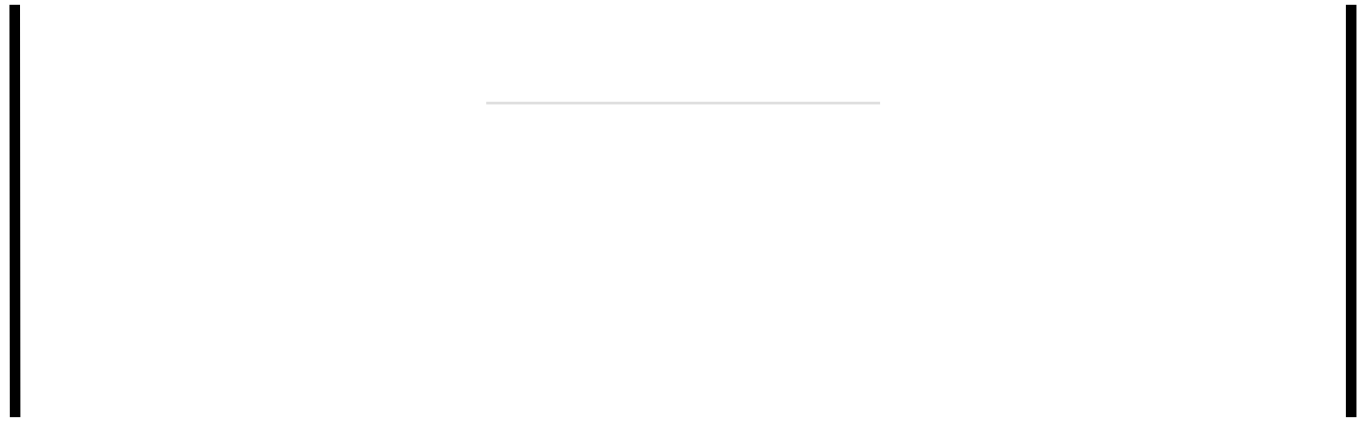


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Thabiti Davis cut by Carolina Panthers
Sports/B2

Sports

Luck not in cards so far for gridgers

By Paul Gaeta
Sports Editor

One week ago, if you asked any Demon Deacon football fan what was expected of this year's team, the answer was simple — a post-season bowl berth.

There were no ifs, ands, or buts about it. The talk from day one of this 1998-99 school year was how the Deacon football squad has the talent to reach the team's first bowl appearance since 1992 and what would be only their fifth ever bowl appearance since the team began play in 1947.

It was a far cry from the normal early season talk about Demon Deacon sports where ordinarily hype about the upcoming basketball season would overshadow traditional expectations of a football team dwelling in the cellar of the ACC.

But as quickly as a Brian Kuklick pass zips into his receiver's pads, so too did the significant optimism surrounding this season's team. In just a matter of days, the injury bug buzzed into the team's practice field and stung the Deacs with a pain that might just be felt the rest of the season.

The first came late last week when senior Kelvin Moses, the team's Mr. Everything defensive back, had arthroscopic surgery on his left knee.

While Moses should return in three to six weeks, his relatively short absence from the Deac line-up could still prove hurtful.

The Deacs must have a strong early part to their season to cushion what will probably be late-season losses when the Carolinas and Florida States of the world come into town.

Without Moses, the Deacs could find it difficult to gain this support early in their schedule. The numbers the big man brings to the table tell the tale immediately: 33 career starts going back to his freshman season; 317 tackles—11th best ever for a Deac's football player.

So it goes without saying that an absence of Moses, any absence of Moses, will hurt the Deacs significantly as they will not have their run stopping, pass blocking, and thunderous tackling intimidator on the defensive side of the ball.

While news of Moses' injury was still making its way around campus, the injury bug was at it again, this time knocking out star quarterback Brian Kuklick with a sprained knee.

Kuklick owns the best arm in the ACC and one of the best in the nation. Last season, he was one of the league leaders in total offense until a late season leg injury sidelined him for the remainder of the year.

This year, talk already had Kuklick's name mentioned among the top five or 10 best quarterbacks in the country.

Yet, without Kuklick, the Deacon offense is mediocre at best as the team's air attack becomes heavily depleted.

Granted, the Deac's prized recruit should be back by the Sept. 5 opener at Air Force, but a knee injury this early in the season worries me a bit, especially when the same player ended last season with another leg injury.

