

Clemson quarterback Steve Fuller dragged to ground by Carolina linebacker Darrell Nicholson ...defensive ends Ken Sheets (89), T.K. McDaniels move in to help

The fall and rise of Matt Kupec

Lee Pace

CLEMSON, S.C.—Matt Kupec was never too thrilled over the brand of football coached by Bill Dooley. He often wondered why some of the running plays Dooley sent in weren't passes, and why most of the passing plays always seemed to be sprint-outs with a receiver eight yards deep in the flat.

So when it was decreed in January that Dooley's replacement would be Dick Crum, who ran the veer and used dropback passes at Miami and who said he might use the same here, Kupec was understandably pleased. "I know his quarterback throws a lot of dropback passes, and that excites me," Kupec said the day Crum was hired.

Crum had every intention last spring of opening up the Carolina offense which had been effective but unimaginative under Dooley, and Kupec would be the man to make things work. Kupec ran first team offense in spring practice and for the opening weeks of preseason work, and all parties involved contended that the new system was making progress and things would be in fine order when Sept. 16 and East Carolina rolled around. And no one doubted that when they saw Doug Paschal blast around right end for 42 on the second play of the season.

But the Tar Heels could manage only 270 total yards and two touchdowns in that opening 14-10 victory. Still using the split backs the next week against Maryland, Carolina scored 20 points, the most any team would score on the Terps until Penn State scored 27 last Saturday. Kupec's rushing total for the first two games was minus-30 yards.

So when Kupec was banged up in the first quarter against Pittsburgh and his replacement, Clyde Christensen, could not move the offense to Crum's liking, freshman Chuck Sharpe was given the job the next week against Miami. He held that job for five games and played exceptionally well against Wake Forest and South Carolina. All that time Kupec, a likable fellow who, someday wants to run a college athletic program, could only cling to his memories of winning 13 of 16 regular season games the past two years in games he started.

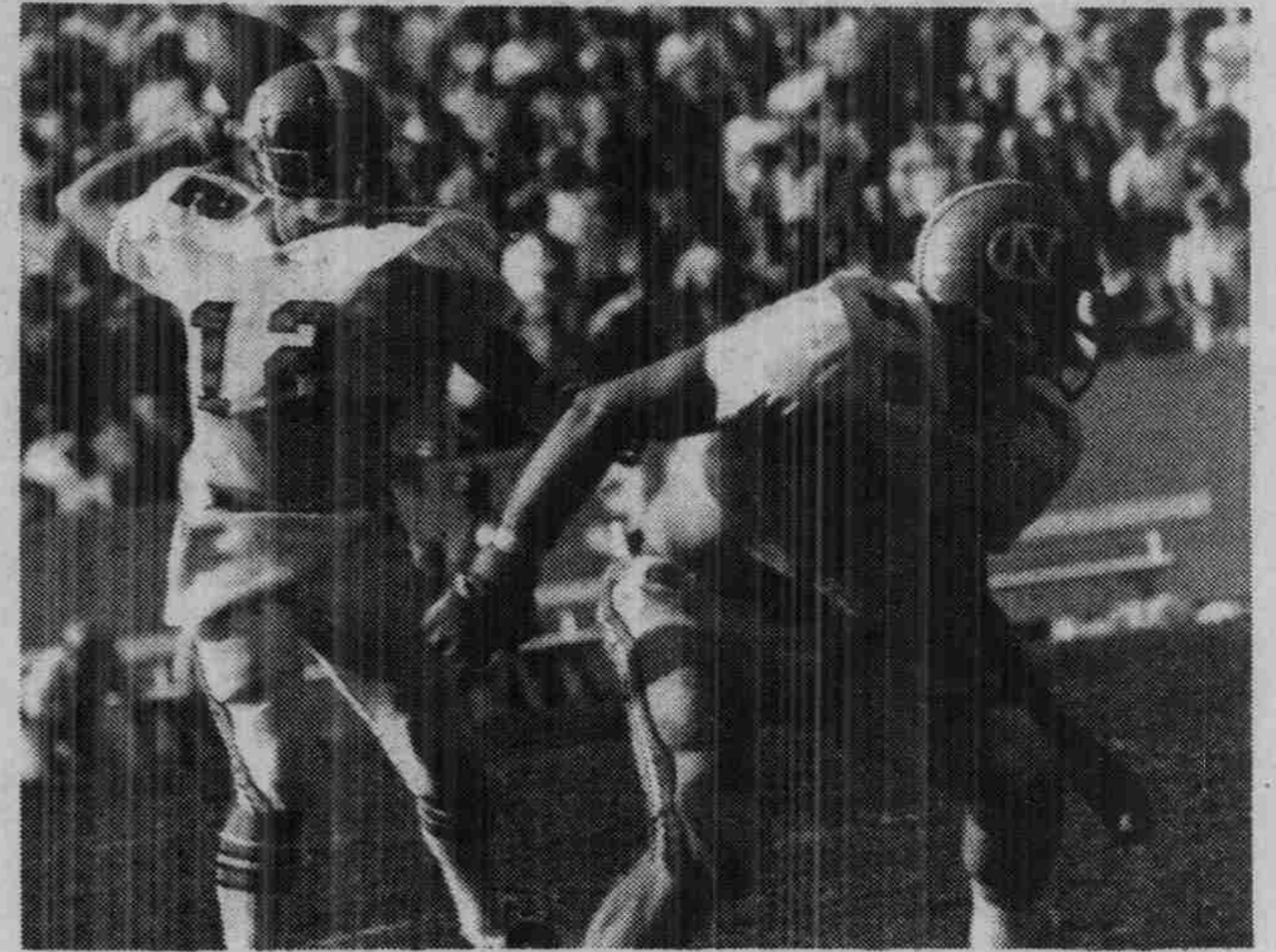
"I guess I didn't handle things too well at first," Kupec said last week. "I moped around that first week. It was real tough. It was strange watching instead of playing."

