Of course, UNC's players rallied around their defensive coordinator, Carl Torbush. They do that on occasion.

One year after UNC hired a new coach, Clemson did the same — and got Bowden.

The two programs are currently

heading in different directions.

Clemson has risen to a level UNC had reached when Brown left. And North Carolina is showing signs that it might suffer through the mediocrity that has plagued the Tigers at times during the last eight years.

Speculation is easy. Would the Tar Heels still be at the level they were when Brown left if they had hired Bowden? Or could they be even better, with the last piece found for national-title contention?

That argument is not fair to Torbush. Let's just say Clemson is awfully fortunate to have Bowden leading the Tigers' charge back to

national prominence.

Bowden is in only his fourth season as a head coach, but the results are telling. He has improved teams — quickly. No grace period, just instant results.

The Tigers looked bad the last time they visited Kenan Stadium.

Quarterback Woodrow Dantzler made his first career start against North Carolina in 1998. He played 50 snaps and completed two passes for 18 yards. He rushed 14 times for eight yards.

But now, with Dantzler spearheading the effort, Bowden is causing fits for defensive coordinators trying to

come up with a scheme to stop the Tigers. And Dantzler's backup, Willie Simmons, might be even better down the road.

I doubt Bowden's going to be leaving Clemson any time soon. The ACC better hope he stays. Bowden might just save the league.

The conference has been looking for a second school to solidify its national standing since Florida State joined the crowd in 1993.

The Tar Heels played that role for a few years. Georgia Tech followed them. But neither had staying power.

Maybe the same thing will be said about Clemson a few years down the road. But I doubt it.

Bowden has found a place where football genuinely matters to the stu-

By **BRET STRELOW**
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR



dents and alumni. The Tigers are having no trouble filling the 81,473-seat Memorial Stadium. And renovations are in the works.

Even as Clemson struggled, it has still been a football school relative to the rest of the ACC. Clemson is once again a football school on the national level. It's got Death Valley. It's got Howard's Rock.

And it will likely have a place in the Bowl Championship Series, which will earn millions of dollars for the ACC. It will also earn respect for the league.

Even if Bowden's not orchestrating his magic in Chapel Hill.

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In 3 Weeks



Tailback LaMont Jordan and the Maryland Terrapins venture south to Chapel Hill on Nov. 11. It's homecoming and North Carolina's last home game of the season. Pick up a copy of DTH Sportsaturday for the lowdown on the game.

DTH Sports Schedule

NCAA Football

Noon

Miami (Fla.) at Temple
Notre Dame at West Virginia
New Mexico at Air Force
Tulane at Army
Duke at Georgia Tech
Rutgers at Navy
Boston College at Pittsburgh
Ohio State at Iowa
Purdue at Wisconsin
Illinois at Penn State

12:30 p.m.

Georgia at Kentucky
Colorado at Kansas

1 p.m.

Wake Forest at Maryland
Northern Illinois at W. Michigan

1:30 p.m.

Baylor at Nebraska

2 p.m.

South Carolina at Vanderbilt

Minnesota at Indiana
Louisiana Tech at Auburn
Central Michigan at Ohio

2:30 p.m.

Missouri at Texas

3 p.m.

San Diego State at Brigham Young

3:30 p.m.

Virginia at Florida State
Michigan State at Michigan
Texas A&M at Iowa State
Kent State at Marshall
Hawaii at Rice
USC at Stanford
Alabama at Tennessee

4 p.m.

Middle Tennessee State at UAB
La. Monroe at Central Florida
San Jose State at Nevada

5 p.m.

Arizona State at Washington State
North Texas at Boise State

Idaho at Utah State

5:30 p.m.

Clemson at North Carolina

6:30 p.m.

California at Washington
Oregon State at UCLA

7:00 p.m.

Texas Tech at Kansas State
Virginia Tech at Syracuse
TCU at Tulsa
Connecticut at Akron
E. Michigan at Bowling Green
Wyoming at UNLV
Colorado State at Utah

8 p.m.

Houston at Memphis

9 p.m.

Mississippi State at LSU
Fresno State at Texas El Paso

10:15 p.m.

Arizona at Oregon

ACC standings

	Conference				Overall			
	W	L	Pts	OP	W	L	Pts	OP
Clemson	5	0	207	80	7	0	307	89
Florida State	4	0	209	56	6	1	295	86
Virginia	3	1	94	74	4	2	163	118
N.C. State	2	1	95	77	5	1	215	146
Georgia Tech	2	2	140	104	4	2	199	134
North Carolina	1	3	97	157	3	3	123	192
Maryland	0	3	44	125	2	4	123	192
Duke	0	3	46	141	0	6	58	243
Wake Forest	0	4	51	169	0	6	77	206

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