

Viking loss to Virginia's Trojans ends hopes for CIAA Championship in '95

by Carlos McCormick

Football, like love, can be a hurtin' thing.

ECSU's Oct. 21 loss to the Virginia State Trojans was a hurtin' thing for a team that had played their hearts out all year—a team whose hard work, dedication and skill had brought them to the brink of becoming CIAA champions.

ECSU kicked off to the Trojans as they deferred possession to the second half. Virginia wasted no time in scoring as quarterback Rodney Granger hit Tillman on a 50-yard pass for a touchdown with only three minutes and 11 seconds elapsing on the clock. The Trojans led (8-0) after the two-point conversion.

On their first possession, ECSU's Malcom Mackey ran the ball 52 yards into Trojan territory. But Virginia tightened their defense and the Vikes had to settle for a 27-yard field goal by Wilton Evans.

The Trojans reeled off 36 points, amassing 360 yards to finish the game 44-3. "It was the worst performance of the year," said Viking Coach George Moody.

The Vikes threw five interceptions, and could only muster 178 offensive yards. With all these factors the Vikes lost their second game of the year, along with this year's chance to win a CIAA championship.

"We were so close to winning the championship — I really don't know what went wrong," said junior Ivan Deloatch.

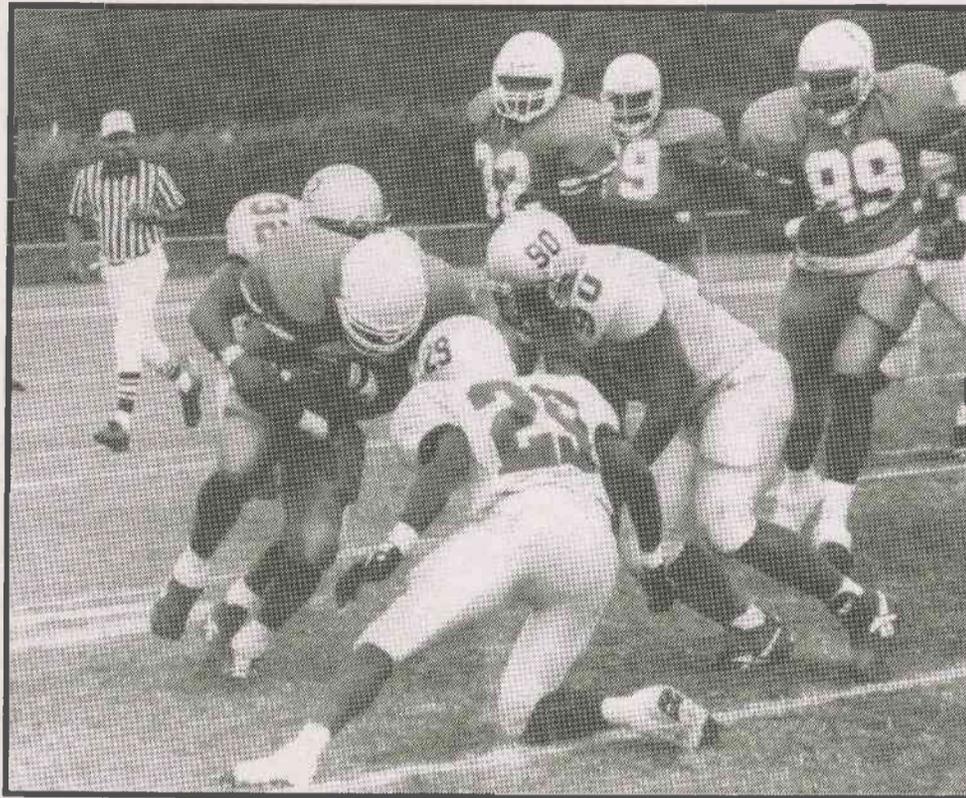
On Oct. 28 the Vikes faced former CIAA champions Hampton University — without the service of two their starters, Ivan Deloatch and Derrick Harrel. The Vikes scored 13 points in the nationally televised (36-13) loss, and lost two key players to injuries — Murchinson and Lamont Avent.

"They were not that much better than us — they just got all the lucky breaks," said Kenny Crump.

This year ECSU placed high hopes on a returning nucleus of starters; a defense led by all CIAA defensive back, Barry Liscomb and two key linebackers: senior, Andrew Richardson and junior, Dameon Latta, and an offense led by Aaron Murchinson, Kenny Crump, and Travis Wright.

