

# SPORTS

## Viking Blues: despite victories team flattens at season's end

by Mark Morris

The ECSU baseball team started the 1989-90 season with a momentum that promised an end to the "Viking Blues" of the long athletic year.

But after finishing the season losing 10 of their last 12 games, giving the niners a 13-15 record, the "V" in Vikings is still this year's "scarlet letter" of the CIAA.

The Vikings began the season on the road March 2, taking a 16-5 spanking from Christopher Newport. However, the young but close-knit team quickly turned things around with a six-game winning streak which included doubleheader victories over Binghamton College and St. Paul, as well as wins over St. Joseph and the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.

The ECSU run was stopped short of seven games as they split a doubleheader with the Coast Guard Academy. The Vikings also split a twinville with conference opponent, Virginia State and knocked off Bowie, giving them an 8-3 record and with a full head of steam going into their first clash with Norfolk State University.

A fired-up Viking squad turned in

a classic performance. ECSU took an 8-4 victory over the home team in game one of the doubleheader, but seemed to run out of gas for the second game and was defeated 12-2.

The Vikings fought to maintain their winning record, but the fatigue factor was too much as they were scheduled to play a grueling 16 games over an 8 day span.

Sophomore outfielder, Paul Council felt that the Vikings were a completely different team from that point on.

"Everyone was distracted because we were constantly thinking of the time we were spending out of class," said Council. "We were all very tired also as basically the same starting nine was used until the very end when a few changes were made, but by that time fatigue had already taken its toll."

The 2-10 run which featured an eight-game losing streak left the Vikings flat at the end of the season and very little momentum going into the CIAA tournament.

Team batting leaders for the season were Kovic Brown who had 34 hits on the year finishing with a .386 average, Scott Bigbie who had 30 hits

for a batting average of .333, and Chris Tomlinson who had 25 hits for an average of .338. Freshman catcher, Eric Oglesby, also showed up well at the plate this year hitting 21 times with a .296 average.

"I really wasn't intimidated this year by being a freshman," said Eric. "I knew what I could do coming out of high school. That goes for batting and playing catcher as well, once I'm in a game situation, my 'baseball smarts' take over."

A major flaw in the Viking baseball program this season was the lack of power on the mound. Alexander Daniels, who was expected to do well pitching this season aggravated a back injury that he acquired during basketball season, leaving the Vikings to rely greatly on the services of super frosh, David Abernathy.

The young pitcher from Hertford, NC posted the highest record of all Viking pitchers with six wins and one loss. Senior John Gurganus was just as busy winning three out seven starts and registered the most strikeouts on the team with 26. Steve Harrell was second in strikeouts with 19, followed by Abernathy with 16.



Viking baseballers Steve Harrell, Scott Bigbie, and Eric Spruill (left to right) watch as a teammate hits a pop fly during ECSU's Easter Sunday match against Norfolk State at Knobbs Creek Recreational Center in Elizabeth City.

## Darrell McCalop: 'unsung hero' of ECSU's Athletic Department

By Mark Morris

When he isn't taping knees and ankles, or taking inventory on a mountain of athletic equipment, you will find him in the ECSU infirmary.

His name is Darrell McCalop and he may very well be the best kept secret in Viking sports.

He appeared on the scene at ECSU in the spring of 1981, a student trainee from a junior college expecting to continue his education under the guidance of an established professional. However, Darrell McCalop's apprenticeship lasted the duration of a single football scrimmage and before he knew it he had "the keys to the store."

"I began in the spring at a blue and white game and there was already an athletic trainer here," he recalls. "But when we came back in August, I was faced with the responsibilities of being the athletic trainer and equipment manager all by myself."

From that moment until now there has not been a single dull moment for the intense young man from Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Darrell McCalop, trainer and equipment manager, doesn't know any other way to play it.

"I'm a workaholic" he says. "My day begins sometimes at six or seven in the morning and at times, I'm leaving the Vaughn Center at midnight or one A.M."

McCalop has been a trainer since his high school days beginning in 1975, where he experienced much of his growth in the field.

"As a trainer, I had to have a soft side and as an equipment manager I had to have a hard side, but the hardest part being 17 years old and having to give instructions to guys older than myself, but I basically had everyone's respect which made things easier."

McCalop was in no way overwhelmed by the transition from high school to college level athletics; he attributes this to the help he has received from ECSU students.

"I've been lucky because of the outstanding student workers I've had over the years, from Kim Cooper and Anthony Thames in 1981 to Wylia Slade, Deya Arujuno, and Jamette Smith of more recent times."

McCalop stresses how important such students have been to him.

