

“The best part is when we watch them play.”

MARK GAINES, groundskeeper supervisor

friends no matter who wins.”

**12:53 p.m.
Carolina Blues**

Women in short khaki and blue dresses mill around the plush Players Lounge in the Kenan Football Center.

They chatter, giggle, smile, wait and watch.

These are the Carolina Blues, students dedicated to working for UNC football by showing around high school football prospects.

When the recruits saunter in, the Carolina Blues greet them. The men take in the room with its large television screens and wood paneling, having visions of stardom at UNC. The first group of recruits, followed by family members and coaches, is already being led out of the room by a pair of Carolina Blues eager to share the inner workings of the UNC football program.

**1 p.m.
Tar Heel Town**

The UNC Marching Tar Heels assemble along a brick path in the center of Polk Place, and tubas begin to warm up, bellowing chords and song fragments.

Groups of fans cluster in anticipation of the football team's arrival, and the buzz of conversations and laughter show the rain has dampened the ground but not the spirits.

“What is everyone waiting for?” asks one purple-and-gold-clad ECU fan.

A UNC fan responds, “The winning team is about to run through.”

**1:45p.m.
At Home**

The overcast and periodic rain did not stop junior Dan Mishin and friends from flipping their usual burgers and downing several cold ones at his Kingswood apartment.

Mishin, a psychology major, transferred to UNC after his sophomore year at ECU. “It’s a confrontation because a lot of them are my friends, and they just give me a hard time because I’m at UNC now, and they’re still at ECU,” he says. “Sucks for them, I guess.”

Tailgating regularly before football games at his Chapel Hill apartment, Mishin has a larger crowd than usual because his ECU friends came for the game that will determine bragging rights.

Mishin and his friends from ECU started the cookout at 11 a.m. At about noon, most of his UNC friends came to join.

Despite all the trash talking, students from both schools emphasized their desire to have fun partying together and watching the game. “If it’s an ECU win, we’re going to tear up Franklin Street,” Holloman says. “If not, we’re still going to tear up Franklin Street, party to a Carolina win. Either way, we are going to party.”

**2:10 p.m.
Franklin Street**

Ten-year-old Rachel Welsler runs outside The Shrunken Head, turning her face up toward her mom to boast a little blue Tar Heel on her cheek.

Rachel is one of the 2,000 people to visit the store on Franklin Street to get a free face painting and a “Beat ECU” button before the game. In her hand is a Tar Heel blue balloon she was given at Johnny T-Shirt.

Waves of Carolina blue dressed fans swarm stores such as Johnny T-Shirt, Whim’s and The Shrunken Head buying clothing, pompoms and, according to Whim’s store manager, Kim Hollcib, “lots and lots of ponchos.”

**2:15 p.m.
Tailgating**

Dr. John Iseman and Dr. Mark Borowitz play football with their sons in the sprinkling rain. They have traveled from Myrtle Beach, S.C., to take a sabbatical from their responsibilities and marital duties at home.

The two 1986 graduates have set out on the weekend excursion to bond and show their sons firsthand why UNC is so unique.

Iseman explains how much he loves UNC and how he tries to travel to Chapel Hill at least two or three times a year to attend games.

The two men joke among themselves about what constitutes a real doctor – Iseman is a dentist and Borowitz a surgeon.

Their opinions about the opposing team are sprinkled with expletives as they make pointed comments about the qualities of the school. As alumni, their enthusiasm for their alma mater is evident in their speech.

Iseman says, “UNC plants a seed in your heritage that lasts a lifetime.”

**2:30 p.m.
Goodfellows**

After taking off their raincoats, a variety of fans wearing either purple and gold or Carolina blue have a few drinks with their lurches at Goodfellows to prepare for the showdown.

With only an hour to kickoff, the fans in Goodfellows, a restaurant and bar on East Franklin Street, are warming up for the game with reassuring words of victory and bottled beers in hand.

“My wife and I are here, we just kind of wandered in,” says

Michael Gibson, a 1987 ECU graduate. “We’re enjoying the Franklin Street activities.”

Gibson was at the bar with his wife enjoying one of the drink specials, a Carolina Pride Kamikaze shot, which is a mixture of vodka, Blue Curacao and lime juice sour.

“This was a ‘Carolina Pride Kamikaze,’ but the bartender turned it purple for me because I paid him more money,” Gibson says. “It tastes great now that it is purple,” he adds.

**2:43 p.m.
Scalping**

Vince Edwards surveys the passing crowds of people and thrusts his arm into the air, two tickets in hand.

Shouts of “Tickets! Tickets!” sound off repetitively like sirens, beckoning individuals to approach. Standing along the walkway leading up to Gate 6 of Kenan Stadium, Edwards is one of many scalpers here trying to sell extra seats to the game.

This weekend two of Edwards’ friends could not make it, and he decided to sell their tickets. “I’m not into selling them to make money, but I need to at least cover the cost of the tickets,” he says.

Chris Beal, a freshman at Western Carolina University, cranes his neck around the sea of people in attempts to locate tickets for the game. He and his father have been coming to UNC games for years but were unsuccessful in obtaining tickets before today.

Though they do want to get in the game, Beal says he realizes this is the time to watch out for outrageous pricing. “We saw a guy on the other side trying to sell \$32 tickets for \$75,” Beal says, shaking his head. “There’s no way.”

Beal and his father eventually settle on Edwards’ tickets that have a \$32 face value but sell for \$50 each today. “I’m not trying to rip people off,” Edwards says.

Beal clutches his tickets in hand with a satisfied look on his face. Though he says he believes scalpers are wrong to raise their prices, Beal knows sometimes they are the only option.

He says, “I’m just trying to get into the game.”

