

A photograph of two men in dark suits and ties standing in front of a large, classical-style building with a prominent dome. The man on the left is smiling and looking towards the camera. The man on the right is also smiling and looking slightly to the side. A large red sign is in the foreground, partially obscuring the lower part of the men and the building. The sign has white text and a decorative border of stars.

RED

PRIMARY
SEASON

A CAMPAIGN THROUGH A NEW FIELD

PHARMACEUTICAL RECRUITER NEEDS STUDENT WORKERS

Here's your chance to get an inside look at what it takes to get into pharmaceutical and medical sales! A local pharmaceutical and medical recruiter is offering a flexible work schedule to qualified students. You can work from 15 to 30 hours a week in a prime location off of Harrison Boulevard on Weston Parkway in Cary. The pay is exceptional, the dress code is casual and the industry is exciting.

To be considered
you must have:

- * Strong organizational skills
- * An ability to work in a fast-paced environment
- * Good telephone skills
- * Technical proficiency

Please send an application letter that qualifies your background to plicata@patlicata.com.

Or you may call
653-1180, extension 116.
Interviews will begin
immediately.



510 Glenwood Ave.
www.hi5raleigh.com

Play Hi \$500 Every Monday Night!

Win \$500 CASH just for watching Monday Night Football! See Website for details.

College Night Wednesday nights!
Karaoke, DJ's, dollar PBR's, \$2.50 margaritas

Hi-5 is your Pack watching headquarters!

REMEMBER THESE DAILY SPECIALS

SUNDAY

Catch former Pack stars in the NFL and enjoy BOTTOMLESS beer! \$8 Bottomless ALL DAY
(Yes, all you can drink house beer!)

MONDAY

All You Can Eat Wings \$8 and Monday Night Football

TUESDAYS

\$3 ANYTHING behind the bar

WEDNESDAY

College Night! \$1.00 PBR's/\$2.50 Margaritas and Karaoke/
DJ (18 and up, Welcome!).

THURSDAY

DJ (10-2)
Ladies Night: 1/2 off all food for ladies
and \$3 Cosmo's

FRIDAY

DJ and Dance 10-2am

SATURDAY

Catch the Pack on one of our 27 TV's and celebrate the win with a live DJ and Dancing until 2 am!

STATE the facts!



**Most NC State
students prefer
not to have drugs
available at
parties they
attend.**

2004 NC State CORE Survey (n = 1051)

Student Health Services
Health Promotion
515-9355

Ad paid for by Wake County ABC



PORK, BEEF BRISKET,
RIBS, TURKEY, CHICKEN,
AND BEEF SAUSAGE

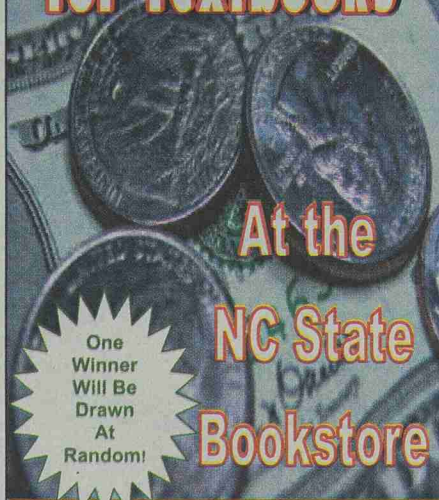
GREAT BBQ

&

TAILGATE
SPECIALS!

• 2430 HILLSBOROUGH ST.
• NORTH HILLS MALL (FALL '04)

Win \$200
for Textbooks



At the
NC State
Bookstore

for the Chance to
Win

Take the online course
AlcoholEdu
and complete the final
exam
by October 1!

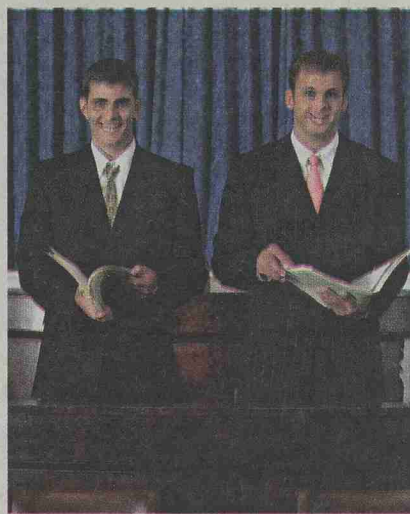
It takes approximately 2-3 hours to
complete the course

If you are a first year student
and have completed the final
exam,
you are already registered to win!

To take AlcoholEdu:

- Go to
<http://college.alcoholedu.com/login.asp>
- As "new user" enter one of the login IDs:
First Year students: C5496F5
All other students: C5496TH5

Red



COVER Jay Davis and Marcus Stone in the old N.C. Senate hall.

Secretaries of Defense	4
P. Thomas and A. Maddox are your top agents	
Technician Picks	7
We know who's going to win the awards	
Filling His shoes	8
Now that He's gone, who takes His place?	
Primary Season	12
Maps out the Pack's campaign course	
51&15	14
Hall of Fame father knows best	
Firing up the grill	20
The best way to prep for the big game	
The Final Word	22
Tim Coffield tackles the two big themes	

RED Editor
T.S. Amarasiriwardena

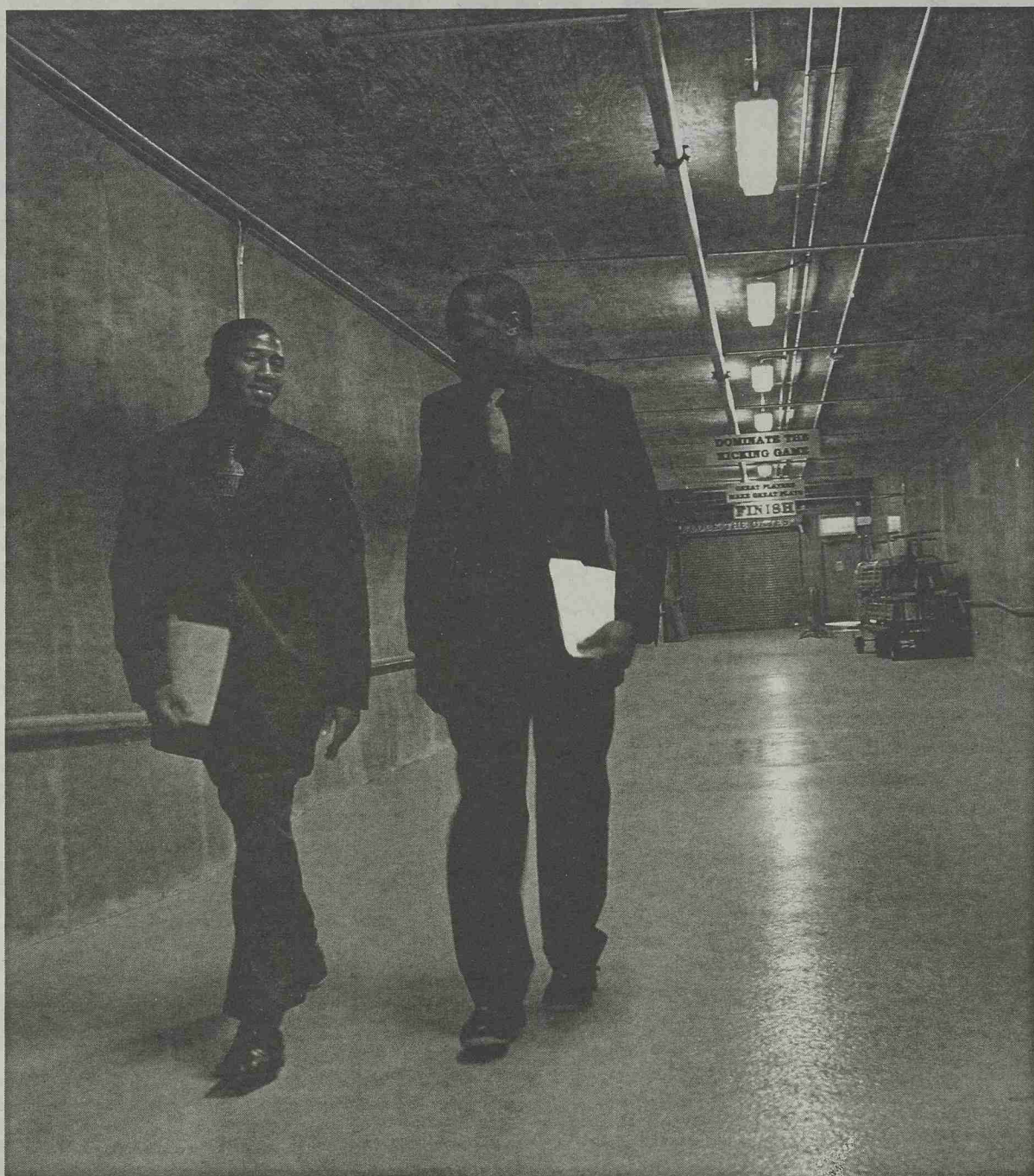
RED Managing Editor
Tim Lytvinenko

RED Contributors
Patrick Clarke
Mark McLawhorn

**TECHNICIAN
Editor in Chief**
Matt Middleton

Managing Editor
Ben McNeely

© 2004 Technician / NCSU SMA
323 Witherspoon Student Center
Raleigh NC, 27695
technicianonline.com/RED



Secretaries of Defense

BY RYAN REYNOLDS

Andre Maddox is, literally, the strength of N.C. State football. The 6-1, 220-pound senior can bench press 400 lbs. and power clean 315 pounds, making him the strongest player on the team based on bodyweight.

After all, one of his favorite hobbies is lifting weights.

But his profession is playing roverback for the Wolfpack defense, and his main task is making opposing offenses pay the price for bringing the football into the secondary.

And State will have to rely on Maddox to be the strength of the program this season. That's no problem for the weight-lifting guru, but he will have plenty of help - most notably from senior linebacker Pat Thomas.

Anchoring a linebacker corps that has a mix of experience and underclassmen is the responsibility of Thomas. And he's willing to accept the burden.

"With a good defense you can expect to win just about all your games," Thomas said. "We have a good defense and we know that. We have to carry the team. We put all the stress on ourselves. I'd rather put all the stress on the defense. We have more ways of scoring than the offense does. The defense can pick up a fumble, get an interception or block a punt."

This could still be a difficult task for a defense that struggled all of last season, two years removed from being the ACC's best.

DEEP DOWN: Hidden within a backup deep in Wolfpack Territory, Andre Maddox and Pat Thomas prepare the defense. Photo by Tim Lutzow

The secondary was the obvious weakness, giving up 284 passing yards per game en route to a disappointing 8-5 (4-4 ACC) record.

But that didn't stop Maddox and Thomas from having breakthrough seasons. Maddox and Thomas were first and second on the team with 145 and 130 total tackles, respectively. Maddox was the only NCSU defensive player to earn first-team All-ACC honors, while Thomas was voted to second-team All-ACC.

Why the confidence that the defense can get back to the upper tier that it was at two seasons ago?

A lot of it comes with the addition of Reggie Herring as the new defensive coordinator.

"It's all about leadership. Having that head man in charge to call all the plays," Maddox said. "He's there to make that final decision, and he's real tough on us and he keeps us in line. Chuck did that, but he was the head coach and he had to be on both sides of the ball. With a defensive coordinator we get more one-on-one time."

The defense will have plenty of opportunities to prove its toughness. The Pack defense will play one of the hardest schedules in the country against a variety of offensive schemes.

Ohio State will be geared toward the ground game, Virginia Tech will run a West Coast style offense while Florida State and Miami will bring a potent balanced offense.

"That's what you want as a college football player. You want to play those tough teams that are on TV every week," Maddox said. "To be the best, you've got to beat the best, and that's what we're trying to do."

BEING THE BEST

It's not as difficult to make the transition to college football if the area high schools are loaded with some of the best athletes in the nation.

Maddox and Thomas were fortunate to play in such a region. Both were defensive stars at Killian High School, located in Miami, a hotbed of recruiting for some of the best football programs in the nation.

And both were prime targets for Amato to add during his first recruiting class in 2000.

Maddox and Thomas didn't come to State as a package deal though.

"It was just a coincidence," Maddox said.

Even though they came on their own accord, both players signing the opening of the flood gates of players coming from Florida to play at State — especially from Killian.

Freshman safety Miguel Scott and sophomore linebacker Stephen Tulloch are the latest defensive stars from Killian to put on a Pack uniform.

"Every high school football team in Dade County [Miami] has at least five or six talented kids," Scott said. "So the speed of the game back at home is very fast. The speed is faster up here, but you can adapt to it better."

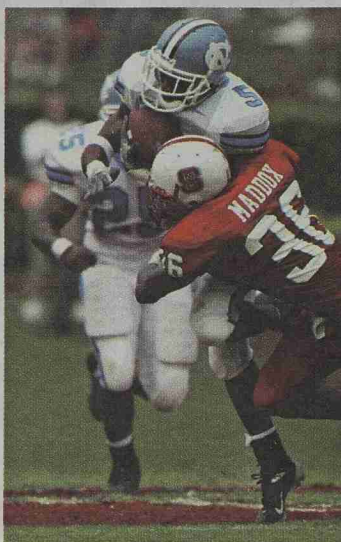
Thomas contends that becoming a great prep football player in the Miami region and making the transition to the college level has to do with more than just speed.

"At Killian they taught us a lot of discipline," Thomas said. "We were always doing a lot of hard work. A lot of players come out of high school and they're not used to the hard work that we do up here, but when I came here I was used to it. It was an easy transition my first year."

