Albany St. Rams Await 1977 Gridiron Opener Under New Mentor, Whitney Van Cleve

ALBANY, GA. – The Albany State College Golden Rams football season could be viewed with mixed emotions. The Rams will open the 1977 grid season under new head coach Whitney Van Cleve and will return, virtually intact, veteran offensive and defensive units.

However, the age old problem facing the Rams again this fall will be that of finding capable reserve strength at several positions. A promising group of freshmen are expected to fill the void on both the offensive and defensive teams.

Van Cleve cited spring drills as an indicator of what is in store for the Rams during the upcoming season. He said, "a lot of the players really 'grew up' during these drills."

The Rams lost only four lettermen via graduation and will carry a three game win streak into their season opener against Fayetteville State University on September 10. Van Cleve will have the luxury of theirty lettermen returning this fall to build the nucleus of his ball club, but is quick to point out that the Rams will still be a relatively young squad.

Offensively, the Rams will probably rely on the leadership of junior quarterbacks, Ricky Alexander, 6-4, 215, and Curtis Tucker, 6-2, 210. The overall ground attack should be vastly improved with more emphasis on a running game as opposed to last year's "run and show" offense. A wealth of talented running backs are returning including Ernest Adams, 6-1, 210; Daniel Collins, 5-11, 190; Roderick Kelly, 5-10, 185; and Anthony Kennedy, 5-10, 190.

"Our offensive line is still questionable, but it showed a lot of improvement during the spring. They are getting off the ball quicker and are hitting and staying with their men better. We feel that with a good running game, as well as a good passing game, we will be right in the thick of things for the conference championship," said Van Cleve.

The backbone of the team should again be the defensive unit. Every position will be manned by a veteran, but here again, the lack of quality reserve strength could really put a strain on the first unit.

Along the defensive front will be ALL-SIAC performer James White, 6-6, 280; Harold Stephens, 6-0, 260; and Curtis Bunche, 6-5, 240. White and Stephens should be the leaders on the defensive unit with Bunche holding his own at defensive end.

The Ram also return an outstanding pair of linebackers in Charles Monroe, 6-3, 230, and Ricky Davis, 6-2, 220. The linebackers along with an experienced secondary, led by all conference performers All Moss, 5-10, 180, and Darold Pope, 6-3, 200, should make it hard on opponents to pass successfully.

One of Van Cleve's major concerns could be his kicking game, which did an adequate job at times last season, but it is still inconsistent and could give the Rams some problems if they cannot shore up the loose ends.

Jimmy Thorpe Flies High at Greensboro Regional

By Godfrey M. Laws

GREENSBORO–There were more than plans flying high on Highway 68 near the Greensboro Regional Airport on Sunday.

Jimmy Thorpe shot a smoking 15 under par 129 at the Bel Air Golf Course to win the Gate City Open by 8 shots and $1200. Jimmy had a 65 on Saturday, 7 under, and a 64 on Sunday to post the thrilling 129.

Thorpe eclipsed the old record of 14 under for the tournament set just last year by his brother, Chuck. Thorpe's closest pursuer was Mike Walach, who shot 137 to win $700. Walach had a closing 65 on Sunday.

This reporter gave Jim a lift home on Saturday, since we are both from Roxboro. During the trip, it was revealed that he and Chuck plan to try again for tour cards at Pinehurst in October.

Jimmy was the hottest thing in Guilford County on Sunday, but the Thorpe family as a whole was quite warm. With father looking on and mother at the club house, Chuck playing in the same foursome with Jimmy, shot a 70 to go with a first round 69. One other of the five golfing brothers, Bill, shot a 71 to add to his previous 73. They earned $400 and $158, respectively.

After 'Yours Truly' shot a horrible 156, he got a chance to see how golf should really be played. Jimmy birdied the par five fifteenth and the par four sixteenth, which carried him to fifteen under. He showed his skill at the all-important short game by getting up and down on fifteen and seventeen, before closing out the superb performance with a routine par on eighteen.

Among the amateurs, Charles Smith won the Championship Flight with a 67-78, 145. Vernon Hughes came in at 147, 73-74, to take second. Willie Smith shot 73-74, 148 for third.

Chester Bradley, the tournament director, said, "This has been a very wonderful tournament. We got much cooperation and we hope it will be better in the future."

The next stop on the so-called Black Tour will be Nashville, Tennessee this weekend for the Teddy Rhodes Memorial.

