



SPORTS

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Black on Sports



Robert Eller
Sports Editor

Rams Stress Quickness, Speed

Emphasis on conditioning and football fundamentals has ended at Winston-Salem State, head coach Bill Hayes has trimmed his squad to 67 for the season's opener against the A&T Aggies at Groves Stadium in Winston-Salem at 7 p.m., September 2.

"The Aggies are always tough," commented Hayes. "Our offensive line averages 6-0 and about 210, and their defensive line averages 6-6 and about 250. But we'll come ready to play football, not basketball."

Kermit Blount, quarterback and offensive co-captain, concedes that the Aggies' size will give him problems. "I'll have to rely

on quickness and speed," said the 5-8½, 1977 CIAA leader in total offense.

Gary Raiford, all CIAA tackle and Blount's co-captain thinks the Rams' smaller line can handle the Aggies. "Last year they were the easiest team on the schedule to block. We just kept low and blew them out. We couldn't believe it last year. We can't block them high they've got great upper body strength."

Raiford knows that the Aggies do not want a repeat of last year's 33-13 rout in Greensboro. "They've got to be different this year. They made a real turnaround last year, and I know they're really getting ready

for this game. I've just got to stay low."

The contest in Groves promises to be the largest crowd to watch Black football in North Carolina. According to Athletic Director C.E. "Bighouse" Gaines, "Tickets are selling like hotcakes" for the 30,000 seats.

The Rams schedule starts with tough A&T and gets tougher. The following week the Rams host perennial power Hampton Institute at 7 p.m. back at Bowman Gray Stadium, and then the CIAA champs go to Durham, then come back to host Virginia Union before playing always tough Norfolk State and

See Page 12



Kermit Blount

It will all come to a head Saturday night at Groves Stadium. The bickering over an A&T assistant coach spying on the Rams practice, a counter charge by A&T assistant coach spying on the Rams practice, a counter charge by A&T that the Rams sent a spy over to watch them last year and the general argument over which team is the best black college football team in North Carolina will be settled at least for some ten weeks.

The game has been moved to Groves Stadium, home of the Wake Forest Deamon Deacons, because of the overflow crowd—the game is expected to draw. Some 30,000 fans are expected to fill the stands for what some are calling the North Carolina Football Championship for black schools.

Still others, this writer included, see this game as a possible Gold Bowl preview. That is if Jim McKinley should lead the Aggies to the MEAC crown and doesn't decide to enter playoff competition and the Rams can repeat as CIAA winners.

The game should be a very emotional one for both teams. The Rams beat the Aggies for the first time in history last season in the opener for both teams and the Rams gathered momentum as the season went along finishing with an 11-0 regular season mark. They were beaten in the Gold Bowl by South Carolina State 13-6.

A&T lost two more games while still in shock from the Ram game but after adopting McKinley's system won 7 of their last 8 games losing only to Central Michigan, a Division I school, by a single point.

Both teams are loaded with returning stars from last year squads. WSSU returns their entire backfield but must replace offensive line standouts Robert Weeks, an ALL-NAIA selection, guard Dwayne Finch and tackle Terry Jackson. On defense the Rams will miss NAIA-ALL American safety Cornelius Washington and ALL-CIAA and team captain James Winbush.

The Aggies return 10 defensive starters and the nucleus of the most potent offense in the MEAC. McKinley's main problem on offense will be replacing three-time ALL-MEAC quarterback Elsworth Turner. 6-2 190 sophomore William Watson is the likely starter against the Rams. He is an excellent passer and should test the new Ram secondary minus Washington and Reggie Sherard.

This years game should be much closer than last years when the Aggies were slightly overconfident and underprepared.

The game could boil down to a battle between the Aggies super defense and the Rams potent offense led by Kermit Blount, the CIAA's total offense leader in 1978. Blount has plenty of horses to carry the ball and a core of good receivers to catch it. The question is can the reconstructed offensive line hold the Aggie defensive line which averages 6-6 250.

The Ram offensive line averages 6-0 210.

If so, Timmy Newsome, Randy Bolton, a.J. Jones, Chris Kirkpatrick, Smiley Watson and a number of other backs lurking in the woodwork (not the kudzu vines) should have a field day.

If not, it will be up to the Ram defense led by ends Anderson Noble and Winfred Mack, linebackers Baxter Harrington and Joe Ashe, and Willie Jordan and Carl Redd up front to stop the running of freshman sensation Charlie Sutton 6-2 225 with 9.6 speed and transfer Cleotis Johnson.

Watson has a number of fine receivers set to test the Rams new secondary which includes former quarterback Harold Timmons to go along with returnees Robert Johnson and Dennis Bullock.

Look for a hard nosed battle with the outcome hinging on one big play—the kind of play Kermit Blount has made a habit of.

PREDICTION: WSSU 20 A&T 14

PRIDE OF PHOWNERSHIP

For years, the telephone has served as a necessity of modern living. And now, consumers can combine fashion with function through the purchase of their own telephone. In essence, the telephone—as a decorating item—serves as an extension of one's personal tastes. And the many styles and colors available today allow the user to own a phone that complements rather than dictates decor.

Among the collection of fashionable phones available from General Telephone & Electronics Corporation, is the Starlite® telephone—a diminutive and elegant model that makes a perfect bedside companion. The Starlite unit, designed and manufactured by GTE Automatic Electric, is available in both rotary dial and Touch Calling models, and in contemporary shades of arctic white, light blue and avocado—all with color-matched cords.



GREENSBORO—North Carolina A&T all-American defensive end Dwayne "Pee Wee" Board takes a break from pre-season workouts to get some good luck kisses from Debbie Richardson (1) and Angela Watson. Board and the rest of the Aggies will be all business on September 2 when the team travels to Winston-Salem to play the Rams at Groves Stadium.

Aggies Tout Defense

GREENSBORO, N.C. —As North Carolina A&T State University approached the 1977 football season, the Aggies were extremely confident that they would handle their opening opponent, Winston-Salem State, with little trouble.

The Aggies had dominated the series by an 18-0 margin and even cancelled the series once as the coaching staff sought stiffer competition.

But, last season the Rams stunned A&T 33-14 before 20,000 fans in Greensboro to start a perfect 11-0 regular season.

The revenge-minded Aggies will travel to Winston-Salem's Groves Stadium on Saturday, September 2 to open their 1978 football campaign.

"Billy Hayes and his staff did a fantastic job last season and returned a nucleus of that team for this season," said second-year A&T head coach, Jim McKinley.

"There is a natural rivalry that exists between our schools which could make this game one of the most exciting in terms of fan appeal and quality of competition in the east."

The Aggies will counter the powerful Ram attack with one of the best defenses in A&T modern history.

The A&T front defensive line headed by 6-5, 245-pound All-American Dwayne "Pee Wee" Board at defensive end, also boasts 6-7, 262-pound All-

MEAC defensive tackle Lucien Nibbs, 6-7, 260-pound transfer from Central State, Ulysses Thompson and 6-4, 240-pound sophomore, Gerry Green.

To compliment the tall and talented front-line, the

Aggies return the "Greensboro Gang"—defensive backs Thomas Warren, Gerald Johnson and Tony Currie, who combined for a total of 19 of the teams' 28 interceptions last season.

See Page 12

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CIAA - MEAC

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