The influx of Killian defenders to the Pack has almost made State the unofficial Killian North. With all four players likely to see significant playing time this season, the Killian defense that started with Maddox and Thomas is slowly becoming a new generation.

THE ROVER

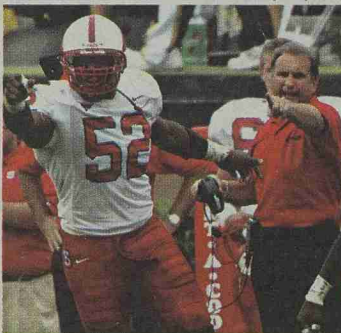
What exactly is the roverback position? Is playing that position more like a linebacker or safety? Actually, it's a little bit of both.



SLAMMED: Senior roverback Andre Maddox takes down a UNC ball-carrier. Pound-per-pound, Maddox is the strongest player at State.

LET'S GO: Senior linebacker Pat Thomas and Coach Chuck Amato yell out defensive assignments to players at last year's Wake Forest game.

Photos by Tim Lytvinnikov



And if a picture could define a roverback then Andre Maddox's picture would be in the dictionary. He plays the position to the cue.

The roverback is one of the most flexible positions on the field. Depending on the defensive scheme, the rover may line up in the box with the linebackers, or drop back in the secondary and play as a safety.

"It's actually fun," Maddox said. "This position gives me a chance to show people I'm versatile. I can play the pass if I have to. I can cover a man one-on-one. I get a lot of practice on that with all the great receivers here like Sterling Hicks, Richard Washington and Brian Clark."

What does it take to play the roverback position?

It takes discipline, skill and most importantly, confidence according to Amato.

"The experience that he's [Maddox] gotten in the last two or three years has made everything so much easier for him," Amato said. "He feels so much more relaxed back there. He makes all the checks. He's so comfortable

with what he's doing and what we're doing, and that's what helps his confidence — not that he ever lacked it."

It will be hard for Maddox to improve upon his season-ending stats from last year, but he came back to the Pack for his senior season, and he thinks his game will be that much better.

"I think the aspect of my game that has really improved is my ability to cover the pass," Maddox said. This defense is going to put us in a better position to get a lot more interceptions than we had last year. Last year we played a lot of man coverage and this year we'll be playing some more zone."

Even though Maddox is known as a rather quiet player, he leads the secondary with his play on the field.

"He brings physical demeanor out there on the field that we have to have at safety," Herring said. "He's an uplifter, he's an up-tempo guy and if he's not out there we would really miss him."

Maddox's job this season may be more difficult than any other defensive player on the field — leading a secondary that couldn't put together a complete game last season. Still, the secondary is loaded with talent, according to Maddox.

"We're all seniors, and we're all experienced," Maddox said. "Every one of us has had playing time and we've all been together so we have that chemistry. It is a great advantage for us."

SOMETHING TO PROVE

Pat Thomas makes his presence on the field known by his propensity to break into the offensive backfield. Opposing quarterbacks are very aware of the 6-2, 230-pound linebacker who led State with eight sacks last season.

Just ask former Ohio State quarterback Craig Krenzel. Thomas pressured him all game in the instant classic last September, tallying 10 tackles, one sack and breaking up the two-point conversion attempt in the third overtime. Thomas doesn't mind talking about it on the field either — but how much is debatable.

"I talk a lot, but he's come along in these four years," senior linebacker Freddie Aughtry-Lindsay said. "I think he's probably up on my level right now as far as in practices and games, so both of us do a lot of talking."

Thomas adamantly denies that he runs his mouth as much as Aughtry-Lindsay, one of the most notorious trash-talkers on the State defense, but likes to think of himself more as a senior leader for the defense.

"I'm more in between. I can be quiet when I need to be," Thomas said. "When I talk, I like to make sure what I say is going to be something important. I just don't like to talk just to say something. If I'm going to talk, it's going to be something said like 'Pat talked, we better listen.'"

Either way, Thomas' performance last year was something to talk about. But it could be a different kind of statistical season for the player who has made a living terrorizing quarterbacks.

"We have some things where are linebackers are used in stunting and blitzing — he'll have his opportunities," Herring said. "There might be fewer totals for Pat, but he'll get opportunities."

Thomas' performance last season has started to turn heads outside of the ACC. Earlier this fall he was named to the Bronco Nagurski watch list, the award for the top linebacker in the nation.

"It's flattering, but stuff like that doesn't mean anything unless you prove yourself," Thomas said. "I don't let it get my head big, and I'm still focused and have to prove something this year."

That something to prove is that the Pack defense is ready to regain the swagger it had two seasons ago.

Maddox and Thomas will do their best to accomplish the feat by making plays on the field. It's up to the rest of the defense to follow their lead.

...and the votes are in

HEISMAN TROPHY

Front-runner: USC QB Mat Leinart. A national title a year ago, Leinart was maybe the country's most overlooked player. Now he'll have to play an entire year with an X on his back and could become the school's second Trophy winner in three years. He should flourish again under the eye of QB guru Norm Chow (he developed record-breakers Ty Detmer, Philip Rivers, Carson Palmer) and benefit from weak schedule.

On the ballot: Florida QB Chris Leak, Georgia QB David Greene, Texas RB Cedric Benson, Oklahoma QB Jason White, **FSU QB Chris Rix, USC TB Reggie Bush**

NATIONAL CHAMP

Front-runner: Southern California won it all last year – well, half of it. This year, the Trojans should win it outright with Leinart and an experienced defense returning. Watch for RB Reggie Bush to give the Trojans an added, next-level dimension. The Men of Troy could falter if no receivers can replace Mike Williams and Kerry Colbert and defense fails to find new leaders. Don't count on it, though.

On the ballot: Oklahoma, LSU, Miami, Florida State, Georgia, Michigan, Kansas State

ACC CHAMP

Front-runner: Miami. Yeah, Florida State was picked to win the league by the media, but when is the last time the Seminoles beat the Hurricanes? Try 1999. No one reloads better than the Canes, who return their starting quarterback and the best cover man in the nation, CB Antrel Rolle. If you need a darkhorse, try Maryland, a team with 10 wins in each of the last three years and maybe the best coach in the league.

On the ballot: Florida State, **Maryland**, Virginia, Clemson, N.C. State

ACC PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Front-runner: FSU QB Chris Rix is a safe bet in a league loaded with talent – but probably no real Heisman contender. Then again, nothing has ever been safe with Rix, a guy who, among other unbelievable acts, once handed out business cards reading "Florida State quarterback," overslept for an exam causing him to be suspended for a BCS bowl and was intercepted by NCSU DL Alan Halloway. Still, he has the arm, the legs and the target – sensational WR Craphonso Thorpe.

On the ballot: **FSU WR Craphonso Thorpe**, Miami QB Brock Berlin, Miami RB Frank Gore, Maryland RB Josh Allen, NCSU WR Tramain Hall, **Clemson QB Charlie Whitehurst**, Georgia Tech QB Reggie Ball



SPEED: Wide receiver Craphonso Thorpe is the ACC's fastest man.
photo by Tim Lytvinenko



BUSH LEAGUE: USC tailback Reggie Bush leads the defending co-national champs into this year's campaign.
photo by Eric Connolly/The (Virginia Tech) Daily Collegian

CHRIS THE QB: Senior Chris Rix will try and guide Florida State into the ACC's elite during the first year of expansion.

photo by Tim Lytvinenko

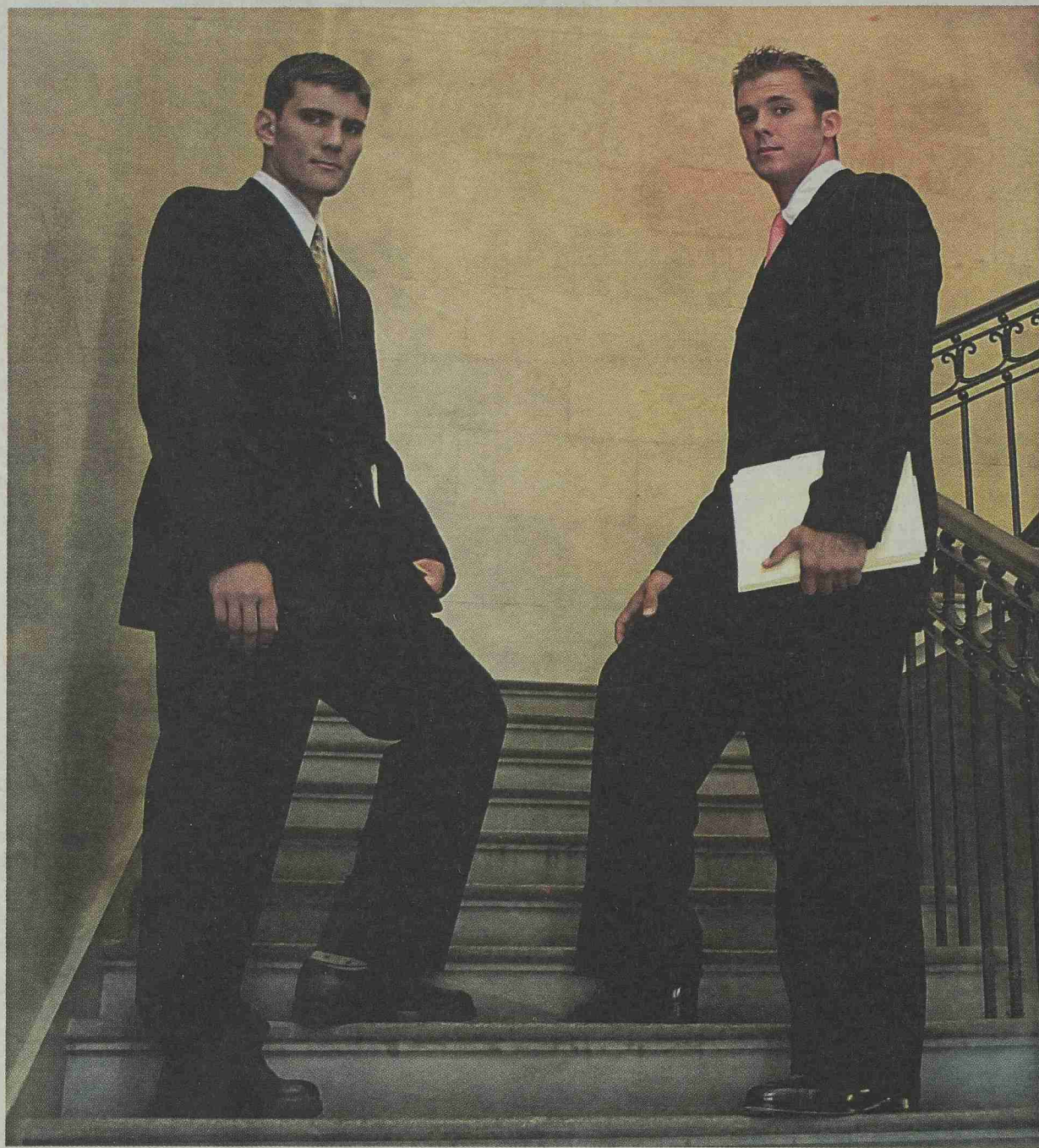


TERRAPIN'S TOWN: Maryland runner Josh Allen is, like his team, a good darkhorse pick to win league awards.
photo by Tim Lytvinenko



HOLD THAT TIGER: Quarterback Charlie Whitehurst will try and pass Clemson to the ACC championship.
photo by Tim Lytvinenko







Filling His shoes

BY AUSTIN JOHNSON

He's gone. He's not coming back. Despite Coach Chuck Amato's wishes, there is no fifth year for Him.

He may never forget playing at State, but His college days are over. He can't return.

It's time to move on.

Someone has to fill His shoes - those gun-slinging, fist-pumping, Southern-draw-spitting, anything-to-win spirited shoes. Not an enviable task, but someone has to play quarterback.

Two would-be starters were to fight for the right to fill those shoes: Jay Davis and Marcus Stone.

The understudy who knows the offense up and down against a top-rated high school recruit with unquestioned physical talent. The program veteran against the relative newcomer. The Floridian versus the Pennsylvanian. Davis against Stone.

Both spent the summer in Raleigh, taking classes and spending countless hours in the film room. They even watched film together when they had the opportunity. They also tried to keep their minds off the inevitable expectations.

"I try not to think about all the fans and all the publicity about filling His shoes," Stone said.

The two opposing teammates have become labeled by their strengths. Davis knows the offense, Stone is the athlete.

For now, knowledge has the advantage. Davis was named the starter late during fall camp - and he was quick to point to his offensive know-how as the reason.

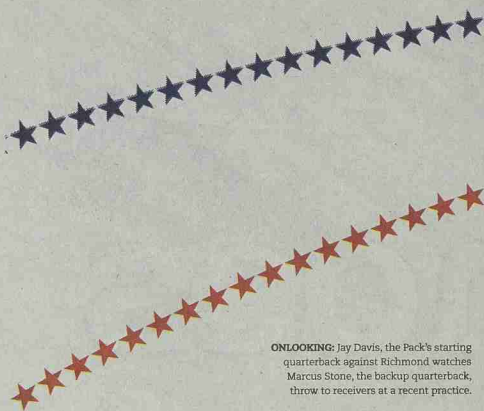
"I studied the playbook well and learned every little corner of this offense, and that's why I think I was named the guy," Davis said.

