

What's your name, again?

BY BRIAN MACPHERSON
SENIOR WRITER

Cornbread sprinted through the left side for 62 yards on North Carolina's second play from scrimmage. Pup took the ball next, driving through the middle of the line until two defenders met him for no gain. And in the second quarter, Junebug seized his chance with a 16-yard run on his first career carry.

Any running backs who struggled the way the Tar Heels' running backs struggled early this season

are destined for some degree of anonymity.

But in most cases, the shroud of mystery doesn't extend to the mind of their position coach.

"I forget names — I just space sometimes," says Andre' Powell, the North Carolina running backs coach. "So I just give them all nicknames. ... I know their names, but sometimes my mind's a lot of places and I just can't recall it."

Those nicknames don't necessarily apply to any player in particular,

either. "Junebug," for example, might refer to bulky speedster Barrington Edwards, but it also might refer to shifty rookie Cooter Arnold.

"Cornbread" might mean walk-on Justin Warren, but then again, it might mean fullback Rikki Cook. All freshmen, on the other hand, know to respond to "Pup."

"(Powell) throws a lot of nicknames out there," Cook says. "They just come out of the air. You might not hear the same one twice."

But if the North Carolina backs can build on the success they experienced against N.C. State, Powell might be the only person left who doesn't remember their names.

Edwards made the biggest splash for the Tar Heels last Saturday, earning ACC Offensive Back of Week honors with a 25-carry, 129-yard performance against the Wolfpack.

"They saw we weren't doing good — 3.3-yard average, if I recall," Edwards says. "I know they were sleeping on us, and we came out and hit them in the mouth."

Arnold, after struggling dur-

ing his first two games, rushed nine times for 39 yards and took a fourth-quarter screen pass for 15 yards.

"We just went out there and played," he said. "The line blocked real good, and we made our reads."

Even Warren, making his first career appearance for the Tar Heels, got into the act.

He carried the ball six times, all in the second quarter, and accumulated 27 yards.

"Our kids did a better job seeing what they were supposed to see, by and large," Powell says. "In our offense, if you just do what you're supposed to do, look at what you're supposed to look at and carry the ball where it's supposed to go, you're going to be successful most of the time."

Once North Carolina proved it could move the ball on the ground, it forced the Wolfpack defense to adjust accordingly and opened lanes for the rest of the offense.

"The run game is crucial — crucial," says tackle Brian Chacos.

"The running game sets up everything else — the pass, play-action, screens."

The early success on the ground created time and space for quarterback Matt Baker to find his receivers in the second half.

The senior responded with the best two quarters of his career — he completed 12 of 14 passes for 144 yards and a touchdown in leading the Tar Heels to a comeback victory at Carter-Finley Stadium.

"When the defense knows you're going to pass the ball, they don't have to worry about keeping players in the box," Baker says. "They can drop people in coverage, they can mix things up."

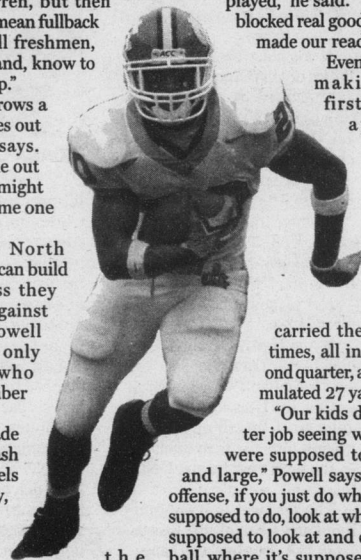
The key now, of course, is for the Tar Heels to build on their success in Raleigh rather than to regress to the inconsistency of their two previous games.

They'll have an opportunity to do so today against Utah, a team allowing an average of 186.5 rushing yards per game.

"There's always something new, there's always adjustments," Powell says. "We've just got to block it, we've got to read it, and we've got to take the ball where it's supposed to go — whether it's Utah, the New York Giants, whoever it is."

If the backs can execute the game plan for a second straight game, they might earn the ultimate reward — their position coach might remember their names.

But then again, he might not.



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