"If I told them that we had to begin preparing for a game at four in the

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**Darrell McCalop**

morning, they would be there, and that's vital to any athletic trainers' program."

McCalop says he has had to draw on his own patience in order to prevent his job from becoming chaotic. The pressures—resulting from other people's expectations of him—can be difficult.

"At times it's like you have to be a robot," he says. "You're not supposed to have bad days; you're always supposed to be cheerful and understanding."

McCalop added that the problems increase when an athlete may not show up at the prescribed time for treatment; this makes it impossible to maintain a consistent schedule.

"You always try to be the best you can be but you can burnout."

The danger of trainer burnout is especially high during a brief time span each year, when basketball season winds down and gives way to the spring sports. McCalop is responsible for seven sports during that time.

Moreover, five days a week McCalop works a 8 p.m. to midnight shift in the infirmary. And all injuries or problems that need attention after midnight demand Mr. McCalop's presence as well.

Given his experience and dedication to athletics, it's not surprising that McCalop has strong opinions about college athletics. He gets irritated with the "experts" when they accuse NCAA division II athletics of being a waste of time, calling the

dream of professional sports far-fetched due to competition from their division I counterparts.

"Players in CIAA and everywhere else in division II get just as much of a shot of playing pro ball as anyone," he says. "Professional scouts are not so naive to think that every decent college athlete belongs to a mega university. In fact, many of the super athletes who come out of high school with intentions to play their sport in college benefit from coming to an ECSU because their chances of graduation are much higher here."

Social pressures can also be lighter at smaller schools like ECSU, he added.

Athletes who do not go pro are by no means wasting their time at ECSU, McCalop continued, "because of the discipline and character that athletics instill in a youth."

Nothing keeps McCalop in motion like injuries. His job is to constantly check up and rehabilitate injured players, and deal with athletes who are trying to do too much.

"The coaching staff here is good about not pressuring an injured kid to get well fast, but you have some players such as Paul Byrd who you literally have to hide his helmet and shoulder pads from." Although McCalop feels a great responsibility to protect his athletes he quickly points out that by no means is it the sole responsibility of the trainer to protect the player from self-destructing. He cites the recent death of LMU basketball star Hank Gathers as an example of a player who sacrifices his health and well-being on the altar of winning at all cost.

"Gathers should not even have been playing with a condition serious enough to place his heart in jeopardy," says McCalop. "No injured player will play at ECSU unless he is cleared by his doctor."

McCalop admits that at times it really does hurt a team to have to tell a player no. For example, a few seasons ago ECSU's starting quarterback, Tim Warren was injured during practice and had to sit out a game between the Vikings and their conference rival, Bowie State.

McCalop strives hard to be the very best he can be. Aside from any recognition that anyone could offer him, what he would like to see most is more respect for his profession itself.

## Athletes honored at banquet

by James Sims

Top student athletes in the Albemarle area were honored at the 9th Annual Albemarle Football Awards Banquet held at the Kermit E. White Graduate Center March 22, 1990.

ECSU Viking Michael Mabry, a 6'2 248 lb junior linebacker won the Player of the Year Golden Helmet Award, and his third consecutive Thomas L. Caldwell award.

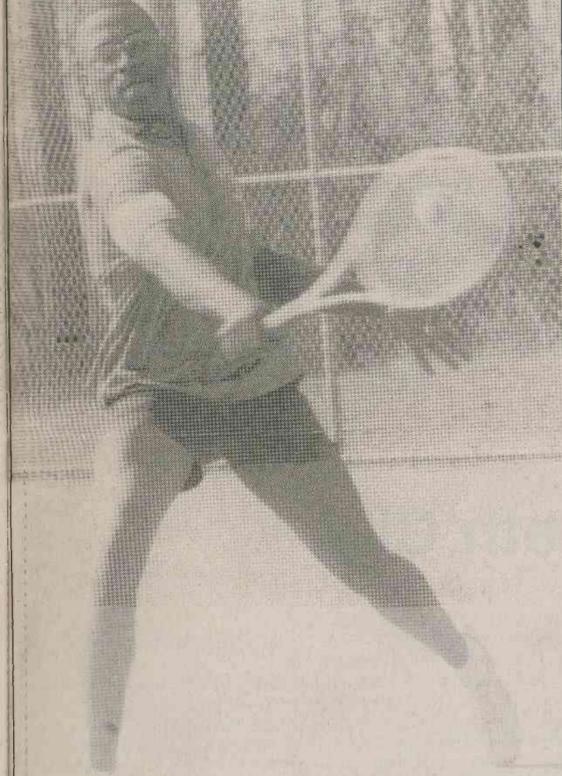
Coca Cola representative Art Jarrett presented a check for \$1,000 to the ECSU Scholarship Fund, on behalf of Michael Mabry.