Davis has shown confidence during his fall workouts, said offensive coordinator Nole Mazzone. Mazzone also stated Davis would make fewer mistakes under pressure.

Wide receiver Brian Clark put it a different way.

"Jay is like that old sea dog," Clark said. "He's seen Him doing it over and over, so he's a little more comfortable."

STATELY: Jay Davis and Marcus Stone spent the summer battling for the starting quarterback job. Photo by Ray Black III



ONLOOKING: Jay Davis, the Pack's starting quarterback against Richmond watches Marcus Stone, the backup quarterback, throw to receivers at a recent practice.

PASS: Jay Davis preps for his first game as a starter in his four years with the Wolfpack. Photos by Tim Lituinenko

THAT OLD SEA DOG

Three years. Three long years under quite possibly the greatest quarterback the ACC has ever seen. Three years of picking his brain, learning the offense, seeing how a quarterback leads a football team. Three years of not playing.

Oh sure, Davis played on a few occasions. Like when he came into that game against Western Carolina last year, or when he entered the Tangerine Bowl in the waning moments last December. But both those times, the game was decided before Davis ever stepped onto the field.

"I wouldn't call it frustrating or anything, you never want a guy to get hurt," Davis said. "You wanna play...but, you know."

When Davis first decided to come to State, all that stood between him and a starting job was Him. It wasn't a perfect-year Him, not yet, and there weren't any other quarterbacks. Jay's father, John, explains that going to State was simply a matter of logic.

"This is how we looked at it going in: State didn't have any other quarterbacks," John Davis said. "We looked at it like 'He's there, then you'll probably be His backup.' And no one goes three years without getting dinked up in college football."

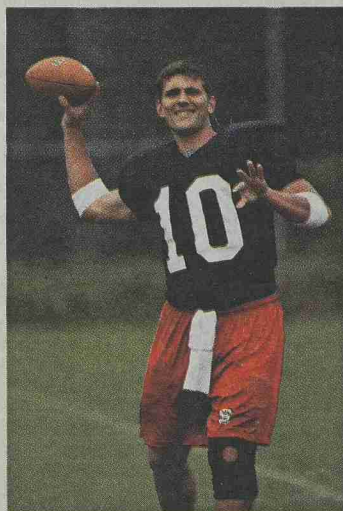
Except Him. He never missed a start in 51 games.

Davis came to school the summer before he enrolled to give him time to learn the offense. To earn some extra cash on the side, he took a job as a waiter at Amedeo's. Amedeo "Dick" DeAngelis, a former State football player from 1954-58, made Davis promise him one thing during that summer.

"I told Jay that one day you're gonna make it and I said just do me a favor," DeAngelis said. "What I want you to do one day when you go up to Madison Square Garden when they have the draft or wherever they have it, if you get picked by a team don't put that hat on—put an Amedeo's hat on."

While DeAngelis never expected Davis to live up to the agreement—"that would be...not wise"—he did expect him to make something of himself as an Wolfpack quarterback. And after three years—finally!—Davis has his chance. A chance to fulfill what is for him, literally a lifelong dream.

"This is my dream since I was a little kid to play for a



Division I team," Davis said.

Davis, after all, grew up with football—and it's his father's fault.

"He might have brainwashed me a little bit," Davis said. "It started back when I was 3 or 4."

John Davis has been coaching high school football off and on since 1979. Growing up with high school football, Jay spent time around the team in all sorts of capacities. By fifth grade, Jay claims, he could explain a Cover 2 defense.

"He's been around, that's for sure. He's been the water boy, the ball boy, sat in on our meetings," John Davis said. "He's been around football for a long time."

Despite his overwhelming football knowledge as a child, quarterback wasn't his first position choice. Davis, a soft-spoken guy who now describes himself as

"not flashy," wanted to be a wide receiver.

"I can't say this now because I switched position to quarterback, but I always thought receivers looked the best on the field with wristbands and gloves and stuff like that," Davis said. "It was about looking pretty, really."

It wasn't long, though, before his lack of speed and gift of football know-how led him to quarterbacking. When it was time for Jay the quarterback to go to high school, he wanted nothing more than to play for the man who had been teaching him all his life—father John, who was coaching at Central Catholic High School.

Things couldn't have gone better until the first game of Davis' junior season. John called out the option to his son for the first time in a live game, and the junior quarterback took the ball downfield for over 40 yards. But he was caught from behind by a defensive tackle that took Davis down and fell on his shoulder—snapping his left clavicle.

"It was the longest carry of his life," John Davis said.

After just five weeks, Davis said he could play. They consulted with the doctor who informed them it "wouldn't be the smartest thing."

John then called up the University of Florida, where their star quarterback and future Bachelor Jesse Palmer had suffered a similar injury, to see how long Palmer had been sidelined. Their answer—five weeks.

The return of Davis lit a fire under his teammates, as the team rallied to win out the rest of the regular season and make the playoffs. They would eventually fall in the later rounds, Davis showed his father and his teammates a previously unseen toughness that fall.

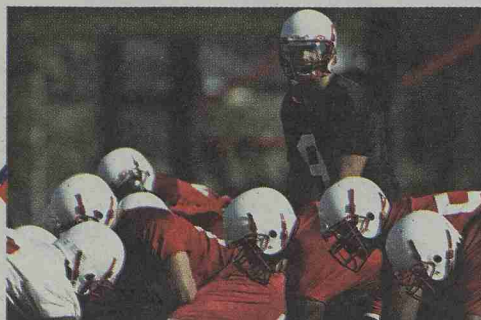
"He's got a fire in his gut," John Davis said.

THE ATHLETE

Marcus Stone was ready for media day. New uniform on, hair styled back, socks rolled up high when everyone else only pulled them up half way. Styled and prepared to field questions from the television media in attendance, he looked the part of starting quarterback.

But just two days later, he learned that Davis would be the starter. He would be the backup, watching from the sidelines as Davis takes the first snap against Richmond tomorrow.

PLAY-CALLING: Redshirt freshman Marcus Stone calls out a play on the line at practice.
Photos by Tim Lytvinenko



"[There's] a little frustration, but I'm not too upset. I said early that it was Coach Amato's decision and we're gonna go by it," Stone said. "I'm just gonna keep working, and if I do get that chance, I'll be ready."

For Stone, a top-rated quarterback coming out of high school, talent has never been an issue. An all-around athlete, he averaged 20 points a game as a basketball player when he wasn't out on the gridiron.

"You'd have to be a blind man not to see the talent Marcus has," John Davis admits.

Stone honed his skills on the street in front of his home in Pennsylvania. His older brother, David, tried to get him hooked on football from the age of 6 on.

Five years older than Marcus, David was the driving force behind Stone's love of football.

As kids they wouldn't just play tag football, they had a game to work on their throwing accuracy. The game had no formal name, but the rules were simple: one person put his hands up like a receiver trying to haul in an over-the-shoulder catch while the other person stood about 20 yards away and tried to throw the football so precisely it hit the other person on the hands. The first one to ten wins.

"It was just a little thing we did to work on throwing accuracy," Stone said.

When Stone began attending Bishop McDevitt High School, he knew that he wanted to play football. What he didn't know, despite his hours throwing spirals to his brother, was just where on the field he wanted to play. As a kid, he had always enjoyed playing running back — pretending he was Barry Sanders as he took the ball downfield.

"I liked having the ball," Stone said. "It was always fun to just run down the sideline."

By high school, he was also considering playing tight end. Being a quarterback didn't cross his mind until David told him to give it a try. David, the starting quarterback for Bishop McDevitt the year before Marcus arrived, didn't have to do much convincing.

"He said just try quarterback," Marcus Stone said. "So I tried it."

It didn't take long for Stone to adjust to his new position. He was the starting quarterback as a freshman, as Bishop McDevitt Coach Jeff Weachter was heavy on talent — but short on quarterbacks. Weachter worked with Stone to retool his throwing motion — he initially brought the ball down too low — and to learn defense schemes.

"We threw him to the wolves a little bit," Weachter said. "It wasn't easy, but he did a good job for us."

A good enough job to turn Stone from running back hopeful to four-year starting quarterback. His junior year, Weachter tried to incorporate the option into his offensive scheme to make better use of Stone's running ability.

"The problem is Marcus always had a feeling that

the option meant the quarterback running the football," Weachter said.

Just like that little boy streaking down the sideline, Stone just wanted the ball in his hands. But now Stone is forced to take over the role that Davis had become so familiar with — the role of backup. No ball in his hands, not even feet on the field.

"As the days go by things start slowing down and I understand it more and I can go out there and play as myself," Stone said.

NOT OVER YET

Practice is over and the majority of the team begins its hike through the dusty parking lot from the practice field back to the Murphy Center. But Marcus Stone remains, as he has after every practice this fall, throwing bullets to Clark.

Stone keeps a look of determination on his face as he continues to punish his already-exhausted shoulder. Inevitably though, his face will morph into a laugh as the comical Clark strikes a pose or tries to convince Stone he actually caught the ball that popped off his hands when Stone looked down.

Clark, a junior, knows what its like to sit behind great players. This will be the first year Clark operates without All-ACC wide out Jericho Cotchery as State's primary receiver.

"Stone is a little more antsy in the huddle," Clark said. "It's a good antsy though, he wants to get the plays out there he wants to run the plays."

The competition has been tough on both players, with ever misread or overthrow magnified in the battle. Simple fall practices became game-like, each quarterback knowing that every day they had to look better than their teammate.

"With me and Marcus going at it like this it kind of brings a game feel to it as far as competition," Davis said.

Even with the announcement Davis would start, the two haven't slowed down. Both still walk off the field drenched with sweat, having gone all out to show coaches their gradual improvement.

The one thing taking pressure off both quarterbacks is the talent of the receivers and running backs surrounding them. With the additions of running back Darrell Blackman and Bobby Washington to compliment T.A. McLendon, State has its first real depth at the position.

"It takes a lot of pressure off when you can just throw a little hot swing out in the flat and let T.A. or Bobby or Darrell take it 20 yards downfield," Stone said. "You've got receivers that can do that, too."

Davis starting

Coach Chuck Amato was finished with interviews after practice. But as he hopped in his go-cart to drive back to the Murphy Center, Amato had one more tidbit of news for the reporters gathered around.

"Jay Davis has won the starting quarterback spot on our team," Amato said.

Just like that, the controversy was over. Davis had been battling for the starting job this fall with red-shirt freshman Marcus Stone. Amato stated after the first scrimmage he was making a push at deciding the position to avoid a media rush on his starter right before game day.

"I really said to myself that I needed to learn every corner of this offense and that's what I tried to do," Davis said. "Now this part's over, it's really just time to start focusing on the season and preparing for Richmond right now and just getting better."

Davis has never started a collegiate game, but has made appearances late in several blow-out games over the last two years. The red-shirt junior played much of the second half against Western Carolina last season. He also played in the final series of the Tangerine Bowl last December — completing a single pass for six yards.

For his career, Davis is 17-28 for 177 yards and one touchdown. Offensive coordinator Leo Mazzone said Davis has really come on strong during fall practice.

"Jay's really showed us a lot more confidence than he did in the spring," Mazzone said. "He's handling the huddle better. He's making good decisions for us. I said the other day after the scrimmage what he's doing is keeping us out of bad plays."

For the last two weeks, Davis has been getting his snaps in against the starting offense. He's yet to pick out a favorite target though.

"All of them," Davis said. "I better not have one or Stone will be the starter."

Davis will start his first game ever on Saturday against the Richmond Spiders.

Kickoff is scheduled for 6 p.m.

— Austin Johnson

The pressure is still on, though, thick and heavy. Davis may have all the weapons in the world, but he's still replacing Him. He certainly hasn't been given a season pass as starting quarterback for the season.

"It's over, until Richmond," Davis said.

Davis knows the pressure. He knows that Stone is waiting in the wings should he falter.

But most of all, Davis still remembers Him. Stone still remembers Him. Win or lose, there is no way for either quarterback to escape the comparisons to Him.

No matter what, the memory of Him remains.

1. RICHMOND

Run-off: Sept. 4. Raleigh

Platform: Richmond's new head coach Dave Clawson will face a tough challenge in his first game with the Spiders. While no one will expect Clawson to upset N.C. State, they will expect him to improve on Richmond's 2-9 record last season.

Key Party Members: QB Stacy Tutt (535 yards passing, 159 yards rushing, two touchdowns); DB Clement Johnson (477 return yards, 1 TD, 50 tackles, three interceptions)

Campaign Message: "This year is more about creating a winning culture, a winning attitude, establishing our system, establishing a work ethic, establishing a mode of operation. And in doing that, if we have two wideouts who step up, if Stacy picks things up quickly, if we find two linebackers, maybe we will have a good year this year." - Coach Clawson told the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Electoral Votes: 1

2. OHIO STATE

Run-off: Sept. 18. Raleigh

Platform: After a heartbreaking triple overtime loss at Ohio State last year, NCSU looks to return the favor at home. Ohio State will come to Raleigh with strong line play and a tough defense that may trouble a quarterback starting in just his second game.

Key Party Members: LB A.J. Hawk (106 tackles, four sacks, two interceptions); RB Lydell Ross (826 yards rushing, 10 TDs)

Campaign Message: "We have a great team with a huge amount of talent. Obviously our goal this season is to win the national championship and I know we have the team to accomplish our goal. It's going to be fun to watch everything come together." - junior center Nick Mangold

Electoral Votes: 9

3. VIRGINIA TECH

Run-off: Sept. 25. Blacksburg, Va.

