

## UNC 49 WILLIAM AND MARY 38



BEN COUCH  
VIEW FROM THE COUCH

### Tar Heels exhibit new resilience

Entering Saturday's season opener against William & Mary, the seeds of doubt planted in the minds of most North Carolina football fans by back-to-back poor seasons had already bloomed in full.

The thought process of most fans went something like this: "The Tar Heels are going to win this week. They can't lose to a Division I-AA team.

"Can they?"

Well, the answer is, "Yes, they easily could have."

More important is the fact that they didn't.

On the first drive of the game, UNC's Justin Phillips fumbled the ball as he attempted to run over the last defender remaining before the end zone at the end of a 25-yard pass-and-run. Those blossoms of doubt immediately sprouted into full-grown trees, casting a smothering black shadow over Kenan Stadium — and not just for the fans.

"(Fumbles after big runs) happen frequently, and what you don't want it to do is happen one after the other," said UNC coach John Bunting. "Crazy thoughts start to enter your head, and I've got to drive them out of there — just stay calm, just stay poised. It's what the kids do, stay poised and hang onto that ball."

William & Mary took advantage only three plays into the next possession. Quarterback Lang Campbell evaded a tackler and launched a bomb down the sideline to Josh Lustig.

BOOM.

7-0 Tribe.

Then the Tar Heels got the ball back and it happened again — this time Jacque Lewis handed the Tribe the pigskin at the 1, following a 47-yard run.

But then the Tar Heels did something interesting — the defense forced William & Mary to go three-and-out.

UNC took a shot to the chin and got back up, scoring a touchdown six plays later and establishing a pattern for the rest of the game.

Nothing William & Mary did could deliver a finishing blow — even Darian Durant's two second-quarter turnovers, both of which put the Tribe at the goal line, only yielded 10 points.

It wasn't pretty, and it sure wasn't ideal, but there was something in the air that led me to believe that the Tar Heels weren't in for a repeat of the 2002 season-opening loss to Miami (Ohio).

And that was the difference between that team and the team out on the field Saturday.

Hope. Confidence. The ability to absorb momentum swings. And a defense that, while not great, could make a stop when it needed to.

"A lot of William & Mary's points came from us putting the defense in terrible situations," Durant said. "When the defense saw us putting points on the board, they fed off us."

UNC's depth allowed the Tar Heels to be rested enough to take advantage of the shift in momentum. Substitutions kept both units fresh, particularly the offense, which generated 180 yards on the ground in the second half.

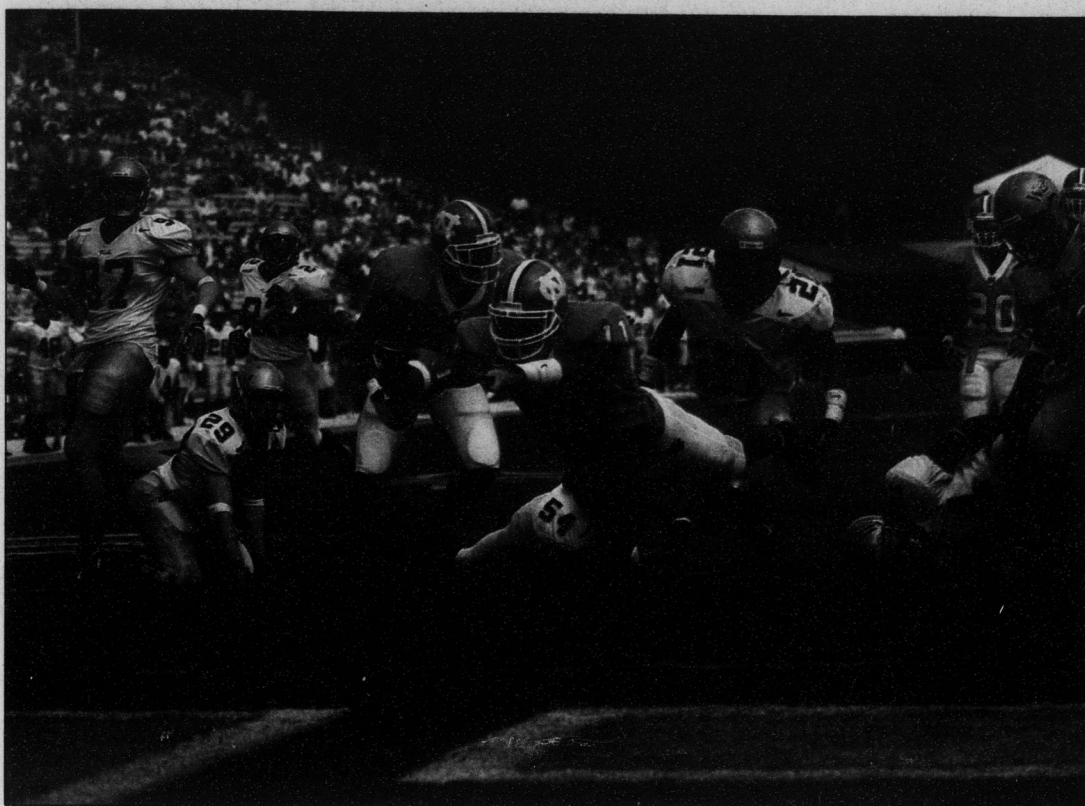
Believing that the Tar Heels will be able to regularly accomplish feats like having two 100-yard rushers in the same game and going largely unpunished for allowing opposing quarterbacks to slip away is a bit naive.

