

# Numerous big names mark Pirates' past

If you think East Carolina has just emerged into big-time football, in a way you're right. But to reach the height it has now attained, it had to make a long and often difficult climb.

Going back to the days when Col. Ken Beatty commanded the East Carolina troops, they were daring enough to play N.C. State even then. But this State team was composed of freshman players, and the Pirates were thrashed by 28 points.

It took the Pirates eight years to capture their first winning season when they had a 5-3 record in 1940. One year later, in 1941, they had a perfect 7-0 slate. Through the years, the Pirates were an up-again, down-again squad, never really overly successful until 1962, when Lenoir Rhyne mentor Clarence Stasavich was brought in to head the team.

Stasavich instituted the single wing, as awkward an offense as ever was invented. Out of that offense, Stasavich managed a 50-27-1 record, but not without some of football's finest athletes passing through Greenville.

After a 5-4 opening season in 1962, Stasavich opened Ficklen Stadium in 1963 with a 9-1 record, including a 20-10 debut victory over Wake Forest. In holding the Demon Deacons to 10 points, the Bucs shut off what little offense Wake could muster that year, including a virtual unknown named Brian Piccolo. The next year, Piccolo gained 1044 yards.

East Carolina was among the first, if not the first team to appear in the Tangerine Bowl. After escaping with a 14-13 win over Massachusetts in 1964, it returned to the bowl and its first television appearance ever, in 1965 to thrash Maine, 31-0.

## skip foreman

The single wing was clipped to a 4-6 mark in 1966, but rose to 8-2 the next year, with one of the nation's leading rushers in Butch Colson. Another top rusher appeared in Ficklen Stadium that year. His name was Duane Thomas.

It was back when Thomas still communicated in spoken language, leading Texas State to a 37-13 win, easily convincing Pirates fans that the time just was not right to take on the big boys. The next year, the Pirates sunk to 4-6, giving indication that the single wing was about kaput. Stasavich's last year was 2-7, and included in the losses was a 24-6 whipping at the hands of Louisiana Tech. Tech had a wirey, strong-armed quarterback that year, and no matter how many Pirate defenders converged upon him, the quarterback always managed to elude them. The quarterback was Terry Bradshaw.

Mike McGee entered Greenville for a one-year stay before his passage to Duke in 1970. McGee managed to achieve mediocrity with 3-8, but the Duke offer left ECU looking for a new head coach. They found one in Sonny Randle.

Randle vowed that his fans "would not yawn in the second quarter, nor leave in the third quarter." Unfortunately, he made the claim against Toledo and Chuck Ealey, a team highly averse to losing. Randle lost that game and five more to finish a shade under .500. The major accomplishment of the year

was a 31-15 pasting of the Wolfpack.

Randle followed with successive 9-2 records, the only losses both times coming against State and Carolina. Randle was later lured away by Virginia, only to watch East

Carolina come to Charlottesville and embarrass him, 61-10 last year.

Pat Dye has had to maintain what has become a "winning tradition" at ECU, and succeeded. All the jokes about that "technical school down east" have faded into the past. In football, ECU has clawed its way up to the big boys, and shown it can compete. Should they win today, some of those big boys may have to move over because they'll have a new kid on the block.