Platform: Tech lost quarterback Marcus Vick for the entire 2004 season when he was suspended over the summer, but may not miss him with the more experienced Brian Randall at the helm. The Wolfpack face a stiff challenge when it goes into Lane Stadium, one of the toughest places to play in all of college football.

Key Party Members: QB Brian Randall (1,996 yards passing, 512 yards rushing, 20 total TDs); CB Eric Green (58 tackles, three interceptions)

Campaign Message: "We may not have 100,000 fans [at Lane Stadium], but when that place gets to rocking I don't know many places that have an atmosphere like that." - quarterback Bryan Randall

Electoral Votes: 6

4. WAKE FOREST

Run-off: Oct. 2. Raleigh

Platform: Coach Jim Grobe has put in place a complex offense that had N.C. State reeling in its second game last season. The Pack will have to adjust quicker to the multiple formations and sets Wake throws at them this year if it wants to avoid another embarrassing loss.

Key Party Members: RB Chris Barclay (1,248 yards rushing, 12 TDs); FS Warren Braxton (66 tackles, three sacks, two interceptions)

Campaign Message: "I haven't actually played at N.C. State - last time we played there I was hurt. This is a new experience for me and I'm looking forward to it. I went and watched them last year against Maryland and watched that atmosphere - it just made it that much better for me."

- wide receiver Jason Anderson

Electoral Votes: 3

5. NORTH CAROLINA

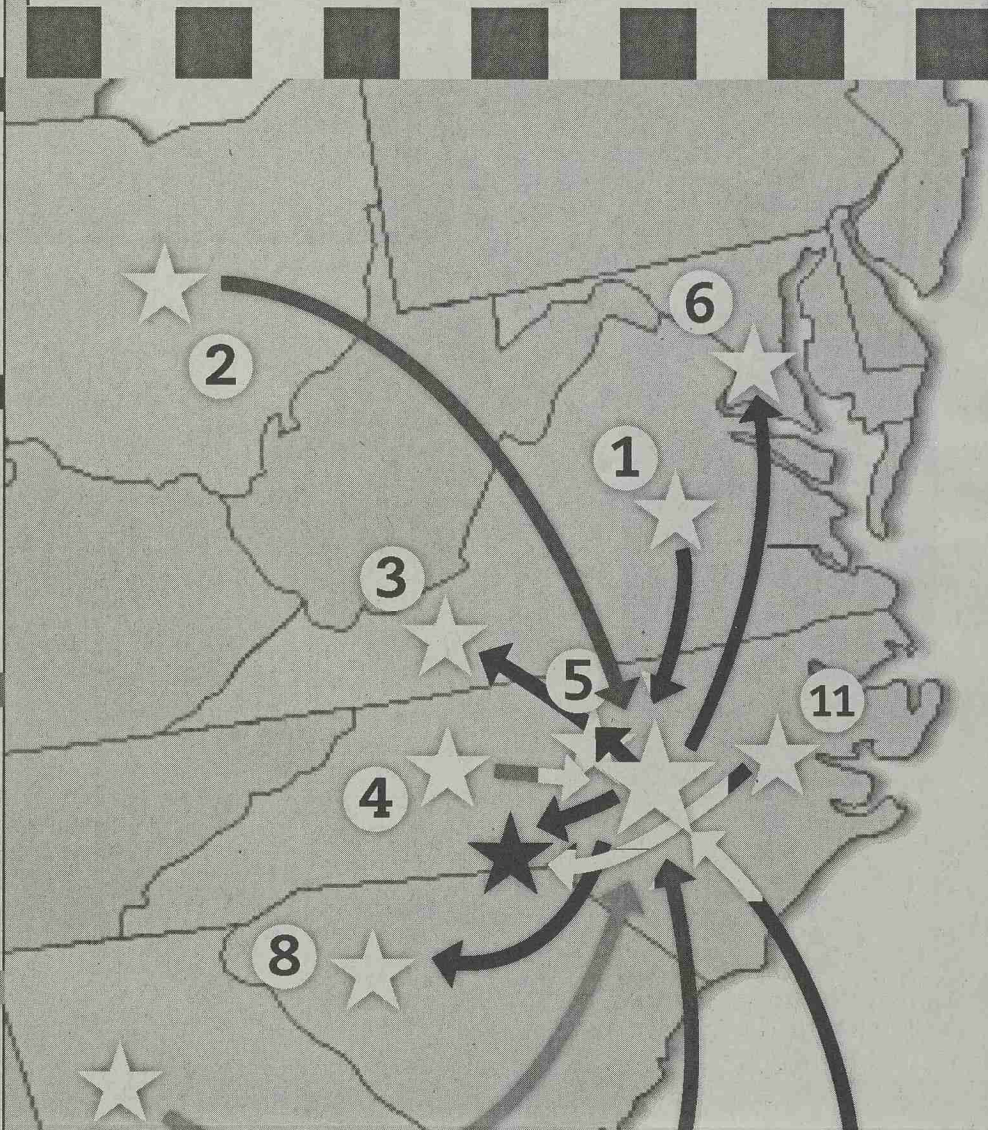
Run-off: Oct. 9. Chapel Hill

Platform: John Bunting's career at Carolina hangs in the balance this season, as another last place finish in the ACC probably means a new coach. Winning the rivalry game against State is of even more importance to Bunting as he tries to keep his job.

Key Party Members: QB Darian Durant (2551 yards passing, 396 yards

PRIMARY SEASON

Campaigning Through a New Field



Key Party Members: QB Darian Durant (2551 yards passing, 396 yards rushing, 24 total TDs); LB Mahlon Carey (96 tackles, two interceptions)

Campaign Message: "If we win games, then all those off-the-field issues will be solved. We can match up with just about anybody talent-wise out there. What we have to do is just get in the right situation." - quarterback Darian Durant

Electoral Votes: 5

6. MARYLAND

Run-off: Oct. 16, College Park, Md.

Platform: Perhaps the most underrated coach in college football, Ralph Freiden has guided his team to three straight 10-win seasons. He's also had Amato's number, winning every battle against him as a head coach.

Key Party Members: RB Josh Allen (958 yards rushing, eight TDs); LB D'Qwell Jackson (132 tackles, 2.5 sacks)

Campaign Message: "I think we still have a chance to be at the top of the conference even though we have a young team and a young quarterback. We lost a lot of guys, but that happens to every team almost every year." - offensive lineman C.J. Brooks

Electoral Votes: 8

7. MIAMI

Run-off: Oct. 23, Raleigh

Platform: Miami is the deepest, most talent-laden team in college football year in and year out. The Hurricanes have played for a national championship in two of the last three years, and the only solace for State is they are coming to Raleigh this year.

Key Party Members: QB Brock Berlin (2419 passing yards, 12 TDs); WR Ryan Moore (637 yards receiving, three TDs)

Campaign Message: "To see all the talent that is here and all the talent that keeps coming, we just keep reloading. It's fun to watch." - quarterback Brock Berlin

Electoral Votes: 11

8. CLEMSON

Run-off: Oct. 30, Clemson, S.C.

Platform: On the verge of getting fired, Coach Tommy Bowden pulled off an upset of Florida State and followed it with a red-hot run at the end of the season to keep his job and get a new contract. There is a lot of optimism they can keep the run going into this year, as the team was picked to finish fourth in the preseason media poll.

Key Party Members: QB Charlie Whitehurst (3,561 passing yards, 21 TDs); LB Leroy Hill (145 tackles, eight sacks)

Campaign Message: "Last year's success has created motivation heading into this year. With the preseason rankings, we feel there is some respect for Clemson. We want to use the finish from last year and start with that same focus from the first game." - defensive end Maurice Fountain

Electoral Votes: 7

9. GEORGIA TECH

Run-off: Nov. 6, Raleigh

Platform: The Yellow Jackets have won the last three games over the Pack, including ruining its 9-0 start two years ago in Carter-Finley Stadium. Led by NCSU nemesis defensive coordinator John Tenuta and dual-threat quarterback Reggie Ball, Tech promises to pose a challenge.

Key Party Members: QB Reggie Ball (ACC Rookie of the Year; 2,338 yards passing; 425 yards rushing; 15 total TDs); RB P.J. Daniels (1,447 yards rushing, 10 TDs)

Campaign Message: "Reggie is a great athlete, but there is nothing like experience on the field. Last year he got all that experience, so this year we expect great things from him. He already had the maturity and he knew the offense - but now he's learning how to read defenses better and how to anticipate better." - wide receiver Nate Curry on Reggie Ball

Electoral Votes: 4

10. FLORIDA STATE

Run-off: Nov. 11, Raleigh

Platform: No team in the ACC (discounting new arrival Miami) has given Florida State as much trouble as the Wolfpack. No one is happier to see Philip Rivers gone than Coach Bobby Bowden, who watched Rivers go 2-2 against a team that has dominated the league for the last decade.

Key Party Members: QB Chris Rix (3,107 yards passing, 23 TDs); WR Craphonso Thorpe (994 yards receiving, 11 TDs)

Campaign Message: "I feel like a lot of times when our quarterback makes mistakes, I don't ever get mad at him because he's just trying to make a play, trying to make something out of nothing. Sometimes instead of throwing the ball away, he'll throw it up and try to give us a chance at it." - senior wide receiver Craphonso Thorpe on Chris Rix

Electoral Votes: 10

11. EAST CAROLINA

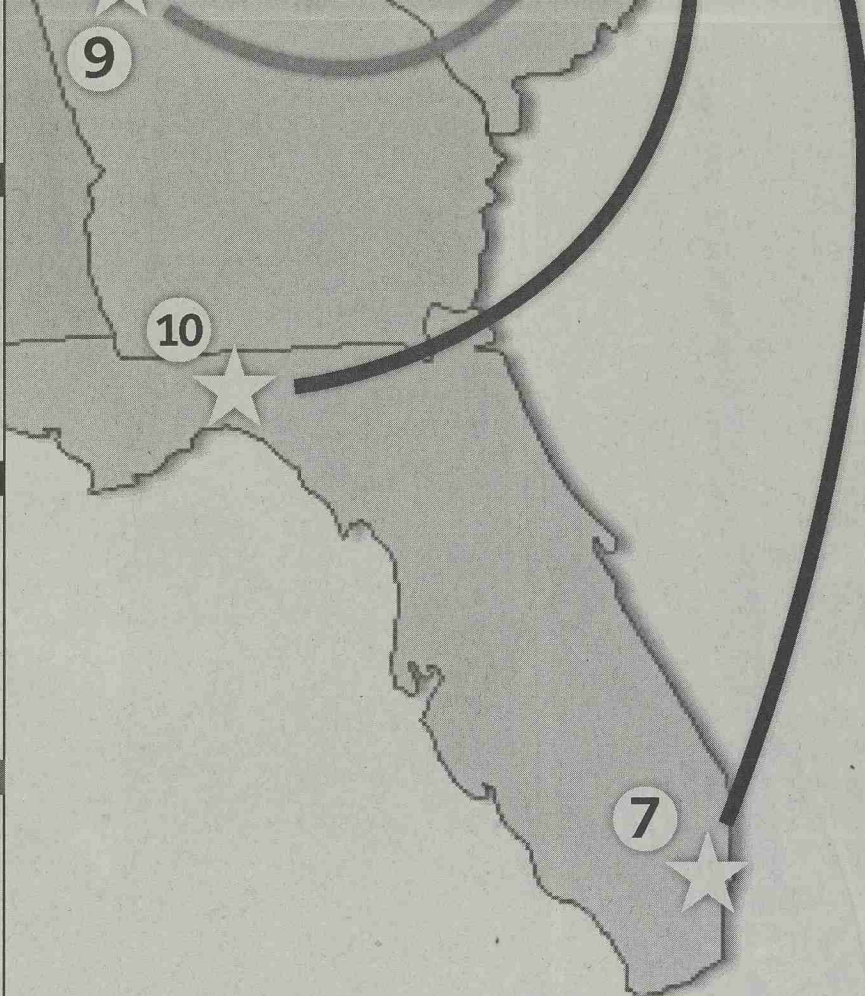
Run-off: Nov. 27, Charlotte, Bank of America Stadium

Platform: ECU is trying to bounce back from an abysmal 1-11 season last year. The team has to stretch opposing defenses better - last year's offense only threw six passing TDs the entire season. The Pirates will meet State for the last game of the season at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte.

