

Gridiron gripes: 3 things I hate about football

Have you ever seen those grammar columns that sometimes show up in the middle-of-nowhere section of a newspaper?

Usually some crusty old retired high school English teacher whose mother was a crusty old English teacher fields questions from equally electrifying souls on dreary grammar issues and offers answers that would enlighten Shakespeare.

For me, such reading is about as thrilling as a televised Scrabble tournament. Maybe that's why I is not so good at grammar.

But I do like the idea of using column space to sound off on topics irking me — and with football season underway I can't think of a more appropriate time to lambaste some problems with a sport that makes it acceptable to sit on the couch for nine hours on Saturdays and not shower on Sundays.

Nothing makes me spill my nachos worse than when defensive players make sensational plays to force turnovers and then get fancy with the pigskin.

I'd guess that half the time a ball is lateraled (not counting option pitches), it's being flung backward by a defender after a turnover.

How any coach can tolerate such high-risk/low-reward behavior by players with as much experience with balls in their hands as Louie Anderson has with a treadmill is beyond me. Columnist Matt's answer: If you're a defender and find yourself with the ball after a turnover, cover it with both arms and scamper until someone takes you down.

Another situation that makes me throw all six of my remotes at the TV screen is when a player on the punt-returning team insists on being around the gaggle of opposing players trying to down a kick.

Any special teams coach will tell you it's the job of the punt returner to yell like Gunnery Sgt. Hartman to his return-mates if he's not going to make a play on the ball, because, of course, if it touches a member of



MATT ESTREICH
STREICH ZONE

the return team, it's in play.

For some reason guys on the return team adore following an oblong-shaped ball — notorious for taking unpredictable bounces — that's careening from the sky from as high as 50 feet crash to the ground until it reaches its final resting spot. My solution: The instant the return man voices his disdain for fielding a particular punt, every member of the return team should race each other to the Gatorade table on the sidelines. Plus it'll increase the probability of one of those awesome crashes where a player spills 200 cups of Gatorade that took the water boy the entire first half to replenish.

A final point of contention concerns the drive-killing end zone interception selfishly brought out by the once-heroic defensive back, only to be tackled at the 3-yard line.

If robbing a TD weren't enough, these greedy coverage connoisseurs can't wait to call mom to TiVo their 106-yard return. But when they're corralled by a lineman, they realize their tailback will be lined up in the painted grass rather than at the 20 if he'd just taken a knee.

My last suggestion: Make a pick in the end zone and sit on it faster than you would in the balloon-popping race on "Wild and Crazy Kids."

If you're like me, there's something about the game that drives you madder than Jack Torrance at the Overlook. If you see these things happen, I encourage you to hurl blunt objects at the TV screen. I promise it'll be more better then learning grammar.

Contact Matt Estreich at estreich@email.unc.edu.

UNC readies for emotional rivalry

BY JACOB KARABELL
SENIOR WRITER

Many people would prefer to have the North Carolina-N.C. State football game late in the year, to culminate the teams' seasons with what many fans consider the state's most important gridiron rivalry.

Instead, the two teams will meet this Saturday, the earliest date the two UNC-system schools have clashed since 1989.

"I'd like to play them at the end of the year," said senior defensive tackle Chase Page. "But we'll play them first game of the season if they want."

Scheduling aside, Saturday's game is one that the Tar Heels can ill afford to lose if they hope to stay afloat in the ACC.

Despite showing promise in a season-opening 27-21 loss at Georgia Tech, last week's defeat at the hands of Wisconsin left UNC desperately needing a victory, especially with road dates against No. 9 Louisville, No. 12 Miami and No. 4 Virginia Tech looming.

"To say that we're starving for a win would probably be an understatement," said UNC coach John Bunting.

But the Wolfpack could pose problems for Bunting's squad.

While NCSU does not feature a workhorse running back in the mold of Wisconsin's Brian Calhoun, the Wolfpack likely will rotate three or four players into its backfield.

One of those athletes is freshman Toney Baker, who started and rushed for 85 yards and scored three touchdowns — all in the first half — in NCSU's 54-10 romp against Eastern Kentucky last weekend.