So what was Matt Kupec doing plowing toward the goal line like a fullback early in the fourth quarter

job back. "Kupec's play was very good," Crum said. "The Matt Kupec today is not the same Matt Kupec who started the season."

And the offense that Kupec ran was not the one he was trying to run at the start of the season. The Tar Heels are back to the 1 and back to a scheme that looks a bit familiar. It's nearly the same format that had Tar Heel fans grumbling at Dooley. But losing in itself is enough to complain about. When you win, as the Tar Heels did 17 times the past two seasons, you grumble about how you won.

"I just know we're better than 3-6," Kupec said. "We've lost a lot of close games that the last two years we would have found some way to win."



Tar Heel quarterback Matt Kupec ready for release ...guard Ron Wooten looks for Clemson rushers

ACC roundup

Terps, Tigers set for match

The Associated Press

Maryland and Clemson, forced to struggle when they were expected to coast Saturday, may have been looking ahead to their Atlantic Coast Conference showdown this weekend.

But both managed to keep their ACC records perfect, each at 5-0, ensuring that Clemson's trip to College Park, Md., this Saturday will settle the conference title.

Maryland, 9-1 and ranked 13th nationally, withstood a scare from lowly Virginia to manage a 17-7 win, while 15th-ranked Clemson pulled out a 13-9 victory in the fourth quarter over determined North Carolina.

In other ACC action Saturday, N.C. State lost 19-10 to No. 2 Penn State, and Duke won 3-0 over Wake Forest in a lackluster battle of the ACC's hard-luck squads.

"If we play against Clemson like we did today, we're in trouble," Maryland coach Jerry Claiborne said, clearly thinking of the title.

"We have to get ready for Clemson," he added. "We have talked for five weeks about getting better. We have to do it now."

Carolina dropped to 3-6 and meets Virginia at home this week. Clemson improved its record to 8-1.

The results leave N.C. State and Duke tied for third place with 2-2 marks, Carolina fifth at 1-4, Wake Forest sixth at 1-4 and Virginia last at 0-4.

Penn St. 19 N.C. State 10

Although N.C. State came close to ending the longest winning streak in major college football and beating what is likely the new No. 1 team, it was little consolation to Wolfpack Bo Rein.

