

(Yawn) UNC women's soccer No. 1 again

Newcomers, veterans lead charge for eighth NCAA title



DTH file photo

Senior Julie Guarnotta's sharp play at forward will aid UNC's quest for an eighth national title

By JAY REED

Assistant Sports Editor

It sounds like a broken record. Every time there is talk about the North Carolina women's soccer team, the conversation goes: National Championship ... National Championship ... National Championship.

At least it has been like that for seven of the past eight years. But if someone hears the repetition for too long, eventually the needle will be moved to allow a new tune to be played.

For head coach Anson Dorrance and his hustling Tar Heels, opponents have been trying — ever so unsuccessfully since 1985 — to move the needle and break the almost monotonous string of games without a defeat, 70 at this writing. But no one has yet been so lucky.

Last year's squad stifled teams' offensive threats with players like Norway's Birthe Hegstad, New York native Andrea Zeman and Lori Henry from Seattle, Wash. Those faces are gone, and with their departure Dorrance has thought long and hard over the steamy summer months about who would replace these all-world performers in the defense.

"We've done a pretty good job of finding the most experienced freshmen we could out there," Dorrance said.

The prospects he boasts of are Mia Hamm of Fairfax, Va., Christine Lilly of Wilton, Conn. and Sarina Weigman of Den Flaag, The Netherlands.

"(These three) will help mitigate the loss of our three national team players (Henry, Hegstad and Wendy Gebauer)," Dorrance said.

And who could forget Carla Werden. Luckily, Werden, a four-year starter, will be back.

She is the quarterback of the Tar Heel team once again from the sweeper position. The soft-spoken Dallas native has quietly become one of the country's premier defenders, as she received first team All-America honors for 1988.

Joining Werden in the defense this season is a veteran to the team but newcomer to the position, Ava Hyatt. Hyatt is a senior from Tampa, Fla., who made such a strong impression on Dorrance as a versatile midfielder in the past three years that he has decided to move her to stopper to fill the void left by Henry.

However, not everyone on the UNC team is from far, far away.

Laura Boone, a Chapel Hillian, in her own quiet way, started all 21 games for the Tar Heels in 1988 and proved to be a steady surprise for Dorrance.

In the midfield, Shannon Higgins will lead an impressive offensive force from the center. The senior from Kent, Wash., led the Tar Heels in goals with 13 while leading the entire Atlantic Coast Conference with 17 assists and 43 points.

Higgins was named Player of the Year by *Soccer America* and also joined Werden on the first team All-America squad.

Coming off the injured reserve list to give a burst of energy to the 1989 team is two-time All-American Tracey Bates.

Bates is a veteran of national championships at UNC, having been

through three in her career, and both her teammates and coaches feel her return is one of the best things to happen to this year's squad.

"I really didn't know how much I missed (Bates) until she was gone," Dorrance said. "I know we missed her as a player, but she gives us so much more."

"Her impact on team chemistry is unbelievable."

And how can the offense be ignored? It is as if no Tar Heel team has been more offensively minded since the start of women's soccer in 1979.

"I think this team is going to be very exciting to watch because they're going to be a team that goes to goal," Dorrance said excitedly.

"We have a lot of people who like to shoot, we have a lot of speed and quickness and we have enough experience in key positions for there to be a good flow."

As well as Higgins and Hyatt returning with their goal-scoring abilities, Pam Kalinoski and Julie Guarnotta come back to haunt opposing defenders with their quick cuts and keen senses for the goal.

Kalinoski's 1988 season was riddled with injuries, but fortunately for the Tar Heels she became healthy toward the year's finale. The North Olmsted, Ohio junior was so impressive that she was named to the All-NCAA tournament team.

Teamed up, Kalinoski and Guarnotta, a senior from Winchester, Mass., will produce a dynamic duo on the front line that will baffle the best in the business.

Well, the team is ranked number one once again. What a surprise.

But how does a team handle such a high pedestal without falling off? It's easy, according to Dorrance.

"It's nothing that intimidates our players," Dorrance said. "It's something we take for granted."

"We'd rather be ranked anything but one, because it would be more motivational for us."

Motivation is one thing this team does not need.

But as every head coach has to do, Dorrance downplays the upcoming season by emphasizing the squad's weaknesses.

"The sort of thing that I'm afraid of right now is that we're going to be complacent," Dorrance said.

Think about it, though. Seven of the past eight with two All-Americans returning.

With this sort of experience on the field, the record will continue to play National Championship for years to come.

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Football

school with more 1,000-yard rushers than any other is frighteningly thin at the position. Senior Aaron Staples, who carried the ball just six times last year, is backed up by speedy sophomores Randy Jordan and Eric Blount (a wideout last year) and freshmen Antuan Williams and Derrick Henderson. Of those four, only Blount has ever suited up in Tar Heel blue. In any case, fullback Michael Benefield will be heading the charge. The 5-8, 205-pound junior has become a leader by example. He'll see the ball plenty in the Tar Heels' air and ground attacks.