**3 p.m.
Will Call**

As thousands of fans are beginning to flood the gates of Kenan Stadium, the Will Call booth at Gate 6 is reaching its peak level of activity.

Fans and reporters are waiting to pick up tickets left for them by friends or employers.

Instead of being handed their tickets, some fans are playing a role in a grand comedy of errors.

A reporter from Fox Sports Net has been waiting at the booth for 10 minutes, anxiously spelling his name over and over only to learn his employer placed his ticket under a different spelling.

Ticket takers at the lineless gate near Will Call stop fans if they try to bring food. Some staffers wince as they see a fan with food approaching. “I’m going to have to take your popcorn, sir. I’m really sorry,” one says. Behind the counter bags of snack food – chips, pork rinds and popcorn – are piled high.

**3:04 p.m.
The Chancellor’s Box**

Even though kickoff is only 30 minutes away, the chancellor’s box is mostly empty. White cloths are still draped over the tables of food, and the student members of Order of the Bell Tower have just arrived to begin serving.

Private elevators paneled with dark wood and manned by operators are carrying Chancellor James Moeser’s guests up to the box to watch the game, eat and socialize at a dizzying height above the field.

The walls of the long thin room are lined with tables loaded with cookies, bags of chips, hot dogs and soda. One wall is floor-to-ceiling glass, affording a view of Kenan Stadium.

Just outside are high bar tables and cushioned Carolina blue stadium seats. Inside, servers in black bow ties and aprons walk around checking the food, their feet treading on thick gold carpet decorated with UNC symbols and rams’ heads.

After a few minutes of preparation, fans begin to trickle in.

Two adolescent boys sit outside at a table, one munching on popcorn and the other eating a large chocolate chip cookie. They stuff their faces and gaze around the box. One boy shakes his head and smiles with wide eyes when asked if he’s ever watched a game from the chancellor’s box before. He’s obviously impressed by the view and the copious amounts of free food.

But for his companion, this is routine. He’s always watched games from the seats in the sky. “I don’t know how long it’s been open, but since then,” he says.

The chancellor, wearing a blue and white checked tie with his suit, stands by the elevators eating a bag of popcorn and talking with three men in dress pants, blazers and Carolina blue dress shirts. “Hello man!” one of the chancellor’s companions bellows to a new member joining the group. “Bigger belly! You look good today.”

**3:20 p.m.
Kenan Stadium**

The low buzz of the crowd at

Kenan Stadium is interrupted by the first words of the game announcer. As he wishes the fans “Carolina blue” skies, the UNC Marching Tar Heels take the field.

The band starts out with a rousing rendition of Vic Huggins’ “Here Comes Carolina,” whipping the home crowd into a frenzy.

But the mood suddenly becomes pensive, and the air, silent, as the band slowly builds up the introduction to “God Bless America.”

The national anthem follows. Game time is near.

**3:25 p.m.
Gate 5**

As the mass of students pushes closer and closer to Gate 5, the rumblings of discontent grow louder and louder and game time draws nearer.

“Let’s move!” a man in a cowboy hat and a Carolina blue T-shirt shouts over and over. But his protests don’t seem to be getting him anywhere.

Restless groups periodically shout out expressions of support for the Tar Heels, leading to whoops and cheers that ripple throughout the crowd.

But the greatest cheers come when a security guard, standing on a wall high atop the crowd near the gate, reaches into a pouch in his red overalls and begins tossing confiscated bottles of liquor into the crowd.

A mad scramble ensues as students dive to the ground and rise triumphant, clutching tiny bottles of Bacardi.

“Hey, man, if we can drink it before we get up there, ain’t nothing they can do,” says one student to another before they raise their bottles in an impromptu toast to the Tar Heels.

**3:31 p.m.
The Field**

The newly laid sod behind the east goalpost is discolored and worn. It was put in after fans tore down the goalpost following the win against FSU.

Past the end zone, the double doors at the end of the tunnel leading to and from the North Carolina locker room slowly push open, and out walk seniors Ronald Curry, Quincy Monk, Jeff Reed and Ryan Sims. The quartet saunters out on the field and

gestures to the crowd before taking the coin flip.

Back in the tunnel, Kitwana Jones is hyped. The sophomore linebacker from Wilmington is jumping around with the his teammates, waiting for the signal to tear out onto the field. Jones claps sophomore kicker Jeff Scudder on the back and yells before racing out onto the field with the rest of the Tar Heels.

**3:36 p.m.
Kickoff**

Place-kicker Jeff Reed places the ball on a tee sitting on the left hashmark of the UNC 35-yard line. Clouds still hang over the field, and a light breeze keeps the flags on the east end of the stadium from hanging limp.

Reed addresses the ball, looks to each side and begins his approach. The crowd noise slowly builds until that final moment when Reed’s right leg pendulums down toward the ball.

He kicks off, and the game, at long last, has begun.



Contributing Staff:

Michael Abernethy, Lizzie Breyer, Brad Broders, Jacqueline Brown, Beth Buchholz, Ryan Caron, Rachel Carter, Brad Chiasson, Rachel Clarke, Kara Eide, Chase Foster, Peter Farkas, Kirsten Fields, Brooks Firth, Brett Garamella, Ian Gordon, Erika Heyder, Stephanie Horvath, Jennifer Johnson, Maggie Kao, Jenny McLendon, Graham Parker, James Russ, John Scarbrough, Scott Sutton and Nikki Werking



DTH/BRIAN CASSELLA



DTH/KIMBERLY CRAVEN

In spite of the rain, the Department of Public Safety and Talbert’s Towing remove illegally parked vehicles from the Ramshead Lot at 8 a.m. (top). Saturday morning before the football game. Madison Hedgecock (44) and other UNC football players get pumped up to run onto Kenan field before the game (above).



DTH/BRIAN CASSELLA

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DTH/LAURA ROTONDO