PROS
(SATURDAY-SUNDAY)
Jim Thorpe, 65-64-129,$1200
Mike Walach, 72-65-137, $700
Chuck Thorpe, 69-71, 139, $400
Bobby Loy, 71-69, 140, $300
Robert Walker, 67-74, 141, $200
James Koosa, 74-68, 142, $175
George Wallace, 74-69,-143, $175
Bryan Staveley, 71-72-143, $175
Charles Bell, 70-73-143, $175
Bruce Dorsett, 70-74-144,$158
Bill Thorpe, 73-71-144, $158
William Lewis, 70-74-144, $158
Junior Walker, 70-75-145, $137
Robert Jones, 76-69-145, $137
Nick Nikas, Jr., 72-73-145, $137
Tim Saylor, 72-73-145, $137
Joseph Johnson, 72-74-146, $95
James Black, 75-71-146, $95
Rufus James, 72-74-146, $95
Phillip Neely, 76-70-146, $95
Alvin Grier, 72-74-146, $95
Pepper Murray, 73-74-147, $75
Wayne McGowan, 73-74-147, $75
Walter Worther, 73-75-148, $75
Mike Gunn, 74-74-148, $75

AMATEURS
CHAMPIONSHIP FLIGHT
Charles Smith, 67-78-145
Vernon Hughes, 73-74-147
Willie Smith, 72-76, 148
Danny Graham, 72-78-150, won playoff
George Moorehead, 75-75-150

FIRST FLIGHT
George Roach, 80-74-154
Harry Wingfield, 80-74-154
James Bouler, 81-77-158
John K. Austin, 82-76-158
Thomas Smith, 82-76-158

SECOND FLIGHT
Freddie Link, 84-76-160
Bill Johnson, 86-78-164
Johnny Sutton, 84-82-166
Thomas Grahm, 84-82=166
Herb Smith, 87-81-168

THIRD FLIGHT
John Murphy, 91-82-173
Brice Ardery, 91-84-175
James Martin, 94-84, 178
Elijah Waed, 93-85-178
Samuel Garrett, 90-89-179

SENIOR'S FLIGHT
Theodore Curtis, 86-84-170
C. V. Anthony, 87-86-173
James Summers, 88-86-174

LEAGUE OPENING NEW SEASON

The Plaza Bowling League will begin its 16th season Saturday, September 10 at Wellons Village Bowling Lanes at 4 p.m.

All old and new members are invited. For further information, contact Roosevelt Lipscomb at 682-4040.

NCCU Eagles Travel To Elizabeth City to Face The Vikings This Weekend

The NCCU Eagles look for their first victory of the year when they travel to the Elizabeth City State Vikings this Saturday. The game will be held at Memorial Field at 6 p.m. The Eagles lost a heartbreaking 14-10 home opener to Va. Union last Saturday.

Coach Willie S. Smith plans no major changes in the lineup that faced the Panthers. The Eagles held the explosive Panthers to 56 yards rushing and 82 yards passing. Smith was proud of his defense in that game. "We looked very, very good defensively, especially Odom and Overton and our front line", said Smith.

Odom led all tacklers with 2 unassisted and 16 assisted tackles. Overton had 3 unassisted and 5 assisted tackles. Chris Smith, the third linebacker had 1 unassisted and 9 assisted tackles to join Odom and Overton.

"We will be facing a new coach with a new system offensively and defensively," added Smith. "They return an outstanding passer in Johnny Williams, who threw for over 1400 yards and 15 touchdowns last year," lamented Smith. "Jeffrey Jones, a fine receiver caught 35 passes last year and Michael Hill also returns at a wide receiver post."

The Eagles plummeted the Vikings 34-0 last year. They held the Vikings to 26 yards rushing and a minus 7 yards (Williams was the quarterback at the time). The Eagles amassed 402 yards rushing and 12 yards passing. Although Ricky Moore was the quarterback last year instead Armwood, the backfield of James Lawrence, Reggie Smith and Alonzo Davis returns, along with Carl Cheek.

Lawrence had 98 yards last year against the Vikings; Smith, 84 yards; Davis, 55 yards and Cheek, 38 yards.

The Vikings must reckon with the Eagles passing attack featuring quarterback Charles Armwood, tight end Joe Mack, and wide receivers Maurice Bassett and Reggie Smith.

Armwood completed 9 of 16 passes last week for 111 yards and his touchdown pass to Mack. Mack caught 6 of Armwood's passes for 69 yards, while Bassett caught 2 passes for 33 yards.

Last year's game was the first of the series and the Eagles are looking to make two in a row.