

ECU now first-class for recruits

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East Carolina has become quite a nemesis for North Carolina in the past few years. In the last two meetings, the Pirates narrowly missed a win, 28-27, and put a whipping on UNC, 38-17.

But ECU, especially with a victory today, could become a nemesis in another way—on the recruiting front. For many eastern and central North Carolina and southeastern Virginia high school football players, Greenville is becoming a place to go to school and play football not just after being rejected by other schools, but as a first choice instead.

Most of the players currently on the Pirate roster, such as quarterback Mike Weaver and runningbacks Willie Hawkins and Eddie Hicks, played prep football within 150 miles of Greenville, and were not recruited by such schools as UNC and N.C. State. These players have adopted the motto "those skinny-legged kids" in reference to what the "big" colleges told them when they handed them their rejection slips.

But several of the best from the area were recruited by others, and did go to other schools, including past standouts as Michigan State's Jimmy Ray, UNC's Danny Talbott and Paul Miller and N.C. State's Freddie Combs, Willie Burden and Charley Young, and current stars Al Hunter of Notre Dame, Mike Voight of UNC, and A. W. Jenkins of N.C. State.

For many years, East Carolina was not even considered when athletic or academic prestige was spoken of. People that graduated from "ECTC" (East Carolina Teachers College) were not like those from the "better" schools that displayed bumper stickers and the like telling the world where their loyalties lie.

But now, there is a bumper sticker which can be seen in numerous places around Greenville and eastern North Carolina. It reads, "ECU 38, UNC 17." Yes, the alumni have come out of the closet to tell anyone who will listen where they went to school.

A benefactor of all this enthusiasm is certain to be the school's athletic fundraising organization, the Pirates Club. With more money for scholarships, the

Football in the sunlight: here to stay at Kenan

by Skip Foreman
Staff Writer

Editor's note: This article was prepared in response to the question raised recently by several students about the possibility of playing night games in Kenan Stadium.

On November 24, 1927, Kenan Stadium was opened for its first football game ever. It was set in a natural bowl surrounded by a green backdrop of pine trees. The dedicatory program said the stadium was designed "to adapt the structure to the natural forest and stream beauty of the location."

Not much has changed. The beauty and the pageantry are still there, an upper deck has been added, and a lot of water-base paint has brightened the decor of Kenan. However, unlike most modern sports stadia in the nation, Kenan has not made the conversion to nighttime football by artificial lighting. Chances are, there won't be any lighting in our, or anyone else's, lifetime.

Carolina football has been a daytime tradition for 49 years. The stadium was a gift from the late industrialist William Rand Kenan on Nov. 13, 1926. Kenan donated the sum of \$275,000 for the construction of the stadium as a memorial to his mother and father. The football team went on almost exactly one year after the donation, to defeat Davidson, 27-0, on opening day.

No one knows for sure where the provision for no lights occurs, whether in the will of Mr. Kenan, or from the wishes of the family, but most anyone in the athletic department will tell you that there are no lights in Kenan's future.

"The stadium is so beautiful and natural that it would be a sin to put anything artificial there," said Rick Brewer, Carolina sports information director.

"There is no stadium more beautiful than Kenan in the fall. The stadium would lose all effects if lights were

installed," Brewer said.

What the late Mr. Kenan did mandate in his will is that there will be nothing to obliterate the pines standing behind the stadium, which is why the upper deck addition wasn't made until the trees had reached such a height so that they could be seen over the upper deck. The natural effect of the area would have to be sacrificed in order for lights to be installed.

Unless the NCAA passes legislation to make college football a nighttime event, it will remain primarily a daytime event. And as far as Carolina is concerned, daytime is fine.

recruiting program, both in football and in all other sports, will get bigger and better organized.

East Carolina's physical facilities are being improved in a hurry. Last year, a lighting and electrical system that many technicians have called the best in the state was installed. Before next season begins, Ficklen Stadium is scheduled to be expanded from the present 20,000 seats to 40,000, thus enabling the scheduling of teams like UNC and State at Greenville.

With continued wins over in-state opponents, East Carolina will pick up more and more of the outstanding high school players in the area, maybe even the best ones. Those loyal alumni will start using their influence such as those of other schools have done for years. Those widespread bumper stickers will have their effect, also. The improved facilities will play a major role.

Some of these factors have already come into play, witness the selection of players for the East-West All-Star game this past summer in Greensboro. More of the players chose to go to East Carolina than any other school.

It would seem then that East Carolina will only get better as the years go by, with fewer of the best area players going elsewhere. With the cutting off of that part of the state from UNC's recruiting area—just as the western part of the state is being affected by the rise of Appalachian State and Western Carolina, Tar Heel coaches will be forced to go to their Virginia sources even more heavily than they have done in the past.

The best hope for North Carolina is that Virginia never gets rolling as ECU has, because the Cavaliers would certainly start to pick up more of their state's players. Because, in the eyes of this year's high schoolers, East Carolina is in the big time to stay.

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