The Vikes started the season at home against the Bears of Livingston College. They scored on an 8-yard stomp by Crump ending the first quarter (6-0).

In the second the Bears shut down ECSU's offense leaving the Vikes' defense to score the only two points of



The Vikings' Aaron Murchinson (#22), the second leading rusher in the CIAA, fights for extra yardage in the Sept. 31 game against North Carolina Central's Eagles. The Vikings won 27-26.

the quarter. A QB sack for a safety by Marcus Barber put the Vikes up (8-0).

Neither team scored in the third but in the fourth junior running-back Lamont Avent scored on a 13 yard scamper. The two-point conversion put ECSU up (16-0). The Vikes defense, hoping for a shutout, came up short when the Bears' Mclain broke loose for a 43-yard touchdown run. The Vikes would go on to win their home opener (16-6).

On Sept. 9, ECSU travelled to Fayetteville, NC to take on the Broncos. The Broncos opened up the scoring with a fake field goal resulting in a 20-yard touchdown pass from Bryant to Young with 7:47 remaining in the first.

"It really caught us off guard but we had a whole ballgame to come back," said senior, Lorenzo McPhatter. On the next possession the Vikes took the ball down the field and capped off the scoring drive on a 6-yard run by Avent with 3:46 left in the quarter.

With 10:24 left in the second quarter Avent ran for another TD. The two point conversion by Montez Wilson was successful in spite of a mishandled snap. The Vikes were up at halftime (16-7). The third quarter was a scoreless defensive battle but in the fourth Crump scored on a 14-yard rumble closing the game (22-7).

Sept. 16, the Vikes took their number one defense to Winston-Salem to play the Rams featuring the CIAA's leading rusher, Richard Huntley. In spite of the cold and rain the Vikings came away

with a (22-19) victory that put them in first place in the CIAA.

On Sept. 23 The Vikes took their number one ranking and undefeated record on the road to face the Norfolk state Spartans. ECSU's defense was concerned about a pair of Spartan standouts: Quarterback Aaron Sparrow, who threw for over 300 yards last year and all CIAA wide receiver James Roe.

"We're not going to try to stop these guys, just try to contain them," said junior, Ivan Deloatch.

The Spartans jumped out to an early first quarter lead, rushing for two TD's while a struggling Viking offense was unable to score until only 13 seconds remained. The score at the end of the quarter was (12-6).

In the second quarter, head coach Darnell Moore's Spartans picked up where they left off by scoring on a one yard TD run. The Vikes took the ensuing kick and moved the ball down the field where Murchinson scored on a 5-yard run with 7:05 remaining in the half. The Spartans took control of the game; all CIAA performers Sparrow and Roe connected for two TD's on two consecutive possessions pushing the score to (35-19). The Viking defense tightened and held the Spartan offense for three downs, forcing them to punt. Viking senior, Malcom Mackey took the punt 67 yards for a touchdown.

In the second half, Spartans' tandem Sparrow and Roe connected for two more TD's. On the other side of the field the Vikings wouldn't give up.

"We felt we could compete with the Spartans," said Murchinson, who led his team back to a (44-41) lead midway through the fourth quarter. The Spartans out-scored the Vikes (21-7) in the final six minutes of the game to hand ECSU their first defeat of the season (62-51). "We didn't play like we should have but the offense really came through scoring 51 points," said Deloatch.

A week after the defeat in Norfolk, the NCCU Eagles came to Roebuck stadium with a (2-2) record after a big win over division 1A Howard University. The Vikes scored on a 10 yard jaunt by the CIAA's second leading rusher, Murchinson; while the defense, led by the CIAA's leading tackler, Andrew Richardson, didn't allow any points in the first quarter. The Vikes' defense crumbled in the second, allowing the Eagles to score twice, cutting their lead to (14-13). "There were a couple of mental errors on the defense," said Moody.

The second half opened with the Viking defense striking first; a 24 yard interception return by freshman Stephen Carter put the Vikes on top (22-13).

With only two minutes remaining in the game Crump and Murchinson led the Vikings to the Eagles' 20 yard line where Murchinson hit senior wide receiver, Sharano Woodly, for the winning score (28-27).

Homecoming brought 8,000 people and an encouraged Viking team to face Bowie State at Roebuck Stadium. In the muck and rain the Vikes put 43 points on the board and allowed only 7 in a memorable Homecoming win.

Saturday, Nov. 4, the Vikings face Knoxville College at Roebuck Stadium.



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