The Wolfpack defense, meanwhile, finished No. 1 in the country in yards per game allowed last season and returns its entire defensive front.

"I have a great deal of respect for those defensive ends, and the defense tackle — (John) McCargo — he is a beast in there," Bunting said. "The one thing we do know is they're going to come after you."

Last year, though, the Tar Heel offense had marked success against the Wolfpack. UNC accumulated 356 total yards — the second-

highest total NCSU allowed all season — and tallied 30 points.

And those points nearly were not enough, as former N.C. State running back T.A. McLendon fumbled at the goal line on the game's final play, ensuring an epic 30-24 UNC victory that sent Kenan Stadium into pandemonium.

This year, however, the Tar Heels must travel east on I-40 to Carter-Finley Stadium, where a sea of red and the sounds of wolves await.

"We've had a couple of Wolfpack howls over the loudspeakers (in practice) to get us ready," Page said. "They do that howl thing every two seconds over there."

And while UNC players will attempt to take the game in stride, it's difficult to discard the emotional nature of the matchup.

"State is definitely the biggest game of the year for us," said wide receiver Wallace Wright. "It's the rivalry everyone comes to see."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

SPORTS CALENDAR

THURSDAY, SEPT. 22

■ **WOMEN'S SOCCER**
at Florida State, 7 p.m.
Tallahassee, Fla.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 23

■ **MEN'S TENNIS**
UNC Fall Invitational,
All Day
Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center

■ **FIELD HOCKEY**
vs. Duke, 7 p.m.
Henry Stadium

■ **MEN'S SOCCER**
vs. Clemson, 7 p.m.
Fetzer Field

■ **VOLLEYBALL**
vs. Virginia Tech, 7 p.m.
Smith Center

SATURDAY, SEPT. 24

■ **MEN'S TENNIS**
UNC Fall Invitational, All Day
Cone-Kenfield Tennis Center

■ **CROSS COUNTRY**
Great American XC Festival,
All Day, Cary

■ **CROSS COUNTRY**
Roy Griak Invitational,
All Day, St. Paul, Minn.

■ **FOOTBALL**
at N.C. State, 12 p.m.
Raleigh

■ **VOLLEYBALL**
vs. Virginia, 6 p.m.
Smith Center

BLOGGIN'

■ **DY-NO-MITE!**
Check out a link to a hilarious cartoon comparing N.C. State coach Chuck Amato to Napoleon Dynamite. "Do the Hokies have large talons?" go to: apps.dailytarheel.com/blogs/pressbox.php

THE Daily Crossword

By Phillip J. Anderson

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ACROSS

- 1 Indy circuit
- 4 Barack of Illinois
- 9 Airhead
- 14 Simpson's judge
- 15 Ardent in the extreme
- 16 Separated
- 17 Manicurist's art?
- 20 looking at you, kid
- 21 Presses
- 22 Humdinger
- 23 Sappho's birthplace
- 26 Short snooze
- 29 Melancholy
- 30 Cheerful songs
- 31 Collection biz
- 32 Sentence break
- 33 Mistreated
- 35 Egotists' art?
- 38 Stupefies with drink
- 39 Connect
- 40 Right on maps
- 41 Kidney-related
- 42 987-65-4321 group
- 45 Metric square measure
- 46 "...no place like home"
- 48 Young or spin follower
- 49 Nostrils
- 51 Deceptive action
- 52 Physician's art?
- 57 Sandwich cookies

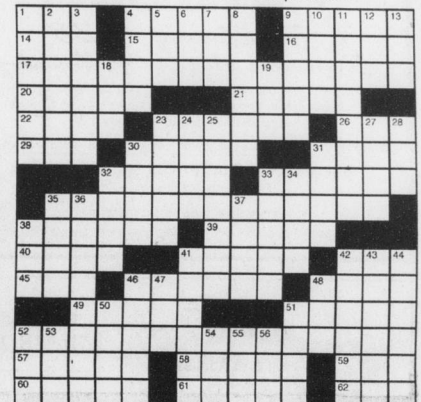
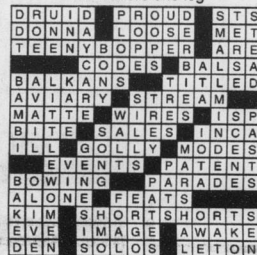
- 58 Have faith in
- 59 Play about Capote
- 60 Stingers
- 61 ___ Monica
- 62 Half of the UAR