"The players gave a good, hard effort, but this is no moral victory. We feel as bad about this one as any we lose," Rein said.

N.C. State held a 7-3 halftime lead on a late, 2-yard touchdown from Ted Brown, but Penn State roared back in the second half, scoring on three Matt Bahr field goals and a 43-yard Matt Suhey punt return.

Maryland 17, Virginia 7

Virginia's Dick Bestwick was another coach to see a good effort wasted. "It's too bad the effort that our players put out today was rewarded with a 17-7 defeat," Bestwick said.

But he wasn't too discouraged about the loss, which dropped the Cavaliers to 2-7 overall and 0-4 in the ACC.

"Nice thing about it," he said, "a lot of those players you saw out there will be back two or three years."

Virginia struck first when Sean McCall took the opening kickoff 85 yards to the Maryland 15, setting up Dan Hottowe's touchdown. But the Terps, now 9-1, recovered with an Ed Lencar field goal and two touchdowns by Alvin Maddox on 2 and 4-yard runs.

Steve Atkins gained just 71 yards for the Terps but still became the first Maryland player ever to top 1,000 yards rushing in a season.

Duke 3, Wake Forest 0

After four straight losses, any win was relief for Duke, even if it was without a touchdown and against 1-9 Wake Forest. "This was a week that tests you," said Duke Coach Mike McGee, who suspended four players Thursday for holding a meeting McGee said was detrimental to the team.

"You may say the score was 3-0, but it was a great victory," he added. "We were not out to prove anything. We were out to win a football game."

Duke improved its record to 4-5 and 2-2. McGee said he would have a meeting Monday with the suspended players, who include starting tailback Greg Rhett and end Derrick Lewis.

The margin was a 25-yard second quarter field goal by Scott McKinney. But to make it stick, Duke had to fight off two fourth-quarter passing threats by Wake Forest, which gave up seven turnovers.

Clemson held Amos Lawrence to five yards on 12 carries in the second half. "Everytime I touched the ball it seemed they were there," Lawrence said. "We were pumped up in the first half, we took it to them. It seemed like we lost something in the second."

And the biggest thing the Tar Heels lost was the game. "Play it again next week we might win 13-9," Crum said. "It could have gone either way." But for 1978, it seemed to come out the appropriate way.

Tigers 13, Tar Heels 9

North Carolina 0 3 0 8 - 9
Clemson 3 3 0 7 - 13

Clem—FG Ariri 46
NC—FG Hayes 42
Clem—FG Ariri 24
NC—Paschal 1 run (kick failed)
Clem—Brown 1 run (Ariri kick)
A—\$3,000.

	NC	Clem
First downs	20	14
Rushes-yards	56-197	53-215
Passing yards	133	13
Return yards	10	92
Passes	10-18-2	7-14-0
Punts	5-37-2	5-43-6
Fumbles-lost	4-1	3-2
Penalties-yards	3-13	9-62

football

From page 1


That sealed the Clemson victory and rejuvenated the festivities in the stands. Next week the Tigers fight Maryland for the ACC championship and the Tar Heels fight Virginia for a little pride and a fourth victory.

"This game depicts our entire season," Kupec said. Carolina played a good game against a good team Saturday, but just like in losses to Maryland and Pittsburgh, the Tar Heels couldn't hang on to a fourth-quarter lead. "It's a shame you have to play that good a game and lose," said UNC coach Dick Crum, who's grown a year older every week this fall. "We had good concentration and good effort. If we had played with that consistency all year we wouldn't have lost five games."

The Tar Heels ran nine more offensive plays than Clemson, had six more first downs and only 15 yards less total offense. Carolina's defense played well for three quarters, holding Fuller to a modest 22 yards rushing, and the Tar Heels ran the ball at Clemson with relative ease in the first half, piling up 161 yards, 87 of those by Amos Lawrence. "We felt we could run the ball on Clemson," guard Mike Salzano said. "But we did a better job in the first half."


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The Bottom Line takes a lighter look at the news Tuesdays and Thursdays on the editorial page of the Daily Tar Heel.



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