

Southern defense key in Bayou Classic victory

Coach Pete Richardson wins for second straight year

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

As big a game as the Bayou Classic is, perhaps Grambling was looking past Southern and to their match-up in the SWAC championship against Jackson State in three weeks.

The Tiger defense, which came into the contest ranked second in the SWAC in total defense, couldn't stop Southern en route to a 22-13 win in front of an announced crowd of 53,297 at the Louisiana Superdome over the weekend.

The win gave Southern its' second straight Bayou Classic victory.

"They were better than us," said Grambling first year head coach Rod Broadway. "They played better than us, they were better prepared and it's embarrassing."

Southern (8-3) opened up the game putting together a methodical nine-play, 80-yard drive as running back Darren Coates gained 45 of those yards including capping off the drive with a 1-yard dive to put the Jaguars ahead 7-0. The Tigers used a mix of pass

and run on the ensuing drive and Cornelius Walker's 1-yard run tied the game at 7-7. The Jaguars came right back, moving the ball against the much acclaimed Grambling defense with ease. Late in the drive on 2nd and 12 Gerard Landry's one-handed 27-yard catch and run from Bryant Lee kept the Southern drive alive. Two plays later Lee found Coates for an easy 10-yard touchdown reception and the Jaguars led 14-7.

There would not be a third straight score on Southern's next possession as the Tiger defense began to settle down, forcing the Jaguars to punt, into an interception and a punt on its next three possessions. Grambling ended the half with quarterback Brandon Landers throwing an interception, and a punt as Southern held the 14-7 halftime lead.

In the second half the Jaguar defense put more pressure on Landers, the league's second best passing quarterback. He threw for 96 yards in the half finishing the day 22-of-36 for 192 yards with 1 touchdown and 2 interceptions. Lee, injured in the first half, did not play in the second half and back-up Warren Matthews was efficient completing 9-of-13 passes for 94 yards.



Southern's Darren Coates (43) dives over a Tiger defender for his first of two touchdowns.

Photo by Brittany Thornton

Late in the third, Tim Manuel's punt was blocked and went out of the end zone for a Jaguars safety and extended their lead to 16-7. Duran's 23-yard field goal

with 8 minutes, 18 second remaining in the game further extended the Jaguars lead to 19-7. But on the ensuing possession, the Tigers quickly moved the ball down the field

putting together an 8-play 67-yard drive in 2:47 capped off by Landers (7-8-67 on the drive) 27-yard touchdown strike to Edwards.

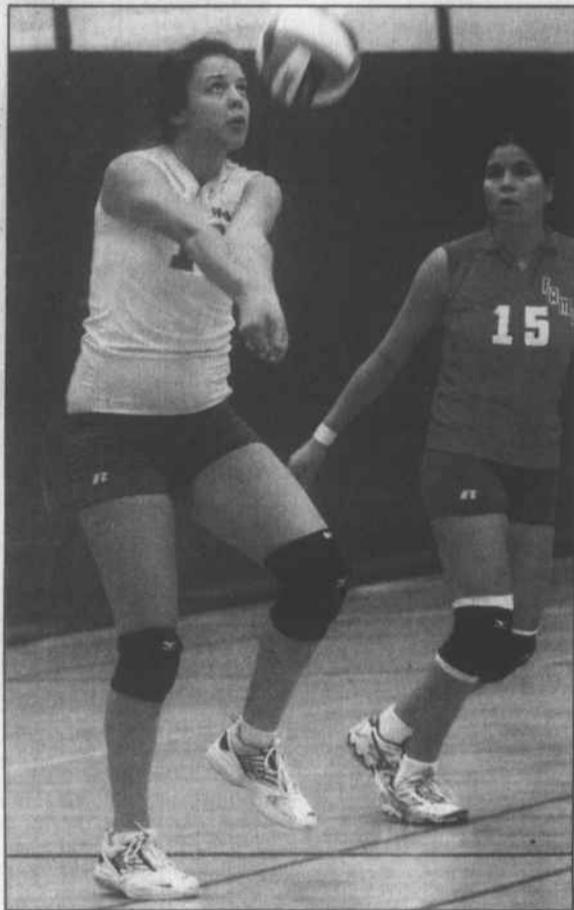
Southern (8-3, 6-3) put the

game away as Matthews found Coates for 32 yards on third and 2 keeping the drive alive and Duran's 37-yard field goal with 1:19 remaining gave the Jaguars a 22-13 lead and all but sealed the deal.

Coates finished the day with 107 yards rushing on 20 carries and four receptions for 46 yards and was named the Classic's MVP.

The combination of Lee and Matthews produced 21 completions in 31 attempts for 214 yards with 1 touchdown and one interception. Jon Malveaux (16 tackles, 10 solo) helped lead the Jaguars defense in allowing Grambling only 253 yards of total offense.

"There have been a lot of struggles this year but my assistant coaches did a good job of keeping them focused," said Southern head coach Pete Richardson, who received a three-year contract extension last Friday. "And our seniors made sure everybody would play hard."



FAMU photo

FAMU's Iva Latic will lead the Rattlers into the first round of the NCAA tournament.

Florida A&M to face Oklahoma

Rattlers set to start NCAA D-I Volleyball Championships

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The Florida A&M Lady Rattlers will face the No. 21 Oklahoma Sooners in the opening round of the 2007 NCAA Division I Volleyball Championship today (Thursday) beginning at 5 p.m. at the Stephen O'Connell Center on the campus of the University of Florida (Gainesville).

As the 2007 Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) champion, the Lady Rattlers received the leagues' automatic bid to the NCAA championship. Florida A&M finished the season with an 18-7 overall record and 8-0 mark in conference play. This year's championship marks the Lady Rattlers' seventh straight trip to the NCAA Volleyball Championship and their ninth appearance in the last ten years.

Oklahoma earned an at-large selection and is making its second consecutive NCAA appearance after advancing to the Sweet 16 last season. The Sooners were 21-9 overall

record and finished fourth in the Big 12 Conference with a 17-3 mark. The Big 12 Conference was among three conferences with six teams selected to this year's championship tournament. This is the first-ever meeting between the two schools.

Florida A&M will join host No. 13 Florida (27-2), the College of Charleston (26-7) and Oklahoma in the Gainesville Regional. Florida will face the College of Charleston on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. The winners of both matches will meet on Friday at 6 p.m. for a chance to advance to the Sweet 16.

Overall, 64 teams make up the bracket for the 2007 NCAA Division I Volleyball Championship. Thirty-one conferences were awarded automatic qualification, and the remaining 33 positions were filled with at-large selections.

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