So, in an instant, the Deacs lost their two most heralded players on offense and defense, turning a much anticipated season into a much-apprehended one.

With two of their stars sidelined this early, it really makes me wonder how much luck these Deacs really have. It seems as if every time they get the momentum rolling, something comes up and pushes them off their path.

Last season, for example, all the team needed was one more win and a bowl appearance would have been more than likely.

Four times, however, the Deacs failed to keep second half leads, losing two of these games by a total of three points.

Three little points the other way and the Deacs would have been playing while students were home for winter break.

The luck of the team, however, failed to fall that way, and the rest was history.

So far this season, that same misfortune seems to be continuing as if some higher power just doesn't want our football team in a corporate-sponsored bowl.

Yes, the season is early, and yes, the injuries to the Deacs two stars shouldn't affect the whole season.

However, it takes two things to win—talent and luck, and if the Deacs continue to play without luck, it will be another season of unfulfilled expectations.

Injury bug stings football team

Senior leaders *Brian Kuklick and Kelvin Moses sustain knee injuries*

By Scott Payne
Associate Managing Editor

The knee: a joint in the middle part of the human leg that is the articulation of the femur, tibia and patella. With the start of the Demon Deacon's football season still over a week away, it is two of these joints in particular that are giving Head Coach Jim Caldwell nightmares, not to mention preparing to defend the option running game of the Air Force Academy in the thin air of Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Within the last week, Caldwell has watched his starting linebacker and his starting quarterback encounter knee problems that will cause them to miss action. Senior linebacker Kelvin Moses underwent successful arthroscopic surgery last

Friday on his left knee. According to team orthopedic surgeon Dr. Walt Curl, Moses had the procedure performed to alleviate an irritation on the femoral condyle in his knee. Moses is expected to miss three to six weeks of action, which could cause him to miss at least the first two games against Air Force and Navy and possibly the Sept. 26 matchup against ACC rival Clemson.

"Kelvin's knee has not responded to treatment or rest during recent weeks and our medical staff decided that surgery to examine his knee would be in order," said Caldwell. "There is no swelling in the

knee and our doctors do not anticipate any serious or long term problems, but this should relieve the discomfort for Kelvin and we will hopefully have him back soon."

Then, to make matters worse, Kuklick, who has been the starting quarterback the past two seasons, sprained his knee in practice. During a live scrimmage last Thursday, Kuklick suffered the injury when a defender was blocked into him. However, according to Caldwell, Kuklick is recovering quickly and is expected to return to practice later this week.

Although both of these injuries are relatively minor in the grand scheme of knee injuries, with no mention of the dreaded ACL or MCL tear, both Moses and Kuklick are two of the most irreplaceable members of the Deacon lineup.

Kuklick, the 6-foot-3, 205 pound product of Hatboro, Pa. and has already thrown for over 5,000 yards and 30 touchdowns in his career at the helm of the Deacon offense. Moses, a 6-foot-2, 232 pound native of Hartsville, SC enters his senior season with 317 career tackles, the 11th best total in school history, and is a pre-season candidate for the Butkus Award.

Kuklick is no stranger to football related injuries. At the end of last season,

See Injuries, Page B2



Moses



Kuklick

Talented Deacs have bowl in sight

By Scott Payne
Associate Managing Editor

If you listen very closely you can hear it - a low murmur blowing around campus. Bowl game? Winning season? That's right — what you heard is true.

Entering his sixth campaign at the helm of the Demon Deacon football team, Head Coach Jim Caldwell and company will open the 1998-99 season with greater expectations than ever before.

After a season in which the Deacs finished 5-6, 3-5 in the ACC, and showed vast improvement in all areas, this could be the breakout year that Caldwell and his troops have been waiting for.

One of the most telling statistics about the Deacons' 1997-98 season was that in the losses to Virginia, East Carolina, North Carolina and Georgia Tech the Deacons went into the locker room at halftime with the lead.

If a few things go differently in the second halves of those games, last year would have had a completely different ending.

But those tough losses gave the Deacs invaluable experience that all teams need to reach that next level, which they can now carry over to this season.

One of the biggest reasons for the Deacs' success last season was due to their staunch defense.

The Deacons' defense featured the tenth best run defense in the nation, allowing only 96.1 yards per game.

