

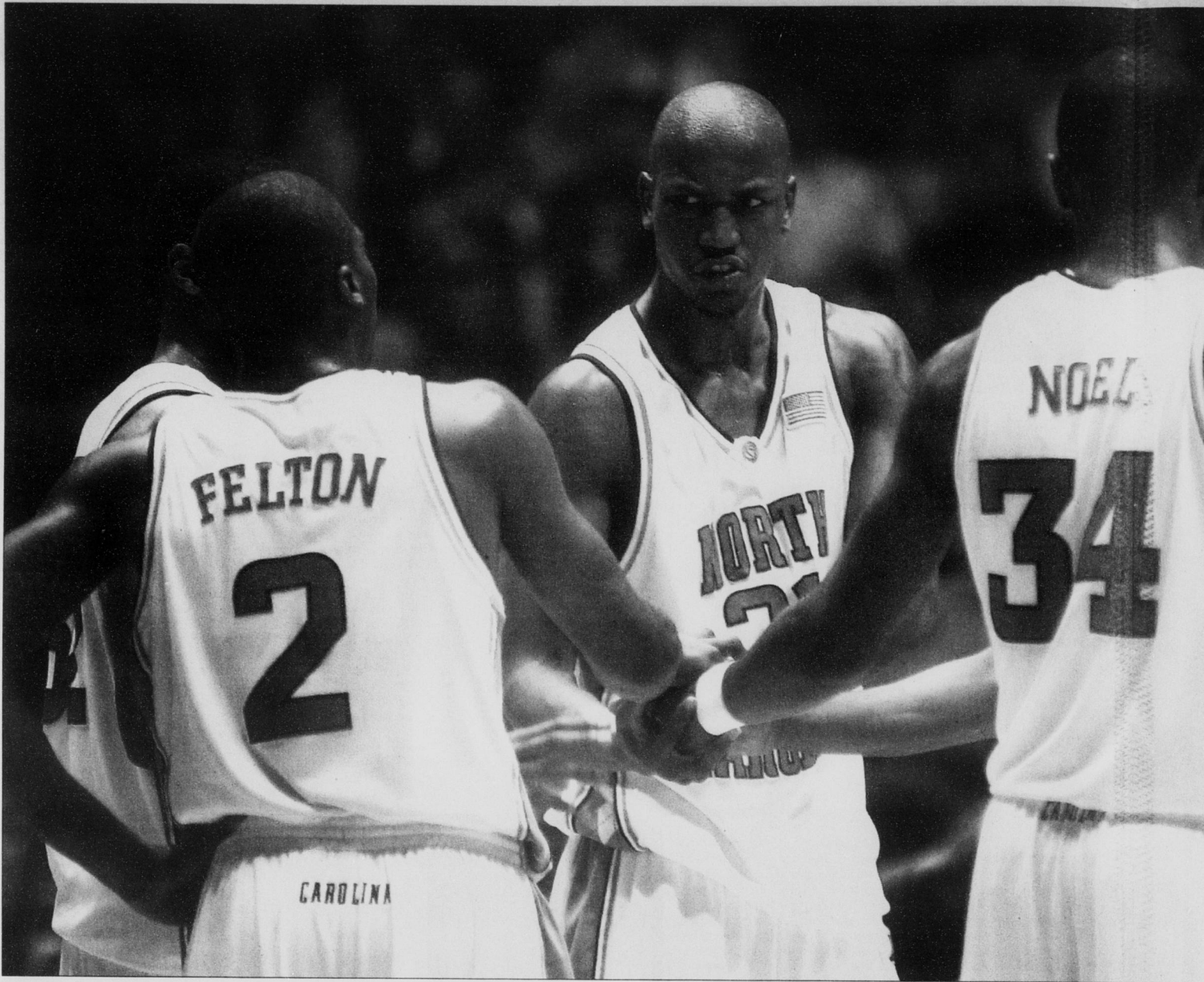
Junior point guard Adam Boone will put his strong outside shooting skills to work at Minnesota this season.



