

Blame Bunting? What about Baddour? Students, alums support decision

Examples include the departures of Mike Roberts, the winningest coach in the history of the North Carolina baseball program, the departure of Mack Brown, who represented the last real hope at the helm of UNC's football program and Carl Torbush, his hired-turned-fired replacement.



BRANDON STATON
NO, IT'S NOT A CAPE

Then Roy Williams turned him down and Matt Doherty turned the basketball team upside-down before some little voice (widely rumored to be that of Dean Smith) convinced Williams to reconsider.

Now, it's John Bunting. A good man indeed, but one who has found winning Division I-A college football games a tall task, to say the least, making it extremely hard to argue against his dismissal.

Athletics Director Dick Baddour has been behind all of it, and it's time that he be held responsible.

In interesting fashion yet again, other than the football team's 1-6 record, it isn't very clear why Baddour chose to fire Bunting in the middle of the season.

In the days leading up to the announcement, University officials and Bunting himself vehemently denied that a change was so close at hand. And while the struggling UNC grad acknowledged his team's on-the-field struggles during Monday's news conference, Baddour dodged questions as to what made him change his mind.

"I don't want this to become a public evaluation of our football program," Baddour said on multiple occasions.

Yet, if that was indeed the case, then it is unclear why the man at the top of UNC's athletic food chain would make such a move mid-season, and hold a massive

news conference to tell everyone. Baddour reiterated during his address to the media that the primary concern at the University is academics and character, both areas in which Bunting has a reputation that is as solid as stone.

But Baddour also said that he thought it was necessary to make a change given the direction the football program appears to be headed.

"There are certain parts of that that I do acknowledge," Baddour said. "Not everything do John and I agree on.

"We are a bit, or a lot, in a numbers game. Wins and losses and productivity and assessing where things are headed. To suffice it to say, I felt like we needed a new direction."

The previously mentioned hires are only a few of the ground-shaking moves made during Baddour's tenure as athletics director.

Many of his hires, Doherty included, have proved as puzzling as the actions leading to them walking out the door.

You don't have to be an athlet-

ics director to know that the decision to fire North Carolina head football coach John Bunting was neither easy nor unjustified.

But you also don't have to be a rocket scientist to realize that Baddour is ducking under the radar in regard to who is to blame for some of the poorer decisions made by the athletics department.

Off the field, Baddour has piloted the landing of contracts with the likes of Nike, Wachovia and Learfield Communications.

But of the eight coaches that Baddour has either hired or promoted to head coach since he took the job, the only three that haven't worked out have been those of the revenue sports, whose success likely lent heavy aid to helping land corporate sponsorship.

And isn't it the revenue sports that really generate the revenue?

It's time that some responsibility falls where it should — on Dick Baddour.

Contact Brandon Staton at bkstaton@email.unc.edu.

BY BETHANY BLACK
STAFF WRITER

The day after news spread that football head coach John Bunting's time is up, Monday morning quarterbacks were out in full force.

Many students and alumni who weighed in Monday supported the decision and said it shouldn't come as a surprise, while others questioned both the need for the move and its timing.

"I just knew it was coming," said Emily Faircloth, a sophomore from Wake Forest majoring in health policy and administration.

"He's a coach for the ACC, so he has to win games," she said. "If he doesn't, he's going to get fired."

Bunting, 25-42 at UNC as head coach, has led his players to only one win this season against Division I-AA Furman.

Faircloth, who regularly attends football games with her family, said this season has not been as enjoyable for her as years past.

"If we're losing really badly by halftime, we usually go back out and tailgate," she said with a laugh.

Alumnus Bill Jordan, a member of the executive committee of the Rams Club, said he's been a Bunting supporter but that the coach didn't get the needed results.

"He had not done what he wanted to do and what we wanted him to do," he said. "We need to go in a different direction."

Some agreed but questioned why the direction needs to be traveled now.

Hollie Edwards, a junior biology major from Raleigh, said she wished Bunting had been fired either before the season's start or upon its completion.

"In terms of the players and students, it's kind of like we've already given up," said Edwards, who finds it harder to sit through games this year.

"Now, we're just waiting for the season to end," she added. "I feel like we might not try as hard as we could have."

Others said Bunting couldn't

"(Bunting)'s a coach in the ACC, so he has to win games. If he doesn't, he's going to get fired."

EMILY FAIRCLOTH, SOPHOMORE

leave soon enough.

"I think it's about time he left," said Nathan Powell, a sophomore psychology major from Raleigh, when told of the decision.

"In the long run it'll be a good decision — just maybe not for the rest of the season," he said. "But we probably weren't going to do well the rest of the season anyway."

Chris Menjivar, a senior political science major from Long Island, N.Y., also said he is glad to see Bunting go.

"It's a good thing," he said. "The direction of the program has been going down, and he hasn't had a winning season since his first year."

"You've gotta do what's best for the program."

But alumnus Ted Kerner, who graduated from the School of Medicine in 1985 and attended UNC as an undergraduate, said there's more to a successful football team than a winning record.

"I support the program regardless of the win-loss record," he said. "I think it's unfortunate when the success of a program is measured only by the number of wins."

Though some have questioned why Bunting's performance is poor enough to warrant firing yet good enough to allow him to complete the season, Jordan doesn't think the lame duck status will have an impact.

"I hope it'll be a positive effect," he said. "I don't think it's possible for the team to be any more lackluster than they were the last three games."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

BUNTING

FROM PAGE 1
Neinas. We will seek advisers from other avenues. We'll leave it at that at this point."