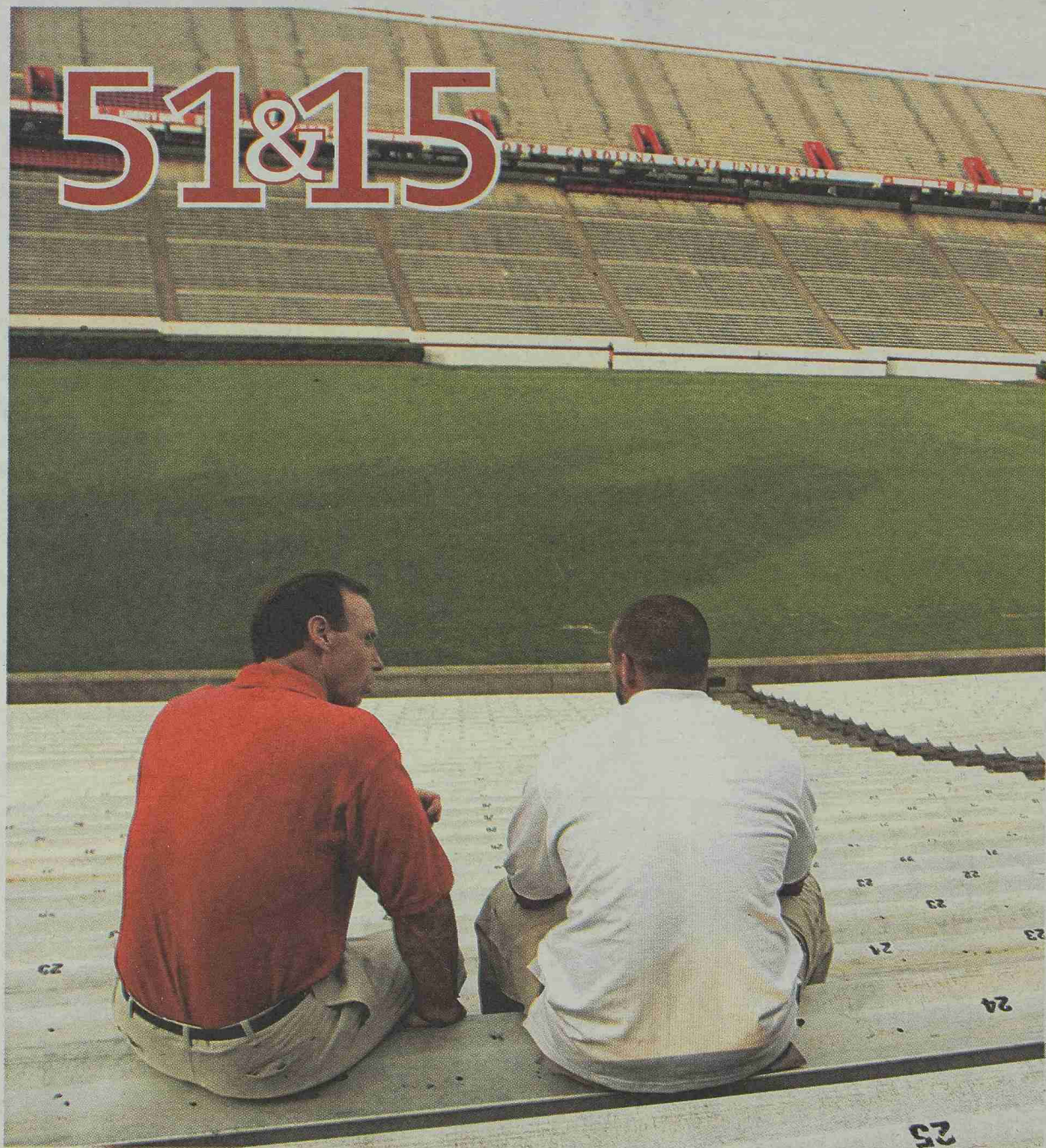
Key Party Members: RB Marvin Townes (1,128 yards rushing, eight TDs); LB Chris Moore (148 tackles)

Campaign Message: "We will be a fourth quarter focused team. We are going to be tougher, especially in the fourth quarter. That goes back to when we started in January, the investment these guys made with all the hard work in the spring and this summer." - coach John Thompson

Electoral Votes: 2



51&15



STORY BY MATT MIDDLETON
PHOTOS BY TIM LYTVINENKO

It would be grossly inaccurate and unfair to tell a father-son story without a "When I was your age..." adage.

Let's go ahead and get it out of the way, not by default, but because former Wolfpack All-American center Jim Ritcher has a good one. He commands attention as he moves to address a group. He has no microphone. No podium. No demonstrative hand motions are necessary. The audience is small - just a few onlookers, including his son John, a N.C. State junior tight end.

The setting - a 14,000-square-foot weight room in the red-and-white Taj Mahal of college football facilities, the Wendell Murphy Center - provides all the needed irony.

"Back in my playing days," the 46-year-old Ritcher began, his coy attributes accentuating, "we barely even lifted weights - it wasn't really involved."

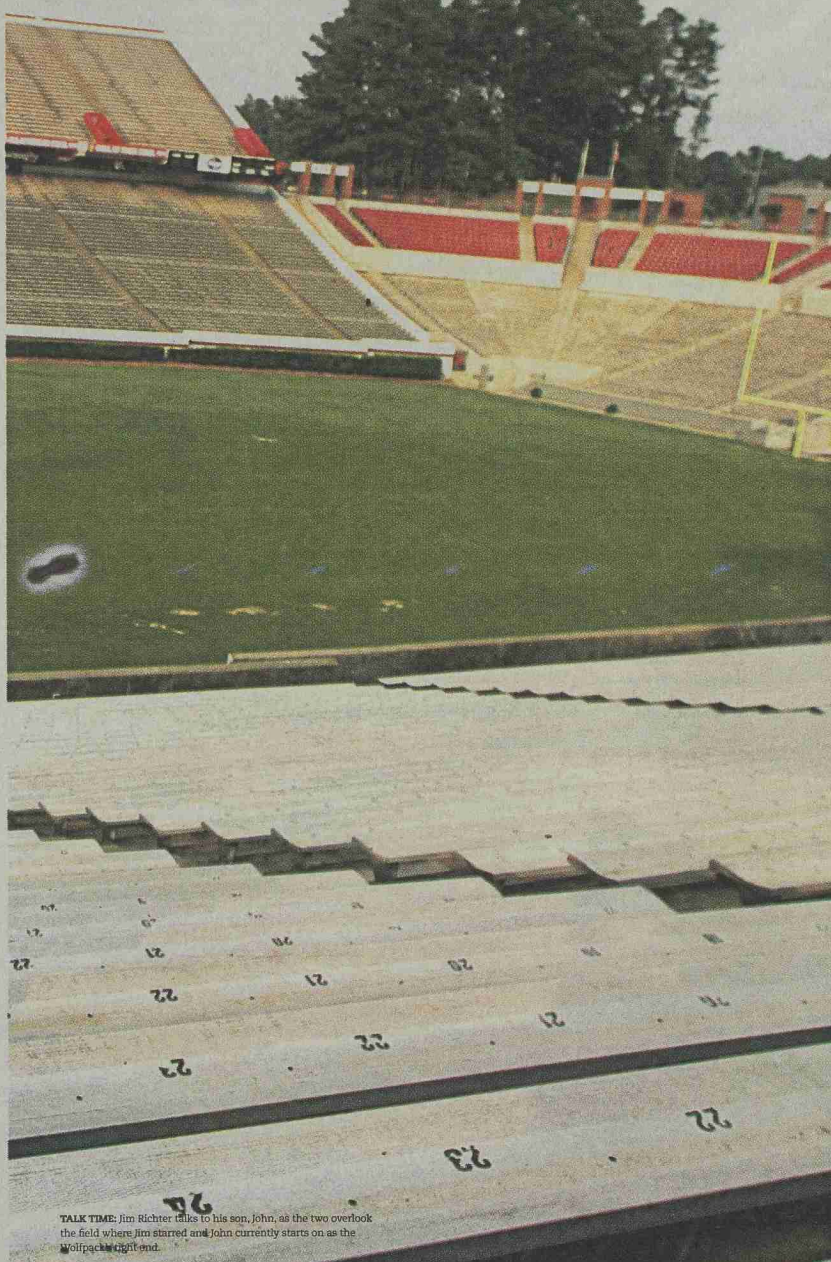
Knowing that fact, shift your eyes from one generation to the other. Look how they contrast. The clean-shaven elder in a red polo shirt, tightly tucked into pleated khaki pants. Wrinkles are so absent, one might conclude that his socks are ironed. The younger in a white, untucked collared shirt, a closely shaven beard, loose cargo khaki pants.

Look how they're the same person. The blue eyes, the strong jaw, the same golden-boy smile, the brown hair, the 250-pound muscular build.

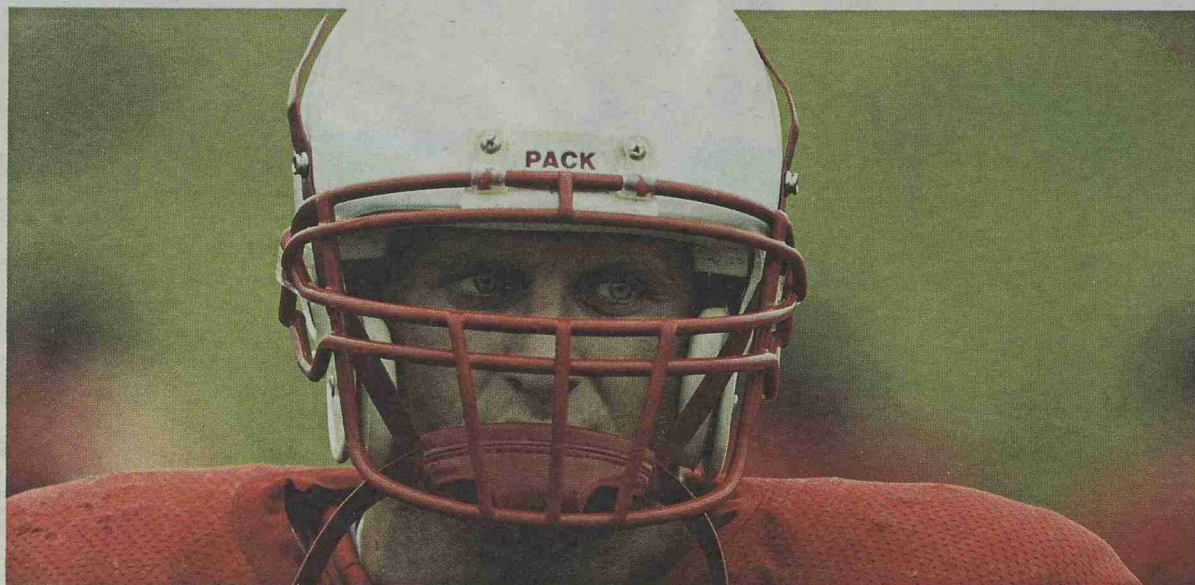
John Ritcher calls his dad his best friend, echoing his tales of past Super Bowls, ACC titles, Herculean displays of strength, college-boy antics with great detail and emotion.

But the most pertinent story of all involves 25, as in 25 years since Ritcher, playing center, literally paved the way for State's last ACC football title. In that quarter-of-a-century span, every school in the league has won or shared a league crown, with the exception of Wake Forest - and N.C. State. Ritcher was in the last of two consecutive consensus All-American seasons that year; he also won the Outland Trophy as the nation's best interior lineman in 1979.

The coming and going of record-breaking passer Philip Rivers has sparked the debate of exactly who is the best player in Wolfpack football history.



TALK TIME: Jim Ritcher talks to his son, John, as the two overlook the field where Jim starred and John currently starts on as the Wolfpack tight end.



LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON: John Ritcher looks on in practice with his sharp blue eyes, reminiscent of his dad's. However, "Most people say I look like my mom," Ritcher says.

To some, it's a black and white issue. "I think Ritcher's the guy," says David Horning, Ritcher's college roommate and current NCSU senior associate athletics director. "Rivers was the most notable, he superseded Gabriel...Rivers was good, but did Rivers make consensus first-team All-American teams? Jim won the Heisman Trophy of linemen, which to me is probably the most coveted award anyone has won here."

To others, it's still a gray area. "They all have different criteria, but certainly he was one of the best," says former associate athletics director and unofficial Wolfpack historian Frank Weedon. "He was so quick for a lineman. So quick."

The late-afternoon sun splashed the south end-zone hill of Carter-Finley Stadium on opening day 1979. Squinting, an observer might have noticed the record crowd of 53,400 that packed newly renamed Carter-Finley Stadium, sitting elbow-to-elbow along the stands and along the green-grass hill. State, dressed in red jerseys with high white socks, was set to open its vicious non-conference schedule with East Carolina, and the purple-helmeted Pirates held a four-point lead at the break.

After halftime, floppy-haired State quarterback Scott Smith gave the Pack a go-ahead score on a drive with dashing option-keeping runs of 28 and 17 yards. From there, State never faltered, pulling away for a 34-20 win.

"This is the best football team N.C. State has ever had," ECU Coach Pat Dye says after the game.

Smith stole the headlines with the winning score and a near-90-yard rushing performance, but it was Ritcher and company paving the way for 307 rushing yards. Life as an offensive lineman, so it goes.

There's a waning romantic quality about the son of one of the program's all-time greats coming back and leading the school to its first conference championship since the legend roamed the exact same field.

But then again, there's nothing romantic about the

positions they play.

John Ritcher once wanted that label, though. Growing up as an NFL brat with homes in Buffalo, Raleigh and eventually Atlanta, when Ritcher was eventually allowed to play football in the sixth grade – family rule – QB was his calling. His youth teammate during that period was another NFL son, Charlie Whitehurst. The first time the two hung out, Whitehurst showed Ritcher an old black-and-white reel film of his dad's Furman team besting the Wolfpack.

Some decade later, one of them made it as a quarter-

back at Boston College, when he got out of the car, I just sobbed," she remembers. "It wasn't so much he might go there, it was that he's grown up. He's going to be out of the house."

Only he never really wanted to leave. "Here was home, and it always had been," John Ritcher notes. "I would have gone here whether my dad played here or not. Coach Amato was here now, and I loved his goals. [Former State] Coach [Mike] O'Cain is a great coach and guy, but I never heard anybody talk about a national championship at N.C. State."