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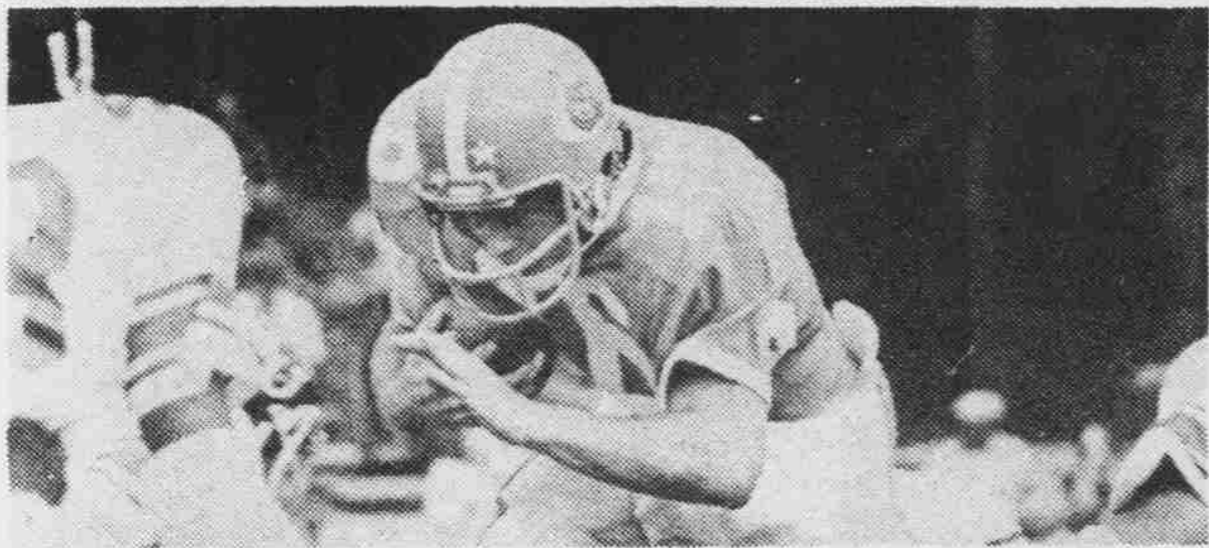
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A major question surrounding today's game is who will start at quarterback for Carolina. Bernie Menapace (above) started Carolina's first five games but did not see action last Saturday against N.C. State. Instead, UNC Head Coach Bill Dooley went with freshman Matt Kupec. Kupec completed 11 of 22 passes for 158 yards. Complicating the decision is the availability of P. J. Gay and Johnny Stratton. Gay, who suffered a knee injury in preseason, may be redshirted, while Stratton, the No. 1 quarterback before suffering a broken wrist, began practicing with the team this week.

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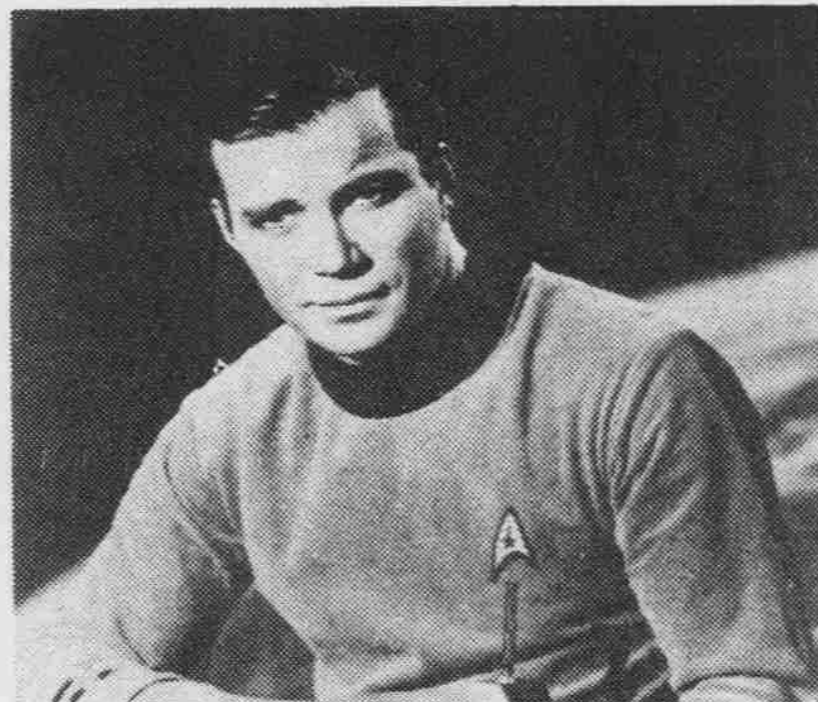
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