

# Tar Heels Short on Depth at Quarterback

By JAMES GIZA  
Sport/Saturday Editor

North Carolina quarterback Ronald Curry is keeping an optimistic outlook on the season and his personal health. "Hopefully, I can play the whole season," said Curry, who ruptured his right Achilles tendon and missed the final six games of the 1999 season. "I'm playing for the team, not really playing for everybody else. I'm just going to do what the coaches ask. Everything's not going to be smooth sailing, so I've got to go out and do the best I can do." All it would take is an injury to Curry to

suck a massive amount of air out of the Tar Heels' sails. With junior Luke Huard out of the backup picture because he left the team Tuesday, red-shirt freshmen Darian Durant and Aaron Leak stand as the primary go-to guys in case Curry goes down. Durant has steadily solidified



UNC quarterback Ronald Curry threw for 2,325 yards and 11 touchdowns in 2000.

his spot as the No. 2 quarterback in the preseason, finishing 11 of 16 for 182 yards and two touchdowns in the team's Aug. 15 scrimmage. Leak went 3 of 4 for 49 yards in that game. Much like Curry, the 5-foot-11, 227-pound Durant has a strong arm and is mobile, fitting well into the scheme that first-year offensive coordinator Gary Tranquill has instituted for this season. "We're both run-pass quarterbacks, and what we try to do is use the running to our advantage," Durant said. "Because a lot of defenses these days, they're just as fast. So you've got to be able to make things happen, and both of

us can do that, so I think we're in a pretty good situation." Durant also should benefit from developing under Curry, wise beyond his years after having to adjust to three different offenses in his career at UNC. "I'm real comfortable because there's nothing better than playing behind a guy like that," Durant said. "He's not selfish at all about giving me a few tips about what to do in certain situations, so there couldn't be a better situation I could be in than to be behind him." Huard was the only one of the backups with any college game experience, but he reported to camp heavier than

the coaching staff wanted and was not allowed to practice. He didn't take a snap in a game last season after finishing his freshman year 29 of 75 for 256 yards with one touchdown and two interceptions. UNC announced Tuesday that Huard has decided he will not return to the team but will remain at school on scholarship. "I feel it is in my best interest for my health and my future that I step aside from playing football," Huard said in a statement. "This is the toughest choice I've ever made considering football has been a huge part of my life, as I've been playing since I was nine years old."

# Unit Hopes Preseason Meetings Pay Off

Special teams had up to five meetings a day during two-a-days and worked on multiple skills in practice.

By RACHEL CARTER  
Sports Editor

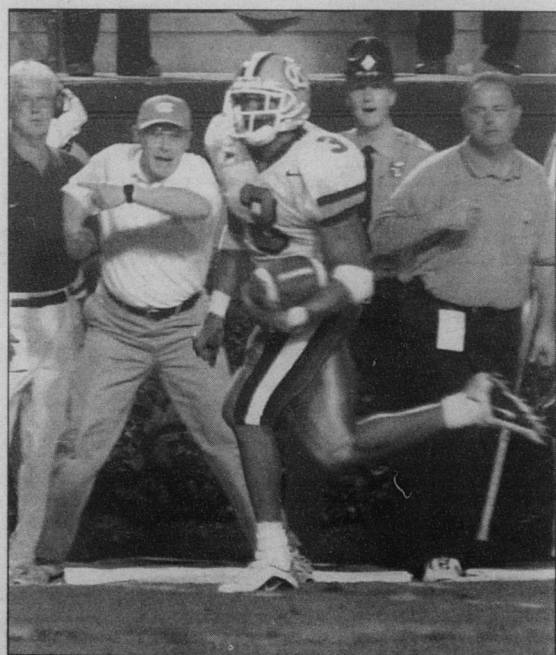
Jeff Reed knows exactly what John Lafferty's going through. In fact, he feels pretty much like they're in the same position. "I'm in the same boat as he is still," Reed said. "Just because I played for one year doesn't mean I know it all and I can do whatever. There's a lot of pressure on me, too." "I just told him to worry about the catch. The protection will be there. And don't look up; don't look at anyone. Just kick the ball, and I know he'll do it. He's cool under pressure." If Lafferty can perform like Reed thinks he will, then the Tar Heels can breathe a sigh of relief similar to last season when Reed stepped comfortably into the kicker role. After Josh McGee graduated, UNC has to find someone to replace their record-setting kicker. Reed turned in a 16-for-20 field goal performance, good enough to make him a semifinalist for the Lou Groza Award, which goes to the best kicker in the country, and to earn him a football scholarship. The entire special teams unit have undergone intensified practices. During two-a-days, the squad met up to five times a day and practiced most facets of

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Senior placekicker Jeff Reed converted 16 of 20 field goals last season and was a second-team All-ACC.

special teams like punt returns, blocking punts and kickoff. "We worked on special teams a lot last year," cornerback Kevin Knight said. "But this is like way different. We've got meetings in the morning, we've got meetings at night. We've got meetings, meetings. On the field, we put things together." Michael Waddell and Knight will handle kickoff returns, while wideouts Bosley Allen and Sam Aiken pull double duty returning punts. Last year, Allen returned a punt 78 yards for a touchdown to give the Tar Heels a 28-14 lead against Wake Forest. Allen returned 28 punts for a school-record 421 yards and two TDs. "We work a lot, and we work harder on special teams," Allen said. "I think we're going to produce more than three times what we have in the past."



DITH FILE PHOTO

UNC wide receiver Bosley Allen returned a punt 78 yards last season to give the Tar Heels a 28-14 lead against Wake Forest.

## Special Teams

PK	45	Jeff Reed
	95	Chris Bender
P	33	John Lafferty
	31	Paul Roberts
H	43	Richard Moore
DS	56	Greg Warren
	75	Skip Seagraves
KOR	18	Michael Waddell
	21	Kevin Knight
PR	3	Bosley Allen
	88	Sam Aiken

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