Then and now

Links between this year's football team and the school's last ACC title team in 1979

NAME	1979	2004
Chuck Amato	NCSU Defensive Coordinator	NCSU fifth-year head coach
D.D. Hoggard	Freshman defensive back	Director of Student-Athlete Welfare
David Horning	Junior starting linebacker	Senior Associate Athletics Director
Jim Ritcher	1979 All-American center	Son, John, is team's starting tight end
Greg Williams	NCSU secondary coach	NCSU cornerbacks coach

SOURCE: NCSU media relations

back. Whitehurst enters his junior year at Clemson as probably the ACC's best returning passer, and Ritcher, who started out as a quarterback at Raleigh's Ravenscroft High, is penciled in as State's starting tight end for tomorrow's season opener against Richmond.

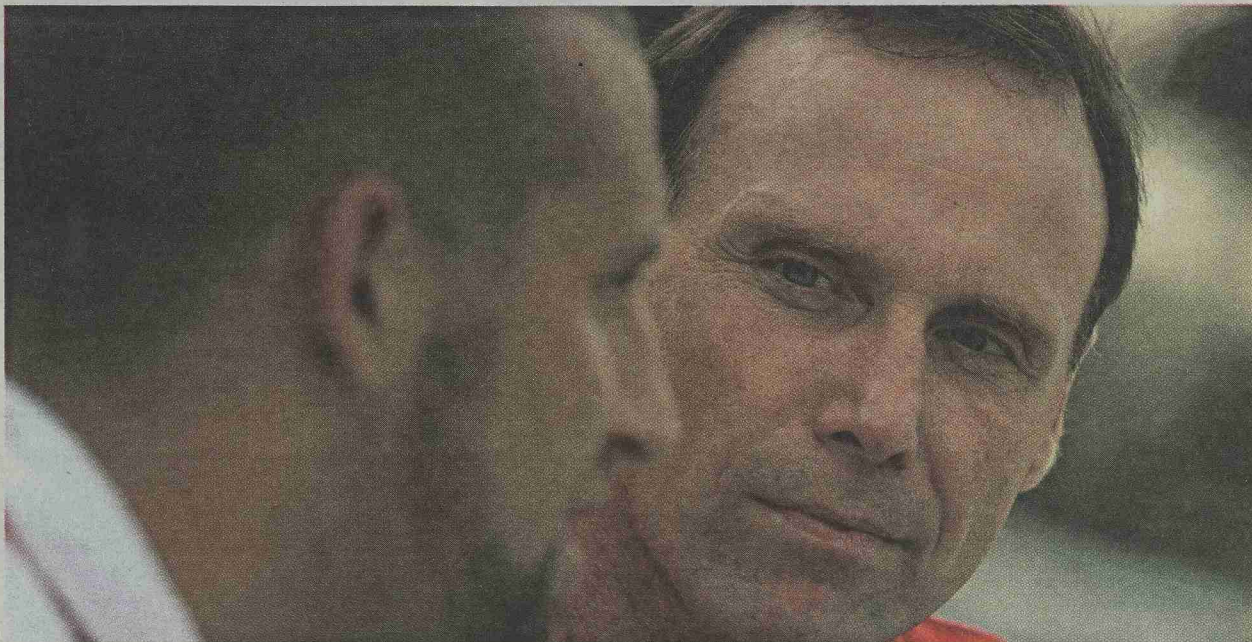
While Whitehurst decided not to follow in the patriarchal footsteps and return to his father's alma mater, Ritcher did. When the calls and the letters came – from North Carolina, Virginia, Boston College, State, among others – Jim used a hands-off, relaxed approach, adamant on the fact this was John's decision. So did mother Harriett – unless John wasn't around.

"When I put him on the airplane to go official visit

Entering his junior year, it's only fitting that on a team of trash-talkers and Floridian speedsters, Ritcher's calling card has become, like his father, his blocking ability from his position.

"John's a very good blocker – that's the first thing he brings to the field," high school coach Ned Gonet said. "He's very good at making things happen at the point of attack, which is exactly what his dad did."

Who knows, with an injury to back-up center Kalani Heppie, the Pack enters the season-opener a little thin on the commanding offensive line position. Another casualty and Ritcher might have no choice but to move there.



GENERATION TWO: John Ritcher looks into his father's eyes and responds to one of his stories. Jim Ritcher was an All-American Wolfpack center in the late 70's.

And put to rest his buddy's catcalls.

"We always tease Ritcher about that, saying 'You should play [center]. If it was 20 years ago, he would be the center,'" current starting center Jed Paulsen says.

The shrill of the cannon was a bit premature. The sure-fire mark that Clemson scored a touchdown resonated and bounced off the orange-clad Tiger fans. Clemson, the perennial ACC power, had four chances to score a touchdown and defeat visiting N.C. State, and four times they ran David Horning's way.

With three backs stacked vertically behind the quar-

David Horning stands stationary holding a small blocking pad. He's about to feel what it's like to be on the other end of Senior Hit Day. But Ritcher, by his own self-admission, has a tendency to hit people with his forehead first.

BOOM! They collide.

"It was a good hit, but I jammed my neck bad," Ritcher remembers.

Suddenly, everything goes numb, Ritcher takes a couple of steps and falls awkwardly to the right. Horning, who's been knocked almost 10 yards in the other direction, watches as they strap his All-American teammate

Later, when he was in the NFL, Ritcher would hide his wife's ankle weights in his shorts or under his shirt to make the team think he gained weight. Eventually, teams caught on and weighed him almost nude. Still, Ritcher had them fooled.

To one-up them, he wrapped the weights around his head and put a baseball cap on. "Here I am, stark naked, and sure enough, the scale reads 275," Ritcher said. "[Former teammate] Fred [Smerlas] says joking, 'You probably have weights hidden under your hat.' I could only think, 'Don't say that Fred!'"

Later when he was with the Atlanta Falcons, Ritcher's tricks earned him the nickname "The Terrorist," for his ability to smuggle the weights any and everywhere.

Perpetually undersized, Ritcher used strength and technique to his advantage, traits he honed growing up in the Ohio countryside and as a wrestler. "He had a fearlessness — he didn't get intimidated," Horning said. "Things that are hard for everyone else came naturally to him." Like lifting weights. Smerlas and Ritcher used to have lift-offs during NFL conditioning, sometimes lifting in excess of 600 pounds.

Horning described one scene, in 1978 against North Carolina, when Ritcher snapped the ball and drove the nose guard 30 yards downfield into the free safety. The middle guard's name? Lawrence Taylor.

But that's not Ritcher's best UNC-related story. In fact, this tale doesn't even involve a football field.

After his freshman year, Ritcher was enjoying the offseason, trying to forget his team's 3-7-1 record. Wrestling Coach Bob Guzzo had a problem, though: his heavyweight wrestler injured himself and would be unable to go in an upcoming match against UNC. Would Ritcher — a very good high school wrestler, according to Guzzo — be willing to fill in?

"Thanks, but no thanks," Ritcher said initially. "UNC had a guy by the name of Dee Hardison, who was all-

The coming and going of record-breaking passer Philip Rivers has sparked the debate of exactly who is the best player in Wolfpack football history.

To some, it's a black and white issue.

"I think Ritcher's the guy,"

— David Horning, Ritcher's former college roommate and current NCSU senior associate athletics director

terback, the Tigers ran right four straight times, and in those four plays, the Death Valley crowd went from loud and obnoxious to pin-drop silent. Their roars quieted when the Pack stopped the Tigers on fourth down to preserve a 16-13 win and move to 4-1 in the ACC. From the sidelines, Horning looked to his left and saw defensive coordinator Chuck Amato wildly yelling at his troops to hurry off the field as fast as they could. They had done it.

Jim Ritcher knows only one gear, so he's running at full speed. He starts some 25 yards away, keeps his

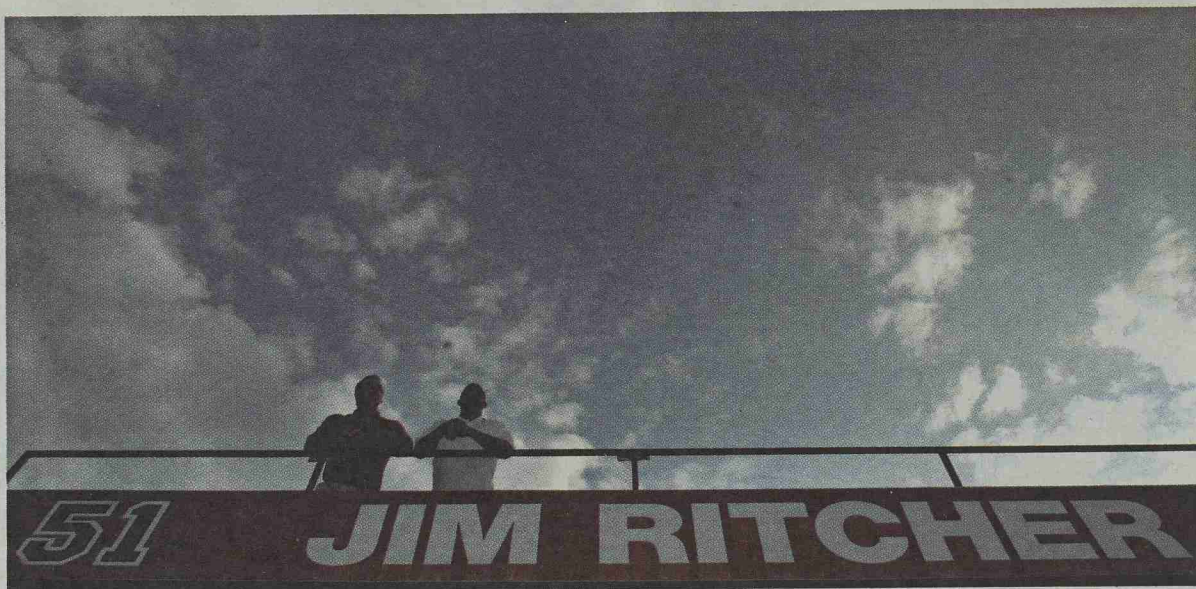
to a stretcher the day before his final game and cart him off to Duke Hospital for X-Rays.

That was N.C. State's last Senior Hit Day.

"I should have picked someone smaller," Ritcher says today.

Size mattered then. In a way, it's always mattered to Ritcher. Under or around 235 pounds in college, he was always told to put on some weight. To put that in relative terms, State's starting offensive line today averages 310 pounds.

But Ritcher contends his position has evolved. "The game was quicker back then," he explains. "Coaches



RETIRED: Jim and John Richter stand above Jim's retired No. 51 jersey that hangs along the west side of Carter-Finley Stadium. John Richter says some teammates might take a year to notice that's his father's name and number.

guy's a senior and built like a bear."

Ritcher, who was not in the best of shape that winter after some time off from football, saw it as an easy decision.

Someone else had other ideas.

"This is State-UNC. You're wrestling," Chuck Amato told Ritcher.

Sure enough, come match night in Chapel Hill, Ritcher took Amato's advice, nah, ultimatum. Competing in the last bout, Ritcher sat and watched his teammates, then felt his throat sink as Hardison began to warm up. "I'm sitting there dreading it; this is going to be awful," Ritcher, weighing about 60 pounds less than Hardison, tells himself.

So Ritcher follows suit, and the UNC coaches notice. Hardison, football player himself, had just returned from the Tar Heel's bowl game and wasn't in the best of shape, UNC looked at Ritcher as a big unknown and ended up pulling Hardison from the match; they didn't want to taint his record if he wasn't in appropriate shape.

Facing a less-intimidating opponent, Ritcher jumped out to a big lead in the first two rounds, then held on in the third to claim victory. As the referee raised his hand, Ritcher could barely move. He somehow made it to the shower, pulled up a chair and just sat, exhausted. When Coach Guzzo came in to inform Ritcher the van was ready to head back to Raleigh, he replied, "You don't understand, coach, I can't move."

"Then I went home and slept — for 18 straight hours."

That was the last day of Jim Ritcher's wrestling career — the only Wolfpack wrestler to retire undefeated, Guzzo pointed out with a bellowing laugh.

Two All-America teams and an ACC football title later, the Buffalo Bills took Ritcher in the first round of the 1980 NFL Draft. Buffalo would later go to four Super Bowls, and Ritcher would be named to a pair of Pro Bowls.

But after losing in all four trips, they would always

be known as the ultimate Cinderella, the team that, be it by bad luck or star-crossed fate, never could break through in the big game, an curious allusion to the way the events of the 1979 season panned out.

The Gator Bowl scouts looking down from the press box saw a wild scene unfolding with an overcast November sky serving as an offsetting backdrop. N.C. State

Nittany Lions completed a 36-yard pass that slipped through the hands of All-American defensive back Woodrow Wilson as the scoreboard clock ticked away. Jim Ritcher remembered looking up at the clock in disbelief. It read :01. From the sidelines he watched, helplessly, the subsequent play: State called block right and Nittany Lion kicker Herb Menhardt lined up for a 54-yard field goal. The kick skidded over the line with a low trajectory,

What does it take to be No. 1?

A case — and a counter-case — for who the best player in NCSU football history is.

POSITION	NAME	NCSU CAREER	FOR	AGAINST
RB	Ted Brown	1975-78	NCSU and ACC career rushing and touchdowns leader was consensus first-team All-America in '78	Relatively discreet post-NCSU career; team never finished higher than third place in seven-team ACC
QB	Roman Gabriel	1959-61	Two-time All-American shined in the NFL; was NFL MVP in 1969, All-Pro 1967-69	Didn't throw for even 1,000 yards in two of three Wolfpack seasons; better days came after NCSU career
C	Jim Ritcher	1976-79	Two-time consensus All-American won Outland Trophy in 1979 as nation's best blocker; only one of the four whose team won a league title	Played a non-glamorous position you can't really measure in stats, not a top-5 NFL draft pick like Gabriel and Rivers
QB	Philip Rivers	2000-03	Holds almost every school and ACC passing record; only one other person in college history threw for more yards	Team never finished above fourth place in the ACC; never selected first- or second-team All-American

—Matt Middleton

had just scored its first TD of the game to move ahead of Penn State, 7-6, with just over a minute remaining in the Homecoming contest. State, hard-luck losers to South Carolina and Auburn, was set to square its non-conference record and accept a bid to its third bowl in as many years.