The defense will once again be anchored by the dynamic duo of bookend linebackers, junior Dustin Lyman and senior Kelvin Moses. Lyman and Moses wreaked havoc on opposing defenses last season as they combined to record a total of 176 tackles and 13 sacks.

Caldwell will look to returning starters junior Fred Robbins, senior Kelvin Shackleford, senior Kelvin Jones, senior Dameon Daniel, senior Jeffrey Muires and senior DaLawn Parrish to continue to make solid contributions week in and week out.

Despite the losses of starters Aljamont Joyner and Robert Fatzinger on the defensive line and D'Angelo Solomon and Robert Zadel in the backfield to graduation, the Deacs should still be able to control the line of scrimmage effectively.

The outlook is even brighter on the offensive side of the ball, with an array of weapons returning for the Deacon attack.

The most dangerous of all Caldwell's offensive artillery is the combination of senior quarterback Brian Kuklick and senior wide receiver Desmond Clark.

Despite missing the final two games of the season last year due to injury, Kuklick passed for 2,180

yards and 15 touchdowns. Against the Maryland Terrapins Kuklick caught fire as he completed 26 of 41 passes for 330 yards and three touchdowns. Kuklick enters the 1998 season as arguably the best quarterback in the Atlantic Coast Conference and one of the best in the country.

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Kuklick's main target last season, Clark, a senior from Lakeland, Florida, turned in a 1997 season worthy of national attention. Clark made 72 grabs last year for nearly a thousand yards, and took five of those in for a touchdown.

With 37 receptions this season Clark will become the leading receiver in ACC history. At 6-foot-3 and 238 pounds, Clark is a nightmare for defensive coordinators but will still be given a lot of attention by defensive backs this season, as he looks to establish himself as one of the elite receivers in college football.

Also returning for the Deacs are speedy wide receiver Jammie Deese, who will get a chance to improve on last season's total of 54 catches with the departure of Thabiti Davis.

Caldwell will use Deese's 4.3 speed in the 40-yard dash to stretch the field and give the Deac's a viable threat deep down the field.

When the Deacs keep the ball on the ground, Caldwell will call on junior running back Morgan Kane to carry the ball.

With the loss of Herman Lewis to graduation, Kane will get the job full-time and will see the majority of the work load.

Junior Kito Gary emerged last season for the Deacs as a big-play threat out of the backfield last season, showing flashes of brilliance early in the season, particularly on his 76-yard scamper against East Carolina, and will undoubtedly see action this season as well.

The loss of center Chris Gaskell will definitely hurt the offensive line.

Jeff Flowe, Sam Settar, Brian Wolverton and tight end Joe



Courtesy of Sports Information

Senior Desmond Clark is off to the races downfield after making a reception in a game last year. Clark will be a big player in this season Deacon air attack on offense.

Zelenka are all returning, however, and the transition period should be a short one.

The war in the trenches will be of the utmost importance for the Deacs this season, as the offensive line will have to give Kuklick time to throw the ball and also open up holes for the running game.

In his five seasons as the Deacon head coach, Caldwell has never had a season open with as much expectation as this year.

Last season the Deacs proved they can be competitive in this conference, now it is time for them to prove they can win and be successful.

This season the Deacons feature just the right mixture of talent, speed and experience that could surprise many opponents.

The Deacons will open against the Air Force Academy on September 5 in Colorado Springs and

will return home on Thursday September 10 for a game against Navy, which will be on ESPN.

Last season the Deacs had great success on Thursday night as they defeated N.C. State in a thriller on a last second field goal by Matthew Burdick.

The weekend after that the Deacs travel to Death Valley to face the Clemson Tigers and this game will be broadcast on ABC.

While the Demon Deacons face non-conference opponent Appalachian St. on Oct. 3 for Homecoming, it is the team's conference opponents that should provide the greatest competition.

North Carolina (Oct. 24) and Florida St. (Nov. 14), two national powerhouses ranked among the top 15 in pre-season polls by the Associated Press, come to Winston-Salem in two games that will the team's toughest tests of the season.

Demon Deacon Football Schedule

- Sept. 5 — at Air Force
- 10 — Navy
- 26 — at Clemson
- Oct. 3 — Appalachian *State
- 10 — Duke
- 17 — at Maryland
- 24 — University of North Carolina
- 31 — Virginia
- Nov. 7 — at NC State
- 14 — Florida State
- 21 — at Georgia Tech

* Homecoming