

The personnel

Some parts may be missing, but the heart remains

When you've been so near to the top of the mountain, the view from anywhere along its sides just isn't the same.

The climb back to the top can be a long, arduous task, fraught with pain, disappointment, disillusionment and obstacles that simply can't be overcome.

For Carolina, the long climb is beginning. The obstacles loom large in the distance and seem much larger without as much of the talent that helped make the climb last year toward the second-place finish in the NCAA tournament in March.

Gone from the Carolina roster are the names of Walter Davis, whose steadying influence was felt in every game; Tommy LaGarde, whose experience was invaluable even though he missed the last part of the season; and John Kuester, whose hustle and free-throw shooting helped Carolina make a bid for the top.

Returning for Carolina to help it on its trek this season are:

Phil Ford, senior guard, 6 feet 2, 171 — Ford probably is the best guard in the country. He is the captain of the Carolina offense and director of the four corners. Walter Davis taught Ford everything he knew about leadership and how to steady a team in a close game. Ford, who has started since his freshman year, is a leading contender for National Player of the Year. He was a consensus All-America last year. "He's an All-America in every way," Coach Dean Smith says. "Even if he never shot the ball, which he does so well, you'd still want him on your team."

Tom Zaliagiris, senior guard, 6 foot 6, 190 — Zaliagiris has earned a starting spot this season in the Tar Heel lineup, partly because of his senior status and because of his important role as a reserve last season. He became famous last season during a stretch when he couldn't miss on 20-foot jump shots. He'll be starting at the big-guard position opposite Ford and is one of the team's best pure shooters.

Mike O'Koren, sophomore forward, 6 feet 7, 202 — O'Koren is the most quotable, colorful player at Carolina now, with the savvy and basketball ability to match. He started last year as a highly touted freshman out of Jersey City, N.J. He assumed much of the scoring and rebounding responsibility last year when LaGarde was injured. O'Koren is very strong and can muscle along the baseline for points when other players might be stopped.

Dudley Bradley, junior forward, 6 feet 6, 194 — Bradley should be a starter this season, even though he is known more for his defense than his scoring ability. He will be relied upon heavily for his experience and his defensive ability. He made a significant contribution last year in a reserve status, particularly during the latter part of the season when Davis was out or slowed with a finger injury. His weakness is his shooting.

Rich Yonakor, sophomore center, 6 feet 9, 211 — Yonakor was forced into action last season when LaGarde was sidelined with a knee injury. His enthusiasm was contagious and was part of the reason for Carolina's success during postseason play. His trademark became his blind abandon when knocked to the floor, jumping up and running to the foul



Mike O'Koren's strength on the boards for both scoring and rebounding will be important to Carolina's inside game this season. The big sophomore dunked this shot during the Virginia game in Charlottesville last year. Photo by Kevin Barris.



Tom Zaliagiris (32) moves against Kentucky's Truman Claytor in the East Regionals last year in College Park, Md. Zaliagiris was a reserve then, but he's a starter now for Carolina and being counted on to make a big contribution. Photo by Tom Barnes.

line. His baseball pitching background helps him on the outlet pass on the fastbreak. But he still hasn't proven he can do a consistent all-around job at center.

Dave Colescott, sophomore guard, 6 feet 1, 173 — Colescott is the top reserve behind Ford this season. He has excellent ballhandling ability because he dribbles so close to the floor, far away from people guarding him. He also has excellent speed between the hash marks and had to run the four corners several times last season.

Ged Doughton, junior guard, 6 feet 1, 169 — Doughton is another backup for Ford and saw some action last year when Colescott was injured. He hasn't had much experience but could see considerable action as a reserve this year.

Geff Crompton, senior center, 6 feet 11, 325 — Crompton was listed near the top of every high school prospect list his senior year at Burlington's Walter Williams High School in 1973 and came to UNC in the same freshman class as Walter Davis. Academic woes, however, have plagued his years in Chapel Hill. He left school after a good freshman year on the junior varsity and played only several games two season ago before leaving again. He's back for one more shot, and if he can stay in school and lose some weight, opposing centers had better look out. Crompton's an excellent rebounder and can do a good job in other facets. But because of his weight, he can only play several minutes at a time.

Randy Weil, junior forward, 6 feet 4, 193 — The native of Curacao, Dutch Antilles, is an excellent athlete, having competed in the 1968 Summer Olympics as a sprinter, but he hasn't seem much playing time at Carolina because of the excellent talent ahead of him. He's a good shooter and has excellent speed.

John Virgil, sophomore guard-forward, 6 feet 5, 175 — Virgil is one of the better raw talents on the team. His quickness and shooting ability are above average, but he had trouble last season adjusting to Dean Smith's complicated defensive system. He'll play a lot this season and could possibly work into the starting lineup.

Jeff Wolf, sophomore center, 6 feet 11, 215 — Wolf shared much playing time at center with Yonakor and Steve Krafcsin after LaGarde was injured. The success of the team this year depends partly on how well he and/or Yonakor man the post this season. He's a good shooter but was not so strong underneath as Smith would have liked.

Al Wood, freshman forward, 6 feet 6, 186 — Wood probably is the freshman most likely to make a significant contribution as a reserve this season. He has quick hands and especially is effective on defense.

Pete Budko, freshman forward, 6 feet 8, 192 — Budko will take at least a year to develop into a college player after making the transition from high school to college basketball. He will see playing time as a reserve while learning the college game.

Mike Pepper, freshman guard, 6 feet 3, 168 — Pepper will have to take some time to develop in a tough college league after playing in a relatively weak prep school league.