Shortly thereafter, PSU faced a last-gasp fourth-and-24 before the formalities could commence, only the

like it was shot from a malfunctioned cannon, then wavered like a Frisbee before ping-pong off the right post and dropping over the crossbar.

Game over; bowl bid stolen like a thief in the night, even for the imminent ACC champs.

When John Ritcher enters the Murphy Center lobby, he looks to the right and sees a bronze statue of his dad,



SNAPSHOTS: The Ritcher family photo album includes shots of Jim, John and Jim's dad in late 1983; John and his brothers on Christmas 2003; the whole family at Jim's induction into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1996.

commemorating his Outland Trophy.

On those fall Saturdays, his dad's name watches over the field in chalky, white letters beside his retired No. 51 jersey hanging off the stadium's west stands, sandwiched between Torry Holt's No. 81 and Ted Brown's No. 23.

Even if all his teammates might not initially recognize it.

"Some guys that have been there over a year might suddenly point and say, 'Wait, that's your dad up there?'" Ritcher says.

And when they finally do figure it out: "We'll crack jokes saying 'Don't ruin your family name if he misses a block or something,'" Ritcher's roommate and Wolfpack starting quarterback Jay Davis says. "I feel bad for him sometimes because he does get that a lot. But, hey, it comes with the territory."

A quarter-century after he left the field, Jim Ritcher's still an omnipresent N.C. State football figure, the same role, to a certain degree, he's always had in John's life.

"He's my best friend in the world," John Ritcher says. "I talk to him as much as I can — politics, football, joking around, everything. He never pressed me to play. But when I wanted to, he never stopped helping me and still hasn't."

Because it's always been about John and Dad.

Little John and Dad in the offseason weight room, dressed alike in their red sweatpants, Bills T-shirts and matching towels working on the Weisiger-Brown Athletics Facility. John and Dad at the Super Bowl, all four losses, the hardest one being Super Bowl XXVI in Minnesota. "He was so frustrated, but he didn't understand, he was young," says mom, Harriette, of her 10-year-old son.

John and Dad in high school. "Jim was a good supporter of our program, he never came out on the field; he let coaches coach and stayed very positive and optimistic," Gonet says.

John and Dad on a recruiting visit to State. The athletics department gave out too many tickets for recruits,

forcing the duo to sit in the aisle of the 2000 FSU-NCSU game — "People recognized dad and said, 'Wow, they couldn't even get him a ticket.' He just laughed."

It's the last game of the season and the Wolfpack's highway route to Durham is colored gold and rust with the foliage of autumn. A win over the ACC-winless Blue Devils would give State its second league title in seven years with a record of 5-1.

The 24,000-odd people that bothered to fill Wallace Wade Stadium that afternoon were split in half: one part Wolfpack red, the other apathetic Duke blue. Those dressed in blue-and-white had one eye on the game and the other on the score of the rematch of the previous year's NCAA basketball national championship between Kentucky and Duke being played that same day.

Those that did watch saw Eric Williams intercept three passes and State roll to a 28-7 victory, its bowl fate in the balance. Several days later it was official, Chancellor Joab Thomas declined to send the team to the Garden State Bowl. State could do nothing, left with the stigma as the ACC champion that didn't attend a bowl game.

Coach Bo Rein thought another bid would come. "We'll wait for a bigger bid," he told the team.

It never came. Some months later, Rein died in a plane crash in the Gulf of Mexico after he left to become coach at Louisiana State.

When Jim Ritcher looks down from Carter-Finley Stadium's section 19, he can't help but see a mirror image of himself. Literally.

John, wearing a No. 15 jersey, is more apt to plow opposing defenders instead of catching passes from his position at tight end as his career numbers — eight receptions, 74 yards — might reflect.

Besides, leave all things aerial to pops.

As a child, Jim Ritcher dreamed of someday flying airplanes, and during the offseason days in the 80's, he learned to do just that from a Bills teammate. When he retired after the playoffs in 1996, he became strongly

interested in commercial air. Eventually, he stuck on with American Airlines and is a domestic pilot for that airline today.

"That's what keeps him from missing football — it's something he loves to do," John Ritcher says.

In between John's games his freshman year, Jim was flying back from New York after a stint of flights one morning. On the flight, he looked out the window at the sunny city skyline and thought that was the prettiest he had even seen the Big Apple from the air.

The date was Sept. 10, 2001.

The next morning, Jim answered a phone call. The person on the other end was wailing. "A plane crashed into the World Trade Center," his mother said in between sobs.

One of the hijacked planes was a cross-country route in a 737, a plane his dad usually flew, John Ritcher remembers. He raced to the phone to call his dad and when he answered, John was relieved. "It was nerve-racking for about five minutes," John recalls.

Ritcher is able to tailor his schedule around John's games, missing "only a couple" in two seasons. He also has the budding gridiron careers of his other two sons, Harrison, a linebacker for Gonet at Ravenscroft and Nicholas, who's finally qualified for the family's sixth-grade rule.

Both brothers have the same blue eyes as John, as well as both their parents that met during Jim's junior year. Harriette Kalevas was a petite, cheerleading brunette from Charlotte. She liked his personable demeanor. He noticed her on the way to class, and ultimately she followed him to Buffalo. Later, they would return, married, in the mid-80's to both receive their degrees.

Now they're here to stay with a home in North Raleigh near Ravenscroft's football field, spending Saturdays following their first son to fields of larger proportions.

Together, all blue eyes on John, big and strong, wearing that number, throwing those blocks.

Just like dad.

Fire up the grill

BY T.S. AMARASIRIWARDENA

"My name is Burke, and I'm a tailgateaholic."

Encircled around a table, Burke Rafter is with company, all with the same problem.

Two days before the first football game of the season, Rafter and his four roommates begin prepping for their pregame activities – tailgating, specifically.

It's never too early to start.

"It's not about when the game starts – it doesn't start Saturday, it starts Friday night," Miles Hedrick says. "You have to get your mind set."

And they should know, they're pros, now in their fifth N.C. State tailgate...er, football season.

"You have to realize we're redshirt seniors," Hedrick, a senior in construction engineering graduating this December, said to a visitor.

"Football is what makes fall semester worth it," Matt Mautsby a senior in psychology said.

Tailgating is neither a cheap or last-minute endeavor for this group.

"I bought that truck pretty much bought specifically

for the purpose or tailgating," Jim Rhodes, a senior in construction engineering, said as he pointed outside.

Starting at sunrise, the group plans to get out to Carter-Finley Stadium early for the 6 p.m. kick off tomorrow.

With a spot on the state fairgrounds near the lake, the crew will set up their trucks and grill.

No tripod Weber will do though.

Shouting down to someone in the basement, Jim yells, "How huge is your grill?"

"It's huge," is the curt reply.

Maybe that's all one needs to know.

It's big enough to cook a half pig, they say. With pigs in that size available for \$120, it will feed "everyone you can think of, and then more," Mautsby said.

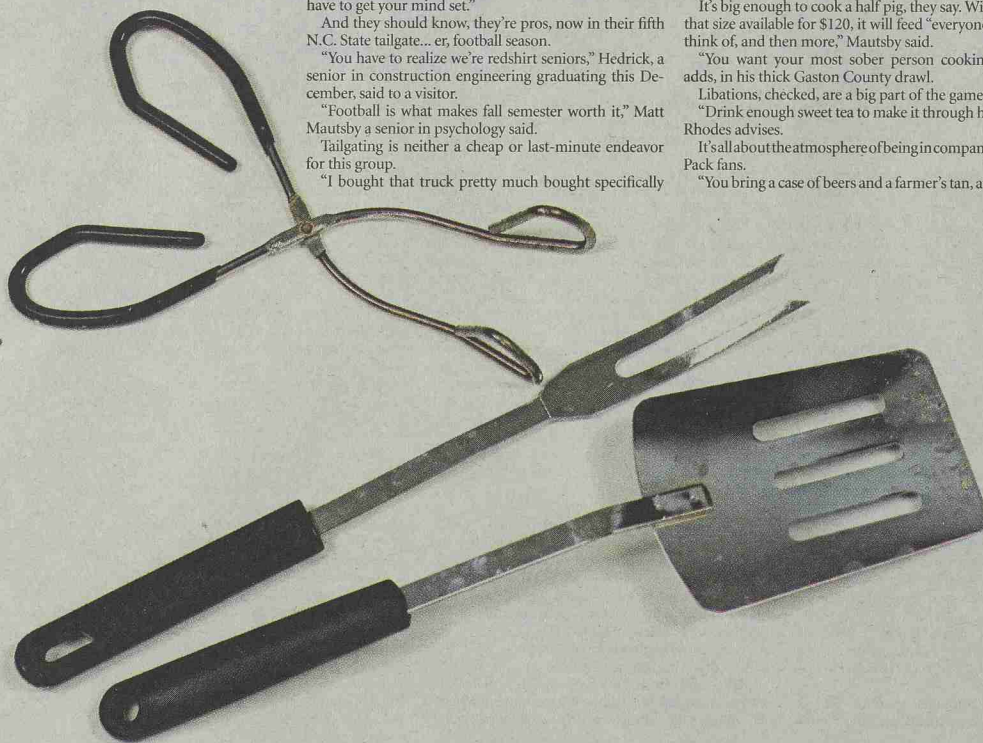
"You want your most sober person cooking," Miles adds, in his thick Gaston County drawl.

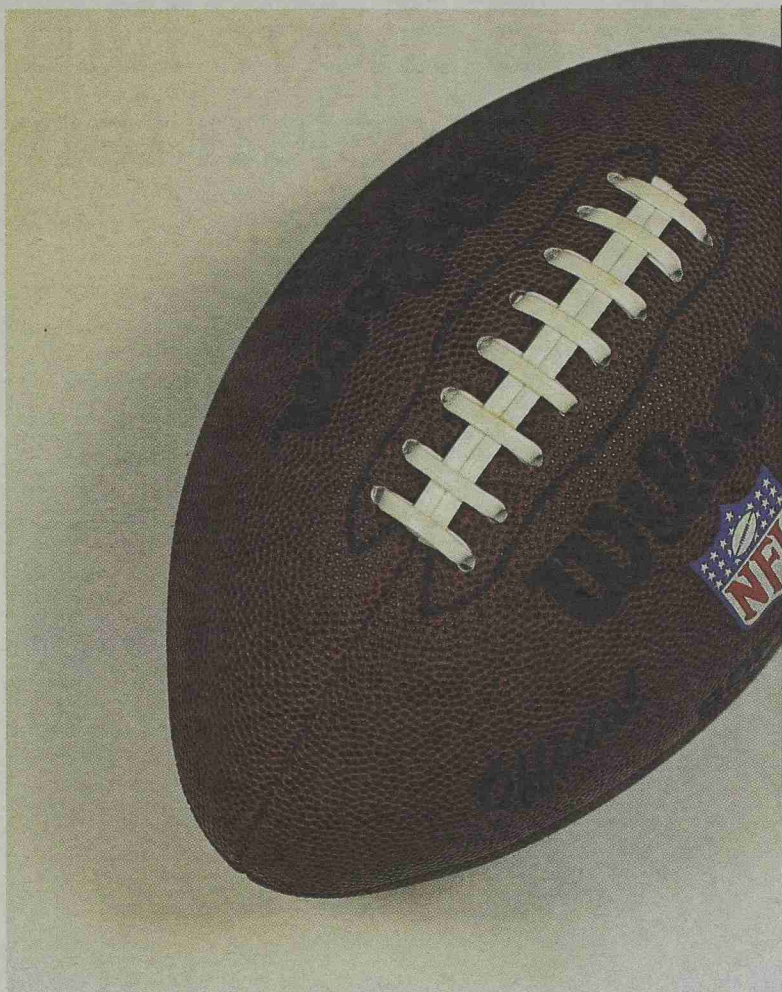
Libations, checked, are a big part of the game.

"Drink enough sweet tea to make it through half time," Rhodes advises.

It's all about the atmosphere of being in company of other Pack fans.

"You bring a case of beers and a farmer's tan, and you're





bound to make some friends," Rhodes says.

And friends might be helpful if one arrives, sans ticket.

"Rarely do we even have a ticket," he says.

"Somehow it all works out," Mautsby says, "Walk around and meet people. If you have the will, there will be a way."

Having gone to games across the ACC, Rhodes says that tailgating at N.C. State is like no other.

"I've tailgated at Carolina where you've sat in the back of a BMW and drink wine," he says.

With new additions to the ACC, football powerhouses Miami and Virginia Tech on the docket, the group still has high expectations.

"We're going to be awesome," Hedrick says, discussing the Pack's defense.

Trying to decide which is the most important game of the season, the group whittles it down to

three games.

Someone offers Ohio State.

"Especially after how close it was last year," Rafter said.

"Naw," Rhodes says. With Miami in their inaugural season, the Pack "needs to let them know we're not Rutgers."

In the end it comes to sentimental reasons.

The October away game with Maryland becomes the consensus decision.