Neinas is known for his ability to seek out coaches and match them up with high-profile programs.

He helped bring Urban Meyer to Florida and, ironically, ex-UNC coach Mack Brown to Texas.

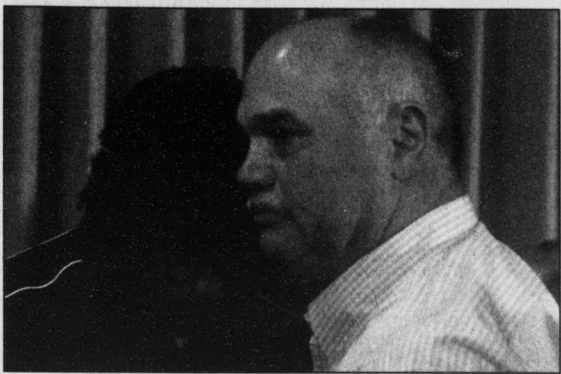
But this might not turn into a nationwide search.

"I said to (the assistant coaches) yesterday if they had any interest, they should let me know," Baddour said. "So the position is wide open."

A few hours after the staff was informed, Bunting was sitting at home when he heard a knock on the door. It was Roy Williams, there to offer his support.

On Sunday afternoon at ACC media day — hours before Bunting was fired — Williams was visibly upset with what his colleague was going through.

"It's a shame that he and his



Senior linebacker Larry Edwards hangs his head after exchanging words with coach John Bunting as he exits the Monday news conference.

family have to go through that," Williams said. "They go off the field with people yelling at them, and that's not right."

Now Bunting has five games left to go off the field wearing Carolina blue. And he's not sure if he ever wants to wear another color.

"We will go on," said Bunting, who

was the UNC's co-captain in 1971.

"I'm not sure how much football I'll coach from here on out, if any, but this is the place I wanted to be. And we were that close — that close."

Contact the Sports Editor at sports@unc.edu.

How the fire started

Thursday — UNC suffers a 23-0 loss at the hands of UVa.

Friday — Radio station WCHL reports Bunting will resign as early as the weekend, but Bunting and University officials deny the report.

Sunday — Bunting is informed in the afternoon by Athletics Director Dick Baddour that he will be fired at the season's end.

Sunday, 5 p.m. — Bunting again denies reports that he will resign when asked by reporters during the teleconference.

Sunday, 7 p.m. — Bunting meets with his staff to inform them that he will be replaced.

Sunday, 8:30 p.m. — Bunting meets with players to inform them that he will be replaced.

Sunday, 8:45 p.m. — The University issues a press release announcing the firing.

Men's golf team sits at ninth in tournament

Senior Ureta is tied for 22nd

FROM WIRE REPORTS
WINDERMERE, Fla. — The University of North Carolina men's golf team fired a nine-over-par 297 in the second round for a 593 total and is in ninth place going into the final round of the Isleworth-UCF Collegiate Invitational.

Texas leads the field of 18 teams with a three-over 579 total.

Oklahoma State is one stroke back, in second place at 580, while Florida is another six shots back, in third place at 586, and Clemson is fourth, at 588.

North Carolina senior Martin Ureta, from Santiago, Chile, carded a three-over 75 for a three-over 147 total and is tied for 22nd place in the individual race.

Robert Riesen, a sophomore from Pinehurst, shot the low round of the day for the Tar Heels, a two-under 70, and is tied for 46th place with a 150 total.

Also tied with Riesen is junior Barden Berry, from Kinston, who posted a score of 77 in the second round.

Reed Darsie, a senior from Chapel Hill, carded a 75 for a 152 total and is tied for 54th place, while David Holzworth, a sophomore from Chapel Hill, struggled with an 84 in the second round for a 158 total and is tied for 78th place.

Toby Ragland of Florida fired a one-under 71 in the second round for a four-under 140 total to hold onto the individual lead.

Brian Harman of Georgia also carded a 71 and is one stroke back in second place at 141.

Dustin Groves of Wake Forest is in third place at two-under 142, while Oklahoma State's Tyler Leon and Texas' Kevin Schultz are tied for fourth place with 143 totals.

The final round of the 54-hole event will be played Tuesday at the Isleworth Country Club, which features a par 72, 7,544-yard layout.

SPORTS CALENDAR

TODAY

Men's Golf
Isleworth-UCF Collegiate Invitational
Time: All day
Location: Windermere, Fla.

THURSDAY

Men's Soccer
at Boston College
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Boston, Mass.

Volleyball
vs. Virginia Tech
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Carmichael Auditorium

FRIDAY

Women's Soccer
vs. Wake Forest
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Fetzer Field

Volleyball
vs. Virginia
Time: 7 p.m.
Location: Carmichael Auditorium

Women's Golf
The Derby Invitational
Time: All day
Location: Auburn, Ala.

SATURDAY

Football
vs. Wake Forest
Time: 3:30 p.m.
Location: Kenan Stadium

Fencing
at Temple
Time: 8 a.m.
Location: Philadelphia

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620 Market St. Chapel Hill 932-9000

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FLICKA REG 1:25-4:10-7:10-9:30

MAN OF THE YEAR REG 1:30-4:15-7:15-9:45

THE MARINE REG 1:45-4:20-7:20-9:35

THE DEPARTED REG 1:00-4:00-7:00-9:55

OPEN SEASON REG 1:00-3:05-5:05-7:05-9:20

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DEPARTED (R) - ID REQ'D DIG (100 400) 700 1000

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