Everett McGiver, an ECSU defensive end, won the ECSU Player of the Year award. Charles Lee, a senior from Currituck received the All Albemarle Player of the Year award.

Coach Donnie Simpson won the Albemarle Coach of the Year Award. Simpson's Knights won the Eastern Regional 1-A championship last fall, ending the season with a 13-1 record.

The awards banquet and awards, sponsored by Elizabeth City State University, The Daily Advance, Hardees and Mid-Atlantic Coca Cola, included a buffet style meal and a performance by the band, Sullivan's Combo.

The guest speaker was Elizabeth City Mayor Sidney Oman.



Tennis squad co-captain Tim McRae executes a flawless backhand during a match at St. Paul's University in Lawrenceville, Virginia. Because of administrative foul-ups, McRae, his teammates and ECSU's softball team didn't participate in this season's CIAA Spring tournament held in Winston-Salem. See editorial on page 2.

## A daily journal: lineman records trials and joys of spring practice

by James Sims

(James Sims is a 5'11", 220-pound offensive lineman on the Vikings football team. He is a sophomore from Augusta, Georgia.)

Wednesday March 21, 1990

Although the sun is out, it's a little chilly but a good day for practice. Everyone is out on the practice field about 3:50 pm at Elizabeth City State University waiting for the coach to arrive. I thought we would start out running today, but instead everyone was weighed in and had their height measured. To see if everyone had been working out prior to spring practice, everyone had to bench press his maximum weight. (I benched pressed 365 pounds, 145 pounds more than my weight, 220 pounds, and a tie for the number one spot of the day).

March 22

I expected to go out today and run also, but to my surprise we exercised by doing jumping jacks, stretching and push-ups. Coach Johnny Walton then told everyone what we would be doing during the course of spring practice, things such as working on agility, fundamentals and endurance. To end the day, we ran ten sample 100-yard sprints; tomorrow we would have to run them in a certain time. Practice was short today; it usually lasts from 4 pm until 6 pm.

March 23

Today is the day that no one wanted to see. We had to run ten 100-yard

sprints, and each sprint had to be done within a certain time: linebackers and tight ends within 14 seconds, receivers and running backs within 13 seconds, defensive backs within 12 seconds, and lineman within 16 seconds.

Linemen were the last to run, but unfortunately practice ended before we got to run. The sprints were murder on some people who were not in shape. "This is harder than I expected," said Paris Booth, a walk-on freshman linebacker, from Washington, N.C., who was breathing heavily while lying on the ground.

March 26

Today is the day that lineman run their ten 100-yard sprints. I don't know about the other big lineman, but I was ready to get it over with. I ran the sprints with a breeze, but unfortunately guys such as Robert Russ, a 357-pound freshman offensive tackle from Deerfield Beach, Fla., had some trouble. "I have cramps in my toes," said Russ as he sat on the ground massaging his toes after the sixth sprint.

March 27

Personally, I think practice is too easy. Today we had fun doing individual drills and racing each other. Other players were laughing and enjoying the relay race between offensive and defensive players. But I must say that team morale is very much alive. Everyone seems anxious for the regular season to begin. I do believe that the 1990 Viking team will be a totally different ball club. Mainly

because we have more quality players, a lot of players have been working out regularly on their own and everyone has a positive attitude.

April 3

Practice has really started to pick up a little during this last week. We're doing more one-on-one drills, which is a lot of fun. Working on things such as one-on-one blocking, which the offensive and defensive linemen do, makes the team wish we had on full equipment.

April 4

Today Mark Hines, an upcoming sophomore defensive tackle from Greenville, N.C., had a front tooth knocked loose by Aaron Back an offensive center from Swansboro, N.C., while doing one-on-one pass blocking drills.

"It hurts," said Mark, as he was reluctant to get back into the action. Even though it was an accident, Back received his share of the pain also. "Are you alright?" Back asked Hines while rubbing his own head. "Yeah," said Hines. "But I think I'll sit this one out."

April 5

"Let's go, it's time to start practice" shouted last year's team captain Michael Mabry, as he led the warm up lap around the field. Michael Mabry is a truly good leader. He does a good job getting things started and he keeps the players pepped up. We have a lot of good leaders on the team but he is one of the outstanding ones. By my senior year, I really hope to be captain.



Spring practice is a time to prepare for the rigorous demands of the fall season. The players, seen here running a rope drill, participated in other exercises to keep them in tune for next season's battles on the gridiron.