However, it's OK to feel good about this team's chances. At worst, they're going to give people some problems. At best, they've got bowl potential.

Most importantly, North Carolina got its first win in its season opener for the first time since 2000.

It's better to almost blow it against William & Mary than get blown out by Florida State like last year.

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UNC wide receiver Adarius Bowman (11) dives into the end zone for a touchdown after making a 19-yard reception from QB Darian Durant.

## A LEAPING START

BY JACOB KARABELL SPORTS EDITOR

Panic? What panic?

After trailing Division I-AA William & Mary 24-14 at halftime, North Carolina scored touchdowns on its first five possessions of the second half, alleviating the fears of the 43,500 fans at Kenan Stadium en route to a 49-38 victory Saturday.

"I'm really pleased, particularly at halftime — there was no panic by anybody," said UNC coach John Bunting. "If we go out and play our game, we'll get things back under control. And of course in the fourth quarter, we were really able to take over and run the football."

The Tar Heels' second-half success was keyed by the ground game, led by Jacque Lewis and Ronnie McGill.

Lewis had four rushes on UNC's 95-yard touchdown drive that put the Tar Heels ahead for good in the third quarter, while McGill ground out 100 yards in the fourth quarter alone.

McGill and Lewis finished the day with 133 and 123 yards, respectively, becoming the first UNC running backs to rush for more than 100 yards in the same game since Curtis Johnson and Leon Johnson against Georgia Tech in 1994.

"It just seemed like we were throwing a lot of passes and not really pounding the ball," said McGill, who went to the locker room twice with a hip pointer he

suffered in the game's first series. "We came out the second half, and the coaches told us to run the ball — so we did."

After allowing 24 points and 218 yards in the first half to W&M (0-1), UNC forced a three-and-out to open the third quarter, punctuated by a blocked punt that left the Tar Heels with the ball at the Tribe's 17-yard line.

Three plays later, a 19-yard touchdown pass from Darian Durant to Adarius Bowman cut the William & Mary lead to three.

But Tribe senior quarterback Lang Campbell, who finished the game with 322 yards and two pass-

ing touchdowns, temporarily put the Tar Heel comeback on hold.

Under pressure from UNC defensive end Tommy Davis on third-and-seven, Campbell stepped forward and found receiver Joe Nicholas open in the middle for a 13-yard gain to keep the drive going.

Seven plays later, running back Jon Smith's two-yard touchdown plunge expanded the Tribe cushion back to 10.

From there, North Carolina dominated on both sides of the ball, taking the lead on a 29-yard Durant touchdown pass to a streaking Derrele Mitchell on the right side. The Tar Heels' next three drives all culminated in touchdown runs by McGill — who re-entered the game just before the end of the third quarter — to put the onetime tight game out of reach.

"Now that we've gotten the lead back, finally, let's grind," Bunting said of the team's mentality. "Let's grind it out. Let's beat them up, let's get physical. ... I told the team before the game, 'I think in the fourth quarter, we'll be able to get after this club if we keep grinding away.'"

The first-half turnovers, though, prevented any battering running attack from taking effect early.

On the game's first possession, Durant found Justin Phillips wide

open downfield. But after gaining 25 yards, Tribe linebacker Travis McLaurin hit Phillips, popping the ball out in the process.

The Phillips fumble proved to be a precursor of things to come: It was the first of four UNC first-half turnovers.

Lewis fumbled at the W&M 1-yard line after an impressive 47-yard scamper, recovered again by McLaurin. Durant then provided the two second-quarter giveaways — a fumble and a tipped interception, both of which were returned inside the UNC 5-yard line.

"It's a crazy game, and a lot of things happen," Durant said. "Today in the first half, a lot of things were just happening against us. The positive thing about it is that we didn't get down. We overcame those. It shows a lot about the character of this team."

And given that the opponents will become exponentially tougher, the team's second-half resurgence prevented what could have been a season-demoralizing loss.

"You look any place around the country, they do it all the time — I-AA teams come in and upset teams," Bunting said. "Didn't happen to us."

Contact the Sports Editor  
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### Tar Heel backfield excels in 2nd half

BY GABRIELLE DE ROSA  
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Oh, to live in a land of hypotheticals.

