



Tar Heels' defensive assignment

State's Ted Brown, left, will be one of the targets for Carolina's defense this week when Carolina travels to State to take on the Wolfpack. ACC defensive back of the week Alan Caldwell (38), above, joins defensive end Ken Sheets (89) and tackle Rod

Broadway (70) in stopping Wake's James McDougald last week. Staff photo of Carolina defense by Joseph Thomas.

Pack gets Dooley's top-20 vote

State's backs pose explosive problem

The day of reckoning is nigh for the Carolina football team.

Saturday, it faces the unenviable task of taking its sputtering offense and strong defense to Raleigh and Carter Stadium to tangle with N.C. State's high-powered running backs — the kind that run over you and don't even say "excuse me."

The cliches come rolling out whenever someone talks about the Carolina-State rivalry. Such good old phrases as "this is what college football is all about," "you can throw the record books out the window" and "there'll be a lot of fireworks" punctuate conversations about the age-old rivalry to the great dismay of listeners who have heard them countless times before.

The cliches, however, could give way to more specific terms after the game, a do-or-die affair for Carolina. The Tar Heels have breezed to three victories in five games this season, but have been unable to win their two games against top-20 opponents — Kentucky and Texas Tech.

And now it faces State, which slipped into the top 20 (at the 20th spot) this week in the college coaches football poll. Even UNC coach Bill Dooley admitted Tuesday he voted for the Wolfpack to be in the top 20.

"I think they deserve to be in the top 20," he said. The Wolfpack now is 5-1 after an opening-game loss to East Carolina and victories that include wins over defending Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) champion Maryland and Auburn of the Southeastern Conference.

"Their offense presents our defense with the biggest challenge this year," Dooley said. "They have a big-

gene upchurch

play backfield."

That "big-play" backfield is anchored by running back Ted Brown, who is averaging just under six yards per carry and 95.7 yards rushing per game. Rickey Adams adds depth to the running back spot while Billy Ray Vickers is performing well at fullback.

And then there's Johnny Evans. The versatile quarterback is a good runner and passer and one of the top punters in the nation. He adds a dimension to the State attack that will put additional pressure on Carolina's defense. In six games this season, he has rushed for 173 yards and passed for 767.

"As far as us having any hope of winning this game, we must stop the big play," Dooley said.

But it's Carolina's offense and kicking game, not the defense, that has Dooley worried. The offense has been plagued with inconsistency during the early part of the season, making some big plays but faltering sometimes in crucial situations. For example, early in Carolina's 24-3 win over Wake Forest, the offense moved the ball down to the Wake 11-yard line when tailback Phil Farris fumbled the ball, and Wake recovered.

"If we expect to win this football game at all," Dooley said, "we must execute more consistently."

Carolina had two fumbles recovered by Wake and

two intercepted passes against the Deacons.

The Carolina kicking game — particularly the performance of punter Johnny Evans — also worries Dooley. The performance this season has not been the same performance of a kicking unit that lifted Carolina out of several tight spots last season.

Facing a punter like State's Evans, Dooley said the kicking game could be a critical factor in determining the outcome of the game. Carolina has a minus-two yards average in punt-return yardage on eight attempts this season.

Alan Caldwell, Carolina's bruising strong safety and the ACC defensive back of the week, ran back an intercepted pass 72 yards for a touchdown against Wake. Dooley praised the senior's performance, as well as the performances of tackle Dee Hardison and defensive back Ricky Barden against the Deacons, particularly for blocks that opened the way for Caldwell's run.

Dooley said John Rushing, the senior offensive tackle who was injured against Wake, and one of the few experienced players on the young line, will miss the State game and is questionable for the South Carolina game next week.

He suffered a strained knee. Freshman John Lucas will fill in for Rushing. Mike Salzano has been moved from his normal right guard position to left guard and Lucas will play right guard, Dooley said, because the freshman has more experience at that spot.

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