



FAMU's Ray Alexander cradles a first-quarter catch against Grambling's Eric Scott (photo by James Parker).

pro scouts drooling by game's end, and also earned lofty praise from Davis, knotted the score, culminating a 12-play, 75-yard drive. His leaping turnaround catch of a Green pass over two SWAC defenders from nine yards out made the comeback complete. The MEAC failed to take the lead, however, when Daniels missed the PAT.

The MEAC squad looked as if it would take the lead on its next possession as Sandiland returned a punt 19 yards to the SWAC 31-yard line. But Roy Bennett of Jackson State picked off a Green pass at the four.

With Smith now back at the SWAC controls, (Brent played the first and third quarters with Smith handling the second- and fourth-quarter duties) the SWAC used 11 plays to cover 96 yards and score the clinching touchdown.

Smith had three pass completions for 45 yards in the drive, but penalties also played an important part in the score. First, the SWAC was hit with an offensive pass interference penalty that changed a third and goal situation

from the five to a fourth and goal at the 20.

Robinson, however, disdained the field goal. Smith threw in the direction of Stamps in the corner of the end zone but the pass was off. Meanwhile, Roberts had decked Stevens in the middle of the field and the linebacker was called for holding. An unsportsmanlike conduct penalty on the defense caused Davis to walk onto the

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-- Bill Davis

field for an explanation. What he got was another unsportsmanlike penalty and the SWAC ended up with a first down at the four.

This time, Smith hit Stamps with the pass and the point after gave SWAC a 29-22 lead and the win. "It was such a great week and the players were so friendly with each other," said Davis in the dressing room after cooling off, "that maybe we should have played the game without officials like you do a

pickup basketball game. But I'm not going to harp on the officiating."

Two turnovers thwarted MEAC comeback attempts on its next two possessions. Bennett's hard hit on Fashaw ended one and Alcorn's Marlon Expose's interception of a Green pass stopped the second.

The Expose interception put the SWAC on the MEAC 31, but Smith's pass was incomplete on fourth down.

The MEAC took over on its nine but could not move. When the SWAC held on downs and took over with 15 seconds left, Smith passed to Stevens for the final points of the contest.

"I'm very very happy," said Robinson in the winners' dressing room after addressing the players and allowing all the coaches to have a word as well. "We worked the kids hard all week long and it paid off. We were fortunate to have quality athletes. I'm proud of

not only the way they played but the way the MEAC played as well. This is one of my top experiences in coaching and I was just as determined to win this game as any game Grambling plays."

While Davis wasn't happy with the final score, there was still joy in the MEAC locker room. "The thing I hate most is that these 32 kids can't get back together again," he said. "Lamont Green played a super game and Ray Alexander probably has the finest hands in America. We had a lot of kids playing out of position but they gave a super effort and our coaches did a great job."

"Today was the brightest day in black college football history and I think next year we will have a bigger crowd. I know one thing: The people who weren't here today missed one hell of a great game."

And with that, Davis forgot about the penalty and the last SWAC score, and walked away smiling proudly. Then he turned and added, "The MEAC was well-represented today and there were no losers."

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route to the title came against Union in the first round of the South Atlantic Regional. UDC won that game in overtime, then breezed. Last year, Union knocked off UDC in Richmond when the Firebirds were ranked No. 1 in the country, a loss that was later avenged by UDC in D.C.

Union defeated UDC this season when the Firebirds were missing

Jones. If the two clubs should meet again in post-season play, Robbins knows it won't be so easy.

"Sure, they're stronger with Earl," says Robbins. "But that's a long way off. There's no reason to speculate about that now."

When Jones and Oakley go at it, there is no better matchup in Division II, or perhaps anywhere. It's the muscle of Oakley against the

finesse and smoothness of Jones.

"I like playing Earl," says Oakley. "It brings out the best in me."

Even at less than his best, Oakley is almost always too much for the opposition.

Barring injury, he should become one of a select few to be named all-CIAA four years in a row. It's also possible he'll be awarded three

Player-of-the-Year trophies.

Individual honors aren't Oakley's bag, however.

He's a team man all the way.

"I don't care about being all-this and all-that," he says. "I just want to win a national championship."

Oakley fully intends to go back to Springfield this March. And this time he's determined to take his sneakers along with him.