"If you're a senior, you haven't seen State beat Maryland," Rhodes explains.

As redshirt seniors, they will savor each game.

"You got to realize that there's only six of them left," Rhodes said.

Anything else?

"Treat every game as your last," Hedrick said, pulling the old coach's adage.

TECHNICIAN | RED | 9.3.2004 | 21

Amedeo's **Italian Restaurant**

Backing the
Pack since 1963 

EXPERIENCE THE TRADITION

\$5 discount

on LUNCH or
 DINNER ENTREE when
 a second LUNCH or
 DINNER ENTREE of
 equal or greater value
 is purchased.

Amedeo's Italian Restaurant

exp. 12/31/04

\$5 discount

on LUNCH or
 DINNER ENTREE when
 a second LUNCH or
 DINNER ENTREE of
 equal or greater value
 is purchased.

Amedeo's Italian Restaurant

exp. 12/31/04

**Amedeo's is a
 Pack Meal Plan participant**

**3905 Western Blvd., Raleigh NC
 851.0473**

How to move like a true pigskin fan

BY TIM COFFIELD

I love the first weeks of fall term for the much same reason as Paris Hilton loves her power-jet platinum bidet. The promise of a fresh start.

A slate wiped clean, my past messes erased. That fresh, tingly feel.

But I'm being too abstract. Mom always says people who speak broadly are just hiding that they don't know what they're saying. She says my uncle Nate is case-in-point, especially when he gets political:

"Gotta get ol' Bush re-elected," he'll start, gazing dramatically out the kitchen window, "only one with guts to fight off the Islamers. He's Christian boy, too. Got them *morals*, you know. He ain't gonna *steal* my money for that welfare stuff..."

Or when football is the topic: "The runnin' game is the thing. Gotta run it. You ever seen someone throw an interception on a handoff? I thought so. And defense, too. Because if the other team don't *score*..."

So I will be more specific. I have many fond associations with fall semesters:

The Brickyard Indian men who use their magic to convince me that, no, \$25 for a linen sheet is *not* a felony, and don't I need a nice puka-shell necklace as well?

The shapes of freshmen girls in the brief period before the I Love New York Pizza Effect takes hold.

The soothing awareness that no, I don't have to open that boo'z'k yet — I've got plenty time to catch up.

The kind panhandlers who greet us with open palms and earnest, bloodshot eyes and even say "thank

you" when I tell them "No, I actually don't have a single cent," — right before I walk inside Planet Smoothie.

The way the heaters in Harrelson haven't yet been fired up to their potato-crumbling intensity.

The H-Street virtuoso cranking out another sweaty epic solo.

The H-Street virtuoso saying yes, I *have* heard of Old Spice High Endurance and no, I will not play "The Devil Went Down to Georgia."

And all those things make me happy, except when my decorative sheet reveals a talent for adhering to clumps of food. But *this fall*, however, is special. For two reasons.

One, it's an election year, which is exciting. I'm giving serious consideration to voting, for the first time ever, in the presidential

election. Now, I'm no dummy. I realize my vote doesn't really count.

But as we all know, voting isn't about selecting a leader. It's about earning the right to complain if the guy you *didn't* vote for winds up winning. Now, I want to make sure both my bases are covered, so I'll just write-in for a sentimental choice, like Chuck Amato. A man with a big heart, for sure. Just look at the size of his chest.

On the downside, the networks will have to sacrifice their coverage of the Laci Peterson and Lori Hacking cases. This will be hard on everyone.

There's nothing quite like the grisly murder of an attractive white woman to bring a nation together.

In fact, if George W. was smart, he'd use this to his advantage. I'd suggest Jenna, I think she'd put of less of a fight.

And two, this year I've decided to attend our football games.

I've mostly avoided sporting events in the past. This is mainly since, like church, being at a game puts me in a situation where I have to keep standing up and sitting back down, even when my legs are tired.

Also, I'm supposed to yell out bold remarks ("Ref! Did you forget your contact lenses!" or "Spiders! This is not I-AA!") at specific moments, kinda like how churches try to pressure me into belting out songs written in Middle English.

But I've pretty much gotten over that stuff. I realize that those kinds of things are important, even if they might not be convenient. I mean, what if no one in the stadium stood up when everyone else stood up? Then, like, no one would ever stand up!

Or what if no one ever yelled? Imagine! It would be quiet! And have you ever been to a football game that was totally quiet! I didn't think so!

It would be easy here to unite the subjects of "football-watching" and "voting" together under the grand theme of "group behavior," and how sometimes it is important for an individual, as a component of a group, to etc. etc. etc.

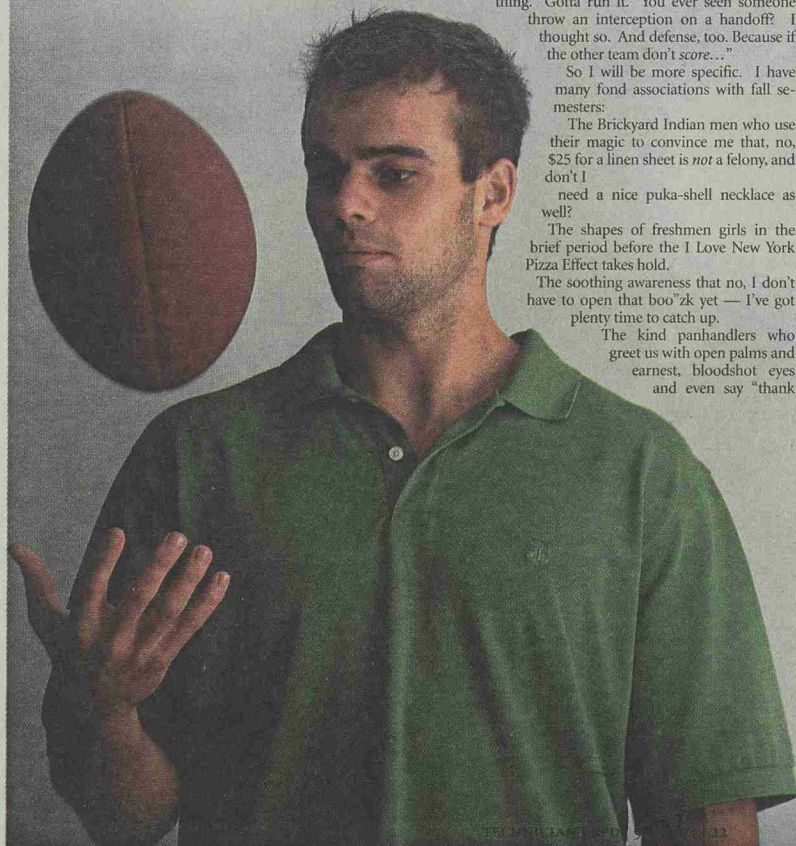
But that would just be stupid. Because I'd fail to recognize the crucial difference between voting and spectating, which is this:

When we vote, we work for the right to complain. Which is nice, of course.

But when we stand and sit and stand and yell at a Pack game, we work for the right to *brag*.

And that, I think we all agree, is just a little sweeter.

Contact tlcoffie@ncsu.edu to join his Gangster Marsupials Club. Motto: With our eyes on our money, and our glocks in our pouches



Stops along the campaign trail

BOOKMARK THESE MAIN EVENTS OF THE WEEK IN KEY LEAGUE BATTLEGROUND STATES

Sept. 10 Florida State at Miami

After hurricane intervention, the national game of the Labor Day week ends gets postponed several days.

Sept. 11 North Carolina at Virginia

Early sign to see if John Bunting's year will be make-it or break-it.

Sept. 18 Ohio State at N.C. State

Will we lucky enough to get a game half as good as last year?

Sept. 25 Clemson at Florida State

Bowden Bowl comes early this year; how good is Charlie Whitehurst?

Oct. 2 Virginia Tech at West Virginia

Game would have been Big East title preview if not for expansion

Oct. 9 N.C. State at North Carolina

State has won just twice in Kenan Stadium since 1992.

Oct. 16 Virginia at Florida State

Wahoos stack a legit claim to be a darkhorse for league title, this is their toughest road game.

Oct. 23 Miami at N.C. State

How good will Chuck Amato fair against the league's "new" Florida State?

Oct. 30 Florida State at Maryland

This is Terps best chance to finally play FSU close at home in College Park.

Nov. 6 Virginia at Maryland

ACC's long-forgotten rivalry, these teams really haven't seemed to like each other as of late.

Nov. 11 Florida State at N.C. State

Pack concludes brutal home schedule with Bowden vs. Amato Part V.

Nov. 20 Duke at North Carolina

Heels try to re-claim Victory Bell in what will almost certainly be a battle for the league cellar.

Nov. 27 Virginia at Virginia Tech

Old rivals battle each other, and for the first time it counts in the league standings.

Dec. 4 Virginia Tech at Miami

Only ACC game of the day will have entire league watching due to game's impact on standings – and bowl bids.



The Best Value in RALEIGH





ALL UTILITIES INCLUDED!
One Check Covers it all!

NOW!

**FREE TRANSPORTATION
TO NC STATE!**

SPECIAL!

**THE BEST IN
Luxury Student Living**

1 Month Free on all New Leases
\$250 Sign on Bonus and Security Deposit Waived*

403 Wolf Creek Circle
Raleigh, NC 27606

919-862-8342

www.collegeparkweb.com

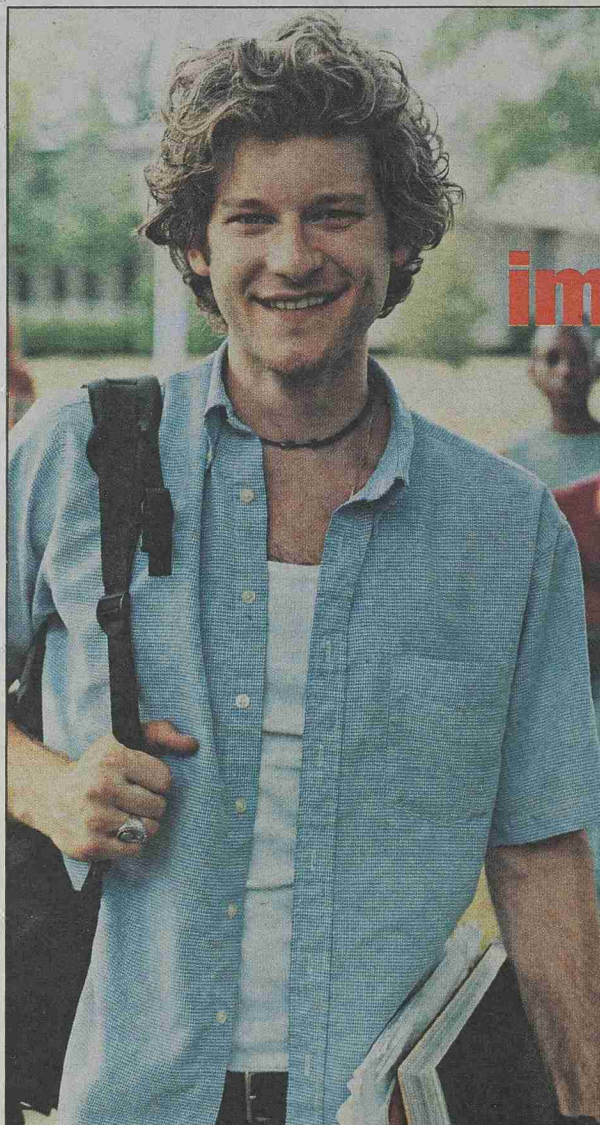




Close to all Downtown Colleges and Universities

- ◆ FREE Tanning Beds and Fitness Center
5 TANNING BEDS AVAILABLE ON-SITE
- ◆ Separate Bedroom/Bathroom Suites
INDIVIDUAL LEASES
- ◆ Resort-Style Swimming Pool
OLYMPIC SIZE LAP POOL
- ◆ Outdoor Recreation Facilities Unmatched
**TENNIS, BASKETBALL, SAND VOLLEYBALL
COURTYARD WITH MASONRY GRILL**
- ◆ Roommate Matching Service Available
2, 3 AND 4 BEDROOM APARTMENTS
- ◆ Student-Friendly Living
COMPUTER LAB, STUDY AREA/CONFERENCE ROOM
- ◆ Large Recreation Room
**BIG-SCREEN TV, XBOX, AIR HOCKEY
FOOSBALL AND BILLIARDS**

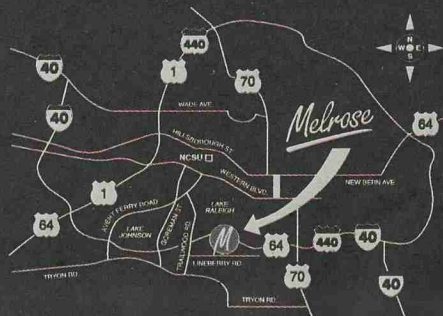
*Available on 4 Bedroom units only.



Your (new and improved) friend, Andy

From academic probation to dean's list • Traded
keg stands for a political stance • Moved to Melrose
(and qualified for a housing scholarship) • Still
prefers pool over pilates and burgers over broccoli

GO WOLFPACK!



LAUNCH PAD FOR INTERESTING LIVES

Individual Leases • 2 to 4 bedrooms • Fitness Center
"Front Door" Bus Route • Computer Lab

Visit us at www.melrose.com,
3333 Melrose Club Blvd. (off Trailway & Lineberry Drive)
or call 919-835-7835.

THE NEW
Melrose
STUDENT
SUITES