

SPORTS

Ram Football Season: The First Half

BY TOLLY CARR
Sports Editor

The Winston-Salem State Rams began their season looking down the barrel of a schedule that included two MEAC powerhouses, a tough CIAA schedule and a lot of new faces in new places.

Head Football Coach Kermit Blount was beginning his second year here at Winston-Salem State and was looking to improve on his 6-4-1 1993 record.

The Rams first test would come on September 3, in Charleston, when the Rams met the Bulldogs of South Carolina State.

Before the game began, it had rained all day in Charleston and it seemed that the game would be more like mud wrestling match. As game time approached, the rain ceased and by game time the field conditions were not as bad as expected. The suspense was building as everyone was anticipating how the Rams would do this season.

The game began with an all out offensive arsenal. Winston-Salem State put touchdowns on the board early and often behind the Jamie Edmonds option attack. When Edmonds was given a breather, freshman Travis Pender's first collegiate snap was a 56 yard pass to All-American Oronde Gadsden. Winston-Salem State's only problem was whenever we scored, S.C. State scored.

Late in the second quarter Winston-Salem State trailed by one as the score

stood at 28-27. Charlie Clemmons had just returned a 68 yard interception for a touchdown and the Rams were hype, but they would score no more. South Carolina State scored two touchdowns in the final five minutes of the half and scored one more in the second half to win 48-27.

The next stop for the Rams would be Aggie Stadium in Greensboro for their battle with archrival, the Aggies of North Carolina A & T. In this game the hype proved to be more than the actual game as the Aggies rolled to a 53-7 victory. Coach Kermit Blount later said the game was an embarrassment to the university because of the team's lack of intensity.

The third week of the season the Rams were still on the road and still looking for their first victory. That Saturday evening they were preparing to lock up with the Golden Bulls of Johnson C. Smith in the **Queen City Classic**.

The Rams were up for this one because some of the Rams including Donnell McDonald and Jamie Edmonds are from the Charlotte area. This game was a defensive showcase for the Rams as they frequent sacked Smith's quarterback. By game's end Donnell McDonald, had four sacks at the outside linebacker position. The offense was no slouch either as the Ram offense amassed 488 yards of total offense.

Freshman Travis Pender, who at this point in the season had won the starting quarterback role, was named the

"Freshman of the Week" by the CIAA due to his 141 yards passing for two touchdowns in the game. Winston-Salem State rolled over Smith, 51-25.

It was finally time for the Rams to come home, they had been on the road all season but today there was no long bus ride. The only thing the Rams had to do was play the number 20 team in Division II Football that no one had scored on all year long, Livingstone College. The Rams scored on the Fighting Bears early with a Travis Pender run, so that streak ended for Livingstone. Now they had to focus on staying undefeated. Livingstone answered with a touchdown of their own and then another as the score stood at 12-7 because they missed their extra points. Winston-Salem State's offense came back with a touchdown of their own and a field goal to lead 17-12, and then came the drama.

In the final two minutes of the game Livingstone drove nearly the length of the field to the one yard line with 43 seconds left. They had a first down and goal to go with enough time to get off at least three plays. If they scored they would go up 18-17 and only leave a few seconds for Winston-Salem State to try and score.

On their first play, they tried to run the fullback up the middle but the Rams stopped him. On the second play the fullback tried to jump over the line but gravity would not allow his 270 pounds to get in the air. At this point the fighting Bears had only nine seconds left and still

one yard to go. They brought in a six foot two inch running back that was sure to try and jump the line or run something to the outside. Luckily for the Rams he tried to run straight through the middle and he went absolutely nowhere. The clock ran out and the celebration was on as the Rams won 17-12.

Exactly one week later the Rams had to do battle with the Broncos of Fayetteville State. In this game the Rams got down early in the first half as Fayetteville led by as many as 20 points. In the second half the Rams came out very inspired and pulled to within five at 33-28, but they shot themselves in the foot late in the fourth quarter when a Tramaine Graham pass was intercepted, the third of the night and returned for a touchdown. Fayetteville State won this time 39-28 as the Rams record fell to 2-3.

At the midpoint of the season Winston-Salem State is below the .500 mark with six games remaining. The Rams can finish at 8-3 which is pretty good looking at the heavyweights they played outside of the conference.

The team that will give Winston-Salem State the most trouble will probably be Wofford on Oct. 29. Over the past few years Wofford has had it's way with the Rams, but this year Wofford will have to travel to Winston-Salem so that could affect the outcome. With half of the season left let us see what the **KB Express** has in store for the fans.

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