Brown has temporarily silenced talk about much-heralded freshman quarterback Chuckie Burnette by firmly handing the job to senior Jonathan Hall, who seems to be back on track after a seemingly endless struggle with his right (throwing) shoulder. Brown said he wouldn't put Burnette into a situation that he didn't think he could handle. Of course, Brown didn't have to say that. Once

he believes Burnette can take the heat, he won't hesitate to throw him right into the fire.

Joining Crowley in his attempt to protect Hall and lead the way for Benefield and Co., senior center Carl Watts and junior transfer Kevin Donnelly have filled two of the voids left by the departure of stalwarts Jeff Garnica, Darrell Hamilton, Creighton Incorminias and Steve Steinbacher.

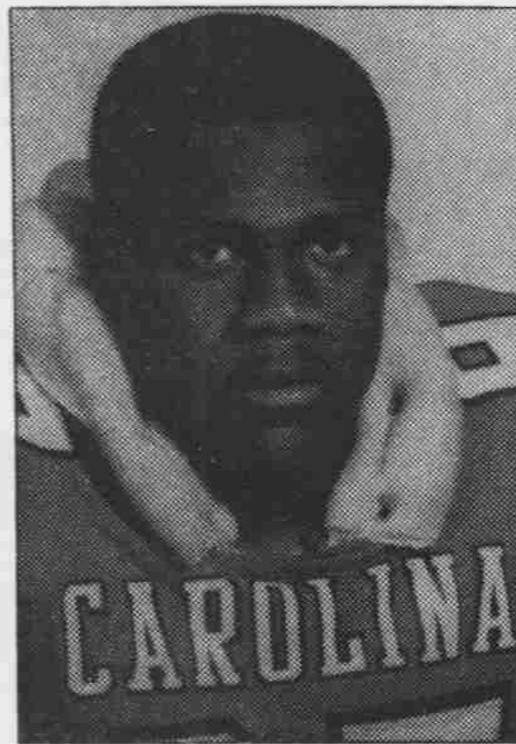
Freshman Alec Millen, who looks like the heir apparent to Crowley in a long list of successful Tar Heel offensive linemen, takes over at left guard. Sophomore Andrew Oberg gets the nod at right tackle, while junior behemoth Bill Boyd (6-8, 288) waits in the wings. Brian Bollinger, a 6-5, 238-pound sophomore tight end, will usually serve as a sixth offensive lineman on the field in the UNC offensive sets.

Blount's move to tailback turned the UNC receiving corps into the Green Team. That is, senior Kurt and a parade of talented but untested

freshmen. Speaking of Parade, watch out for high school All-American Julius Reese, a real burner. Other candidates for the starting positions include Raleigh Millbrook High standout Bucky Brooks, Durham Jordan High's Randall Felton and a pair of Virginians, Corey Holliday and Joey Jauch, a red-shirt freshman. A recent injury to Green, a broken clavicle that will sideline him for at least six weeks, means this group will have to grow up in a hurry.

The kicking game could be a strength for the Tar Heels in 1989. The much-traveled leg of punter Scott McAlister returns for his sophomore season, while Clint Gwaltney, a savior as a freshman last year, is the front-runner for the placekicking duties.

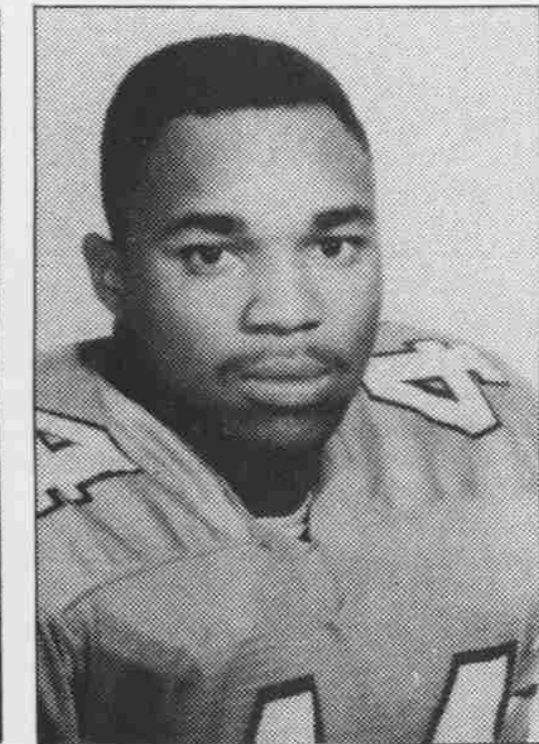
The Tar Heels' alter ego seems ready to surface for the 1989 football season. A stronger, faster and deeper defense should give the Tar Heels' offense a chance to pull out a few victories. Unfortunately for Mack



Cecil Gray

Brown, he may have fewer offensive weapons than at any time in his career.

A .500 season would be an overwhelming success in Mack Brown's second year at the helm of



Torin Dorn

the UNC program.

All he needs is a productive quarterback, a cohesive offensive line, a few freshman contributors and an injury-free season to get it done. Anybody want to buy an umbrella?

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