

Air Duke aims high to outscore ACC

Passing attack will try to hide lack of defense, running game

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For those of you who subscribe to the Miami Dolphin theory of football — pass, pass, pass and pass some more and hope that your defense can hold the opponent to say, less than 50 points: Disenroll from UNC right now and apply to Duke.

You see, it is not by mistake that

the Duke Blue Devils' football coach is a Heisman Trophy winner with 10 years of quarterback experience in the NFL. Last year's ACC Coach of the Year, Steve Spurrier, enters his third year as the Duke coach with a squad that he has built into the most explosive offensive air force the ACC has ever seen.

Duke returns 17 starters and 30 seniors from last year's team which went 7-3-1, took sixth in the ACC with a 3-3-1 record and just missed out on a Peach Bowl bid. This year they'll be better. Perhaps much better.

The flashy 1988 Blue Devils offense scored a lot of points, 29.4 per game to be exact. Unfortunately, the rather porous Duke defense also gave up a lot of points, 29.4 per game to be exact (and parallel for that matter). You can't tell me those neat-freak mathematicians at Duke didn't plan that.

It was a team that led the ACC in total offense (351.6 yards per game) and yet took last in rushing (113 ypg). Duke finished third in the nation in passing and boasted the ACC's top two receivers. Not exactly what a prudent person would call a well-balanced offensive attack.

Add in that the Duke defense was fifth-best overall in the ACC — including second worst in rushing defense, and you have an interesting combination that kept the Wallace Wade Stadium scoreboard operator

busy with scores like 31-26 (over Northwestern), 41-17 (over the Citadel), 38-34 (over Virginia), 43-43 (tie to N.C. State) and 35-29 (over somebody called the Tar Heels).

So Spurrier went back to the drawing board during the offseason, adding a star to his high-flying offense, concentrating on adding a running game and beefing up an experienced but slow defense.

If last year's offense could be called explosive, this year's is going to be searing, and Spurrier wants everyone to know it. Eight starters return, including the ACC's top two receivers, to what will be the core of the Duke football team. Duke isn't embarrassed by its reputation as a "frequent flyer" (the nifty moniker the Duke sports information department came up with). No, to the contrary, they're proud of it.

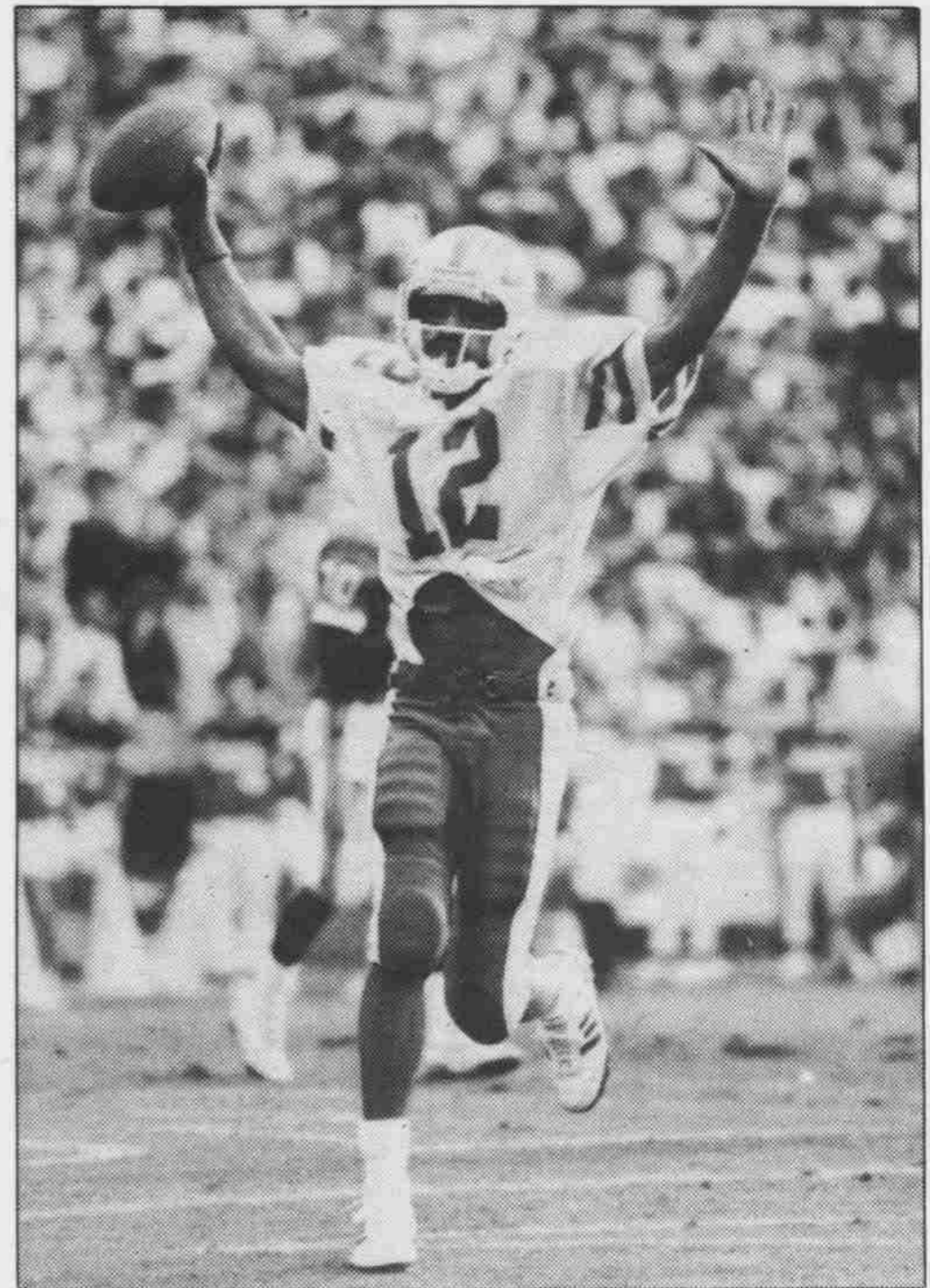
The most important addition to the offense is quarterback Billy Ray, a junior transfer from Alabama. Ray will be trying to fill the shoes of the ACC's top-rated quarterback in 1988, Green Bay Packer Anthony Dilweg. Ray has a strong arm and a 4.5 time in the 40. He will go far in Spurrier's plans to create a rushing threat, similar to the offense that N.C. State used so effectively last year.

