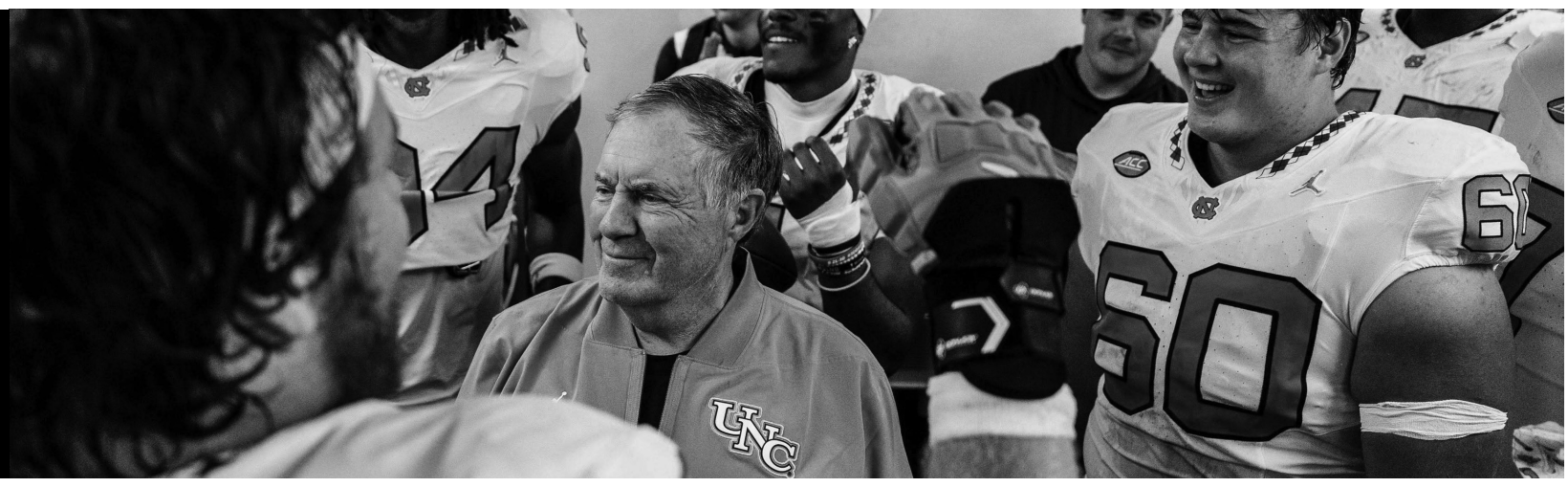
The Weekly Chowdah: RECOUNTING BILL BELICHICK'S LEGACY



The UNC Chapel Hill football team. Bill Belichick has started his second season as head coach for the team.
PHOTO COURTESY OF CAROLINA FOOTBALL ON FACEBOOK

by Raiyan Hussain
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
rmh23005@uconn.edu

Week 10 of the 2026 college football season features a long-anticipated matchup for many Connecticut football fans as the North Carolina Tarheels travel to East Hartford to face off against the UConn Huskies.

There are many narratives that may be formulated regarding this game. Both teams are coming off tough losses to higher-caliber teams that really could've gone the other way. Both are hoping to become bowl-eligible, and with four games left in the season, each game becomes increasingly meaningful. Securing such eligibility and a winning season would be a first for each team's new head coaches as well.

For one side, however, getting to that mark may be more meaningful. Legendary head coach Bill Belichick is in his second-year coaching North Carolina football compared to Jason Candle's first. With more time to instill his vision and philosophy, expectations are undoubtedly higher, as would be the case for any returning college head coach.

On top of that, the Belichick experiment has been off to a rocky start so far. Since his hiring in December 2024, the program has been marred with rather unnecessary controversy and drama. Some of it revolved around his now ex-girlfriend Jordon Hudson, and some of it was related to dysfunction within the team. All of this was only amplified by North Carolina's play, as they only won four games in 2025 with a rather easy schedule.

Therefore, pressure to meet expectations is certainly higher this season.

Zooming out from the focus of the upcoming college football game, it's hard not to see the parallels between the current North Carolina Tarheels and the New England Patriots between in 2022 and 2023.

Belichick made rather questionable managerial decisions there too, such as hiring Matt Patricia and Joe Judge as offensive coordinators in everything but name, torpedoing the development of quarterback Mac Jones. Roster management and drafting was also poor, and the team routinely made gameday mistakes that were very uncharacteristic of a Belichick coached team.

With the continued underperformance and dysfunction of Belichick's football teams across both levels of the sport in the 2020s, it became easy to conclude that Belichick wasn't the coach he was touted to be. For many, future Hall of Fame quarterback Tom Brady was responsible for all his success. The steep decrease in the quality of the teams fielded by Belichick following his departure was all the proof needed to validate such ideas.

Belichick does deserve a lot of criticism for the state of the New England Patriots in his final years there and the current state of the Tarheels football team, but it's also important to maintain a grounded perspective when discussing Belichick's coaching abilities and broader legacy.

Belichick routinely has teams punching well above their weight from a talent perspective. The high expectations that have been ascribed to his teams due to New England's dynasty years may make that difficult to initially see.

His current team serves as a good example. North Carolina gave top five ranked Notre Dame and Miami tough games in weeks four and nine, both of which were very winnable. They also handed losses to a ranked Pittsburgh team and the 2025 ACC Champions and rivals Duke at Durham, NC.

