

Golden Bulls regroup for Fayetteville State

JCSU looking for first-ever win at Belk Complex

By Herbert L. White
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Losing at Belk Complex hasn't given Johnson C. Smith's Golden Bulls a complex - yet.

Smith's on-campus futility streak reached 13 games with a 15-9 loss last week to St. Augustine's, which all but handed the CIAA West to N.C. Central. But a home win Saturday against Fayetteville State keeps the Bulls (5-2, 3-2) in second place and clinches Smith's first winning season since the 1998 team finished 6-4.

"We've just got to go back and reload," Bulls coach Daryl McNeill said. "I'm still proud of our kids, proud of what we've been able to accomplish. I just hope the university and the city stay with us."

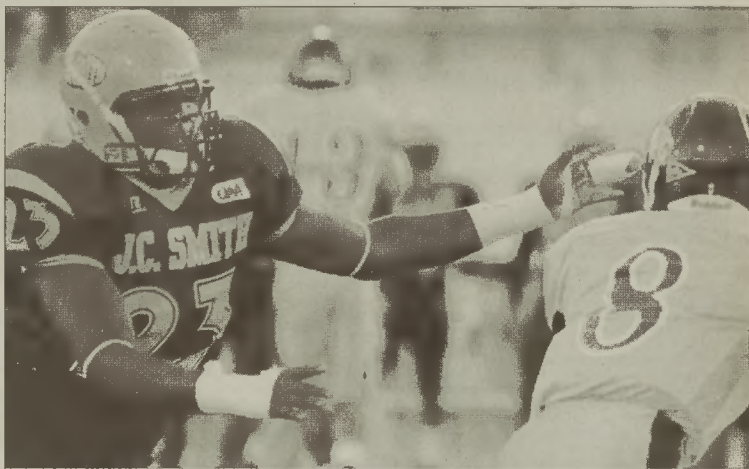
Smith stumbled on offense against St. Augustine's, which pressured Bulls quarterbacks Carlton Richardson and Donja Goodson and stuffed the running game. The Bulls managed just 109 yards total

offense. St. Augustine's defensive end Alex Hall was a terror with 4.5 sacks and safety Marsean Chestnut came up with the game-winning score on a 3-yard fumble return in the fourth quarter. The key was field position - St. Augustine's didn't allow Smith to establish any in the second half, and the Bulls were outscored 15-6.

"We weren't able to execute on some things," McNeill said. "A lot of times when you get backed up you just try to do things safe and we couldn't protect. When you can't protect your quarterback, he can't have a chance to set his feet, these are the kind of things that happen."

Still, JCSU has much to play for. The division, and a possibility of making the Pioneer Bowl as the CIAA's runner-up are out. But second in the West and a plus-500 season are available with a win Saturday.

"We know we do, and that's what I told the kids," McNeill said. "With some luck from the other side, we still have two conference games left and most of the teams in the conference have three left. We still feel like we're one up on everybody and we'll be able to hopefully push this thing on through."



PHOTO/CURTIS WILSON

Johnson C. Smith defensive end Elijah Ashley bears down on St. Augustine's receiver duane Smith in the Golden Bulls' 15-9 loss last week at Belk Complex. Smith can clinch his first winning season since 1998 with a win Saturday against Fayetteville State at Belk Complex, where the Bulls are 0-13 since the stadium opened in 2003. A victory would keep Smith in second place in the CIAA West Division.

With top receiver fully healthy, Panthers playing up to potential

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it, you don't get into that condition. Steve was a guy who was on the shelf for a while.

He's gotten better each week."

So has Delhomme, who threw for a career-high 365 yards and two touchdowns, including a 42-yard TD pass to Drew Carter. Carter also made a diving catch for a first down with just over a minute left that ended the Ravens' chances.

If Carter could become a consistent threat along with Smith and Keyshawn Johnson, the Panthers could be tough to stop.

"Drew hadn't played a whole lot until about halfway through the season a year ago," Fox said. "The second half of the season and the playoffs he gained valuable experience and I think at the end of the day, some confidence to carry over to this year."

While the passing attack took off Sunday, Carolina struggled on the ground,

averaging just 1.9 yards per rush. But Fox said the Panthers went into the game knowing they would have to throw the ball against a Ravens defense that was stingy against the run.