When Ray does go to the air, he'll have the target of Hines, easily the ACC's if not the nation's best receiver. Hines was a first-team All-American last year, leading the ACC in yardage (1,067), touchdown catches (10) and taking second in receptions (68) to teammate Roger Boone (73).

The other wideouts should be senior Walter Jones, with Keith Ewell, Darryl Clements and Greg Downs seeing action. Senior tight end Dave Colonna, a pre-season All-ACC pick, also returns to round out an experienced, fast and powerful receiving corps.

In the notoriously weak rushing backfield, the ACC's leading receiver in 1988, senior Roger Boone, returns, joined by 225-pound junior fullback Chris Brown.

The key to Duke's offensive suc-



Wide receiver Clarkston Hines highlights Duke's passing attack

cess is the front line, of which almost all return as seniors. Tackle Chris Port leads an experienced group which includes senior center Carey Metts, junior tackle Chip Nitowski and senior guard Brett Tulacro. The other guard slot will be filled by the only newcomer, senior Kevin Patterson.

There is no question that Duke will put points on the board. Will the defense be able to stop the other teams is the question.

Three linebackers anchor this determined defense, as potential All-ACC seniors John Howell (6-2, 236) and Randy Sally (5-11, 198) return to their starting slots, joined by senior George Edwards.

The backfield returns senior Quinton McCracken and sophomore Wyatt

Smith at the cornerbacks, with leading tackler Erwin Sampson returning to roam the middle as safety. A slew of underclassmen vie for the other safety slot.

But the problem has been rushing defense, where the blame lies squarely on the front line. Seniors Anthony Allen (6-5, 252) and Doug Kley (6-4, 245) return to their familiar spots at tackle, while another senior, John McDonald (6-4, 240) returns at end. The other end slot will likely be filled by junior Kendrick Eily.

With all the changing and questions and differing concentrations on offense and defense, you would think the kicking game would be different. It is. The Blue Devils lost an experienced, highly respected, probable All-ACC pick at kicker, and also have a big fat question mark at punter. Senior Doug Peterson, the ACC's top scorer a year ago (with 70 points), will miss his final season due to a back injury. Two utility men, tight end Bud Zuberer and strong safety Mark Allen will boot it out for the punting position.

All in all, Duke will be a better team this year, but just how good depends on how well the team changes from an high-scoring, reckless team to a high-scoring, more calculated team.

The Miami Dolphins have been trying to get away from their flashy ways towards a more responsible mix for years without much success. But, considering Duke's academic reputation, and more importantly its ambitious, sharp and motivated head coach, Duke may put it all together and give N.C. State and Clemson a run for their money in 1989.

As always, we all hope not.

1988: 7-3-1, 3-3-1 ACC, sixth place.

46 Returning Lettermen; 16 Returning Starters.

Key Offensive Starters Back: Tailback Roger Boone, tight end Dave Colonna, All-ACC wide receiver Clarkston Hines, split end Walter Jones, center Carey Metts, All-ACC tackle Chris Port.

Key Defensive Starters Back: Tackle Anthony Allen, end John McDonald, linebacker John Howell, cornerback Wyatt Smith.

Key Losses: Quarterback/punter Anthony Dilweg, safety Mike Diminick, defensive end Jeff Patten.

Strengths: Passing offense, big-play receivers, offensive line.

Question Marks: Kicking game, defensive front seven, Will new QB Billy Ray's talent translate into come-from-behind wins as Dilweg's did? How and when are the Blue Devils going to play some tough 'D'?



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