What if the North Carolina football team had fewer turnovers in the first half of its game against William & Mary?

What if Coach John Bunting had decided to let his trio of tailbacks run the ball more in that first half?

And what if Ronnie McGill, who rushed for 100 yards in the fourth quarter alone, had not spent more time in

the locker room than on the field in the first three quarters?

Hypotheticals aside, the Tar Heels are just glad they won their season opener.

Sophomore Ronnie McGill and seniors Jacque Lewis and Chad Scott rushed for 133, 123 and 75 yards, respectively, against the Tribe and scored five of UNC's seven touchdowns.

McGill, who led the team in rushing, had not spent more time in

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Sophomore tailback Ronnie McGill (center) rushes past Tribe defenders. He became one of two backs to run for more than 100 yards in Saturday's opener against W&M.

## UNC tested by D-II champs

Tar Heels defeat Kennesaw St. 1-0

BY BRIAN MACPHERSON  
SENIOR WRITER

Kennesaw State's players walked off the field with heads held high and arms in the air, thrilled with their accomplishment. North Carolina walked off the field slowly, heads down, stunned at the outcome.

An observer never would have guessed that the Tar Heels had just earned a 1-0 victory Sunday at Fetzer Field.

"All over the rest of the world, that's a convincing and secure victory," said UNC women's soccer coach Anson Dorrance. "But because of the standards we set, we come out of that feeling like it's a moral loss."

Despite outshooting the Owls — last year's Division II national champions — by a margin of 24-4 and carrying play throughout the game, the Tar Heels couldn't generate their usual offensive firepower against a team they ordinarily would dominate.

"We couldn't capitalize on the chances we had, and we didn't really stick to our game plan," said senior Anson Felts.

The Tar Heels' first scoring chance came less than two minutes after the opening whistle. Forward Heather O'Reilly deked her way past two defenders, but her shot hit a defender and bounced away.

That would become a theme in Sunday's game, as Kennesaw State (2-2) focused heavily on defense throughout the game. The Tar Heels (4-0) had to generate most of their pressure from the wings, and most shots never reached the net.

"We had too many players playing individually, taking too many touches," said senior Mary McDowell. "They close on you when they always have four or five back there, so you've got to play it quick."

North Carolina got on the board in the game's 13th minute. Midfielder Kacey White led O'Reilly with a pass down the wing, and O'Reilly found freshman Jaime Gilbert for a shot into the top right corner of the net.

But as the game progressed, it became clear that the Owls would not allow the Tar Heels to control play. O'Reilly and White created run after run down both wings, but Kennesaw State defenders jumped in front of most crosses to deflect them away from danger.

It didn't help that the Tar Heels played without dynamic playmaker Lori Chalupny (upset stomach) for the first half and midfield presence Elizabeth Guess (concussion) for the entire game.

But North Carolina, which also defeated Florida by a score of 3-0 on Friday, still wasn't satisfied with its offensive production.

"We made very bad decisions in the attacking third, and we didn't strike balls with accuracy and with power on the frame," Dorrance said. "But again, to credit them,

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## Smaller stature affects UNC despite victories

### Midfield hurt by graduated class

BY BRIANA GORMAN  
STAFF WRITER

North Carolina's winning legacy dwarves any other collegiate soccer program, but on the field the Tar Heels are facing opponents who are giants — literally.

On Friday and Sunday, UNC faced opponents with an obvious height advantage against the

shorter Tar Heel squad.

Florida and Kennesaw State each started seven players who were at least 5 foot 7 inches tall, compared to UNC's three players. The size disadvantage was not apparent on the scoreboard since the Tar Heels won both games 3-0 and 1-0, respectively.

Yet the scores are low compared to the blowouts they had last year, and part of the reason is UNC graduated two of its tallest players, Maggie Tomecka and Alyssa Ramsey.

"Obviously that size that Maggie and Alyssa had is pretty much irreplaceable," said junior Kacey White. "Maggie ruled the middle side to side when she was fit, and I think that is hard to replace."

At times, UNC was dominated in the middle by the bigger players of the Gators and Owls. The Tar Heels were not winning balls in the air and were being pushed off loose balls.

"We suffer from it a bit, because with the loss of Maggie Tomecka, those balls we usually rule in the

middle of the midfield are now 50-50 balls between their players and ours," said Coach Anson Dorrance. "That's a big loss for us."

UNC's small size was also noticeable by their inability to finish in the final third of the field. Numerous times, crosses were sent into the goalie's box, and no one could capitalize on the opportunities.

The Tar Heels had five corner kicks in the Florida game and 16 against Kennesaw State. They didn't score on any of them.

"It was a little frustrating," White said. "We're still working out different plays on corner kicks, like near post and far post. And as the season goes on we hope to connect because we have some great headers in there."

"I think we just have to get in sync with one another and know where the balls are going because this is my first year really taking corner kicks so they're just trying to get used to my serves."

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