Junior center Neil Fingleton averaged 2.9 points and 1.6 rebounds per game after transferring to Holy Cross in 2002.



Junior guard Brian Morrison will contribute at UCLA this year. He averaged 7.1 points in his final year as a Tar Heel.



Sophomore Raymond Felton (2), junior Jawad Williams (21), sophomore David Noel (34) and junior Jackie Manuel gather in a huddle before a game last season. With no scholarship seniors on this year's team, the ju

CASUALTIES OF 8-20 BEGIN NEW LIVES

"It really didn't have anything to do with the players. It was more the situation with the team. Just the karma, I guess. I just needed a change of venue."

BRIAN MORRISON

BY JAMIE AGIN
SENIOR WRITER

They're hidden within a 324-page basketball prospectus like names etched onto a vast memorial, the casualties of North Carolina basketball's greatest conflict.

They're sandwiched between the Berstickers and Browns, Feltons and Foglers, Montrosses and Newbys, lost among hundreds of success stories and happy endings.

They're not tight like the juniors. Adam Boone and Brian Morrison haven't spoken in months. Neither has talked to Neil Fingleton in over a year and a half.

But the trio will forever be linked, even though they've scattered to the far reaches of the country.

After leaving UNC, Boone, the last of three to transfer from a program that hadn't lost a player since 1994, ended up at Minnesota. It was a university that had recruited while he played high school ball in nearby Minnetonka, so he was familiar with the coaches and their system. He even had grown up with several of the players.

Similarly, Fingleton went home. He transferred to Holy Cross in Worcester, Mass., the same city in which he played high school basketball.

For Morrison, the transition wasn't so seamless. He transferred to UCLA and struggled to adjust to the enormity of the Los Angeles. At one point last September, he returned home to Washington state.

Amid rumors he'd break his commitment and head to the University of Washington, Morrison went back to Westwood the following week. He now sees relief in the size of the city.

"Being in Chapel Hill, it's like you're the show. Basketball is everything in Chapel Hill," Morrison said in a telephone interview last week. "Here, people always talk about John Wooden, the tradition, but it's not the same. You're in the middle of L.A. It's not a college town."

Morrison and Boone had an entire academic year to adjust to their new surroundings. Because Fingleton left halfway through his sophomore season, he was eligible to play last December. He averaged seven minutes in 21 games last year, 20 more games than he played at UNC. He will begin the season in a backup role.

Boone and Morrison, meanwhile, have a good chance at starting. The minutes are something they likely would

not have seen if they remained Tar Heels.

But despite the looming lockdown by Raymond Felton and Rashad McCants on the UNC backcourt, neither says playing time had any effect on their decision to leave. Instead, they pointed to the turmoil that eventually led to Coach Matt Doherty's resignation in March.

"I would say zero percent of it was Raymond coming in," Boone said in a telephone interview from Minnesota last week. "The direction of the team was just disturbing at the time. It was a tough situation to be a part of."

Said Morrison: "It really didn't have to do with any of the players. It was more the situation with the team. Just the karma, I guess. I just needed a change of venue."

Fingleton hasn't spoken with the press since the spring and declined several interview requests through Holy Cross media relations.

Forward Jawad Williams, who said he talks with Fingleton online about once a week, said the 7-foot-6 center simply didn't feel like he fit in with Doherty's style.

"I think he just was just unhappy," Williams said. "He didn't feel like this is the place where he should be to make it to the next level in whatever he wants to do."

Williams says he thinks all three are happy now, but senses that they miss being at UNC.

"They must," Williams said. "They come back."

Morrison last visited in June, and Boone was in town in August for Jerry Stackhouse's alumni game.

Both players speak frequently to Bill Guthridge, for whom they originally committed to play, and still very much consider themselves part of the "Carolina Family."