DOWN

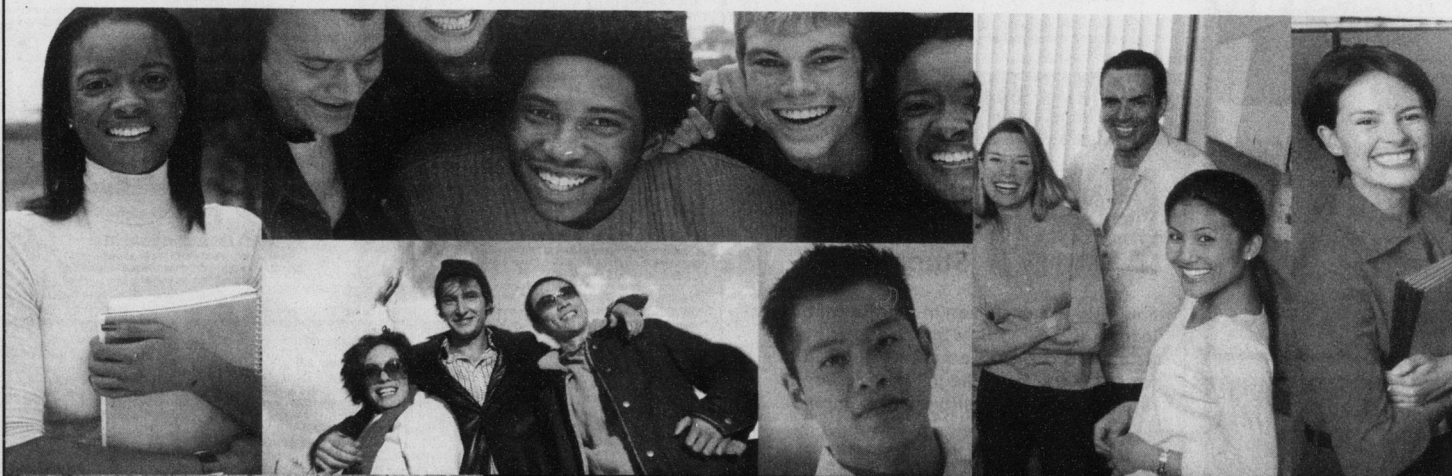
- 1 Ink prints, briefly
- 2 Parthenon honoree
- 3 Decanted
- 4 Poetic peepers
- 5 Interdiction
- 6 Atlys' org.
- 7 DI times II
- 8 Off-the-cuff comments
- 9 Warm-water sharks
- 10 Exposed
- 11 Place of great disorder
- 12 Tolkien baddie
- 13 Final degree
- 18 Sea of France
- 19 Packed-house letters
- 23 Favors one leg

- 24 Pollster Roper
- 25 Race official with a gun
- 27 Copies
- 28 Pea package?
- 30 Storage place
- 31 Spoil
- 32 Coagulate
- 33 Vicinities
- 34 Bondsman's payment
- 35 Brown quickly
- 36 Concentrated substances
- 37 Fork point
- 38 Actress Arthur

- 41 Changes, as a timer
- 42 Wading birds
- 43 Lookout
- 44 Dudley Moore film
- 46 Support piece
- 47 That girl
- 48 Salton, e.g.
- 50 Perched on
- 51 Greek cheese
- 52 MIA verified
- 53 Nest-egg letters
- 54 ___ pro nobis
- 55 Amusing activity
- 56 33rd president



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Diversity Career Night
6pm-9pm,
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Great Hall, Student Union

Carolina Career Fair
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Thursday, September 22nd
Dean Smith Center

On-Campus Interviews
Monday, October 17th
Deadline for pre-selection:
September 30th

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