"I didn't go into the game and I don't think anybody in that locker room thought we were going to...get 150 yards rushing," Fox said. "All things are possible, but that was the strength of their defense. You have to do it just to make them commit guys to it, and it opened up other things and we were able to execute."

The Panthers have also found a way to get their offensive line functioning again. After losing left tackle Travelle Wharton to a season-ending knee injury and center Justin Hartwig to a groin pull in Week 1, the Panthers were forced to make major changes. Jeremy Bridges, who wasn't in the league in at the start of the season, has filled in nicely at right tackle and Geoff Hangartner has done so well at center Hartwig may have to stay on the bench when he's ready to return.

"It's really not a consideration of how much a guy makes, what round he was taken in or what part of the country he's from," Fox said. "We're going to put the best guys out there that give us a chance to win."

Despite losing middle linebacker Dan Morgan (concussion) for the season, the Panthers' defense has improved dramatically after allowing 252 yards rushing to Atlanta in the opener. Carolina has gone four straight games without allowing 100 yards on the ground.

Carolina's defensive anchor, Julius Peppers, leads the league with eight sacks after notching two more against Baltimore and forcing a fumble.

The team continues a tough stretch next week when they visit Cincinnati and then host Dallas the following week, but Carolina appears to be in good shape, as long as Smith continues to outrun everyone in the league.

"We feel pretty good right now," Foster said. "We're going in the right direction, but we're not done yet."



Fox

got to write (stuff) down."

With a shaved head, mustache and goatee, the 6-foot-3 (1.91-meter) first baseman is a fierce batter for pitchers to face. But away from the plate, he has a grin that lights up the room, and he gives some of the most intelligent, erudite responses among major leaguers.

A thoughtful star, Cardinals' Carlos Delgado carries team

By Ronald Blum
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. LOUIS - Most of the New York Mets were putting on their snazzy dress clothes, ready to head back to their hotels. Carlos Delgado was still in the clubhouse wearing sweats and carrying a bat, his work day not yet done.

In his first postseason of a major league career that began in 1993, Delgado has carried the Mets within two wins of the World Series with a polished performance that most players only dream of.

"It's fun when you're winning. It's fun when you're going out there getting hits," he said with a wide smile and a chuckle on Monday after Game 5 of the National League championship series was rained out.

His 1,711 games without a postseason appearance had been the most among active major leaguers, a distinction now taken over by Jeremy Burnitz (1,694). Delgado is batting .414 (12-for-29) with four homers and 11 RBIs in seven games.

But it's not just what he's hitting, it's when he's hitting. His home run against the Los Angeles Dodgers tied the first-round opener, and all three against the St. Louis Cardinals have broken ties.

"When there's runners in scoring position, you almost see him switch modes into this automatic run-producer. It's special to watch," Mets third baseman David Wright said.

Delgado is not just a teammate - he's also a teacher and motivator. He records each of his plate appearances in a notebook for future reference.

"I had it for like probably 10 years," Delgado said. "The last few years, it's a habit. It's part of my routine. I write it down, and at the end of the day I have a little bit more customized - for lack of a better term - scouting report. My memory's not as good as it used to be, so I've

got to write (stuff) down."

Delgado became the 11th player to get four hits in his postseason debut, according to the Elias Sports Bureau, and against the Cardinals he became only the fifth player with nine or more RBIs in the first four games of a league championship series, joining Graig Nettles, Don Baylor, Matt Williams and Hideki Matsui.

"That real cerebral approach," manager Willie Randolph said.

Delgado's gregarious, inquisitive personality filters down to teammates.

"He was one that spent so much time studying pitchers, I thought that stuff was contagious," Mets general manager Omar Minaya said.

But talking, of course, isn't enough in the major leagues. You have to produce.

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"This guy's got it all," Cardinals manager Tony La Russa said. "Guys like that, they have the ability to hit a lot of different pitches and they make adjustments. That's Carlos Delgado, can't go to the same place to get him out. You've got to mix it up, and if you've made a mistake like we've made, he punishes you. He's a big-time producer."

Before the Mets acquired him from Florida last November, Delgado was probably known best in New York for his refusal to stand on the field during "God Bless America" in 2004 and 2005, a protest of the U.S.-Iraq war. Once he got to the Mets, he dropped that protest because Randolph expects his players to "stand at attention and honor the flag" during the song.

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