As a defensive minded coach, Belichick has also been able to consistently field top-ranked units on that side of the ball.

Patriots fans understand this well. They effectively carried the team to 0.500 records together with great special teams units following Brady's departure between 2020 and 2022. They also played major roles in the initial three Super Bowl runs the organization had, back when Brady was objectively not the quarterback he would later become.

The record of fielding great defenses goes back even further to his days as defensive coordinator for the New York Giants. That organization acquired two Super Bowl titles in 1986 and 1990 in part due to Belichick's defenses — his gameplan from Super Bowl 25 is even in the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

If not for voting oversights and shenanigans, perhaps Belichick himself would also be there too.

Belichick got the Cleveland Browns' head coaching job following that Super Bowl. He ended the team's playoff drought backed by the league's best defense, led by longtime friend Nick Saban.

Unfortunately, his tenure and potential Super Bowl aspirations there was ruined by the Brown's sudden relocation to Baltimore. Baltimore then won the Super Bowl five years later, and many credit their success to the foundation Belichick built.

In 1996, Belichick joined the Patriots, and upon becoming head coach in 2000 he instilled roughly the same philosophy that was cut short in Cleveland. With actual confidence from ownership, Belichick oversaw a dynasty spanning two decades and nine Super Bowl appearances.

If Belichick's history tells us anything, it should be that his greatness is not specifically tied to one or a couple of specific players, and it takes time for even the best to achieve the success expected of them. In a modern sports world dominated by impatience and reductionism, those ideas tend to get lost in discussion.

Yes, Belichick has encountered more difficulty as of late than he has throughout most of his career, but that doesn't mean he is "washed" as a coach or never had it in the first place.

North Carolina's matchup with Connecticut on Nov. 7 could perhaps mark the last time in which a Belichick-coached team plays in New England. North Carolina has not scheduled future away games against Boston College, UConn or UMass, and Belichick is well past retirement age.

So, for what may be the final time up here, it will be a pleasure to once again watch Belichick coach a football team in the region where he finally showcased the true potential of his coaching and managerial abilities.

North Carolina may also find that same success in due time, but hopefully not on Saturday.

HOW KIMI ANTONELLI BECAME THE YOUNGEST F1 WORLD CHAMPION



Kimi Antonelli celebrating becoming an F1 World Champion. Antonelli broke the previous record of being the youngest F1 World Champion, accomplishing the feat at 20 years old.
PHOTO COURTESY OF ANDREA KIMI ANTONELLI OFFICIAL ON FACEBOOK



Kimi Antonelli celebrates with the second and third place winners after becoming the youngest F1 World Champion. The previous record was held by Sebastian Vettel in 2010 who was 23 years and 134 days old compared to Antonelli claiming his win at 20 years and 67 days old.
PHOTO COURTESY OF F1 ON FACEBOOK

by Alex Klancko
CAMPUS CORRESPONDENT
HE/HIM/HIS
lvb24001@uconn.edu

On Sunday, Nov. 1, Kimi Antonelli needed to finish in ninth or higher so secure his first ever Formula One World Drivers Championship. He did even better than that.

Antonelli finished third after overtaking Charles Leclerc on a late restart which gave him his first WDC at just 20 years and 67 days old, shattering the previous record held by Sebastian Vettel when he set the record in 2010 at just 23 years and 134 days old.

He also joins Giuseppe Farina and Alberto Ascari as the only Italian F1 champions and is the first Italian F1 champion since Ascari who won back-to-back titles in 1952 and 1953.

Antonelli also became Mercedes' first F1 drivers champion since Lewis Hamilton in 2020 when he won his record-tying seventh title.

The 20-year-old phenom has been excellent all season, winning nine of the first 19 races and adding a further seven podiums to his resume.

At the beginning of the season, Antonelli was on a flyer. He opened the season in second place to his teammate George Russell, before rattling off five consecutive wins to give him a 66-point gap to Russell and Hamilton entering the Barcelona GP.

At the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, Hamilton and Russell finished 1-2 while Antonelli DNF'd to cut the lead down to just 41 points, but that was just the start.

After a third-place finish at the Austrian GP, Antonelli had car troubles at the British Grand Prix which dropped him down to 15th. With Russell and Hamilton finishing second and third, Antonelli's points gap dwindled to just 22 points to Russell, but that wouldn't last for long.

Four races later, Antonelli had four consecutive podiums including two wins at Spa and Monza to increase the gap to second to 63 points and he wasn't done yet.

Antonelli won the Spanish GP to increase his lead to 78 points before Russell bounced back to win the Azerbaijan GP which brought the gap down to 63 points.

Antonelli persevered, though, increasing the gap to 81 points after Bahrain, 102 points after Singapore and 123 points after COTA. That meant if Antonelli finished in ninth or higher at the Mexican GP, he would win the title, no matter what Hamilton or Russell did.

At the Mexican GP, Antonelli did what was needed and won the title with ease. Nine wins, 16 podiums and seven poles make this one of the most dominant titles in F1 history and the season isn't over yet.

With the WDC, Antonelli also joins Hamilton, Nico Rosberg and Juan Manuel Fangio as the only F1 World Champions for Mercedes.

Antonelli also decided not to take the No. 1 in 2027, which is reserved for World Champions, and will instead run his regular No. 12.

F1 will return this Sunday, Oct. 8, at the Autodromo Jose Carlos Pace for the Brazilian Grand Prix. Fans can watch the race at noon on Apple TV.