And over a year and a half after they left, their time in Chapel Hill still resonates.

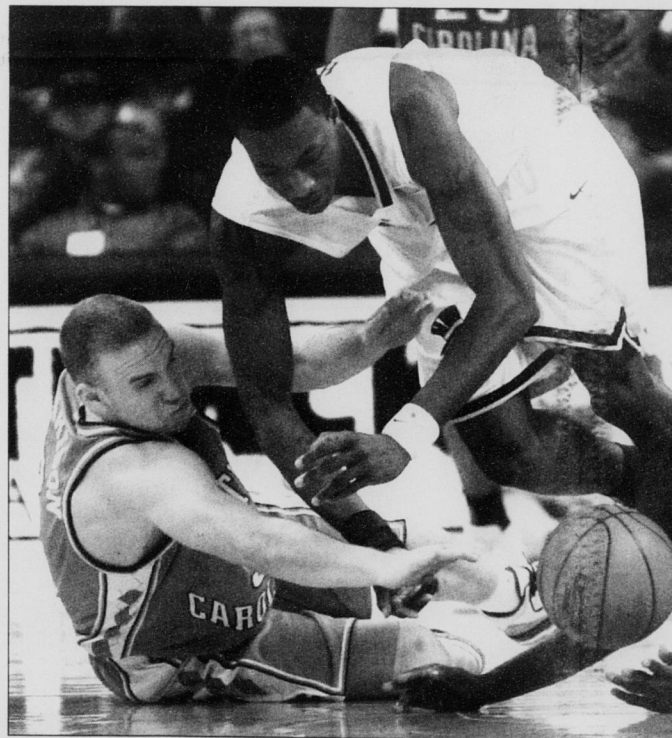
"Those two years. Oh, man," Boone said with a chuckle. "I had a lot of great times and a lot of tough times."

But resonating just as much, it seems, is the time they lost.

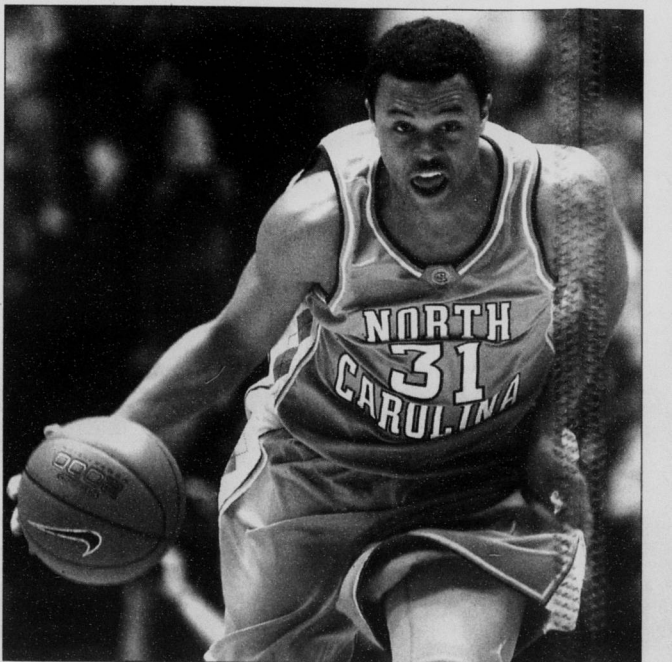
"The move to UCLA has made me grown up as a person a lot," Morrison said. "But up to this day, it's very difficult to think that I could be there right now."

"Coach (Roy) Williams is definitely a great coach. I read an article the other day that he likes to have three point guards on the team that he likes to play a lot."

"He says he doesn't have that right now ..."



Sophomore Brian Morrison (left) and freshman Jackie Manuel fight for possession of the ball.



Above: Point guard Adam Boone led the Tar Heels in 3-point percentage and assists in 2001-02. Left: 7-foot-6 center Neil Fingleton played sparingly before he transferred.

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