



# W.S.S.U. Sports

## HEARTBREAKER

### WSSU loses CIAA championship game to VU

By **Donutea Johnson**  
Argus Reporter

The Rams (8-3) were looking to become only the fifth different school in CIAA history to three-peat as champs last month, but failed as Virginia Union claimed the championship, 31-24.

Expectations were high because the Rams have dominated the CIAA the past three years and had the home-field advantage at Bowman Gray Stadium. Only one thing stood in the way: Virginia Union (8-2) came into the championship with a renewed confidence. They upset the Rams in a seesaw wacky finish at VU early in September, beating the Rams by only one point. That was the Panthers' first win over the Rams in 11

years, and they were looking to prove their win wasn't a fluke.

Both teams were predicted to finish first in their divisions, so it's no surprise that they met in the championship game. The Rams came in with a six-game winning streak, and VU came in with a five-game winning streak. Expectations were high as this was a rematch of last year's CIAA championship game, where the Rams came away with the victory.

The Rams were able to take an early lead from an Ashton Oakley field goal early in the first quarter to make it 3-0. However, momentum was sapped from the two-time defending champs when quarterback Josh McGee went down with a thumb injury

early in the first quarter. He returned but was not able to go for the second half. Virginia Union took a 7-3 lead with a 47-yard touchdown pass to Jerome Haskett. The Rams rallied late in the second quarter with a 2-yard touchdown run from Nathan Swindell that cut into VU's lead, and the Rams went into the half down 13-10.

In the third, the Panthers jumped all over the injury-riddled Rams and scored 18 points in under three minutes. The Rams were able to rally in the fourth with two key drives to cut the lead to 31-24 but fell one touchdown short of breaking even with the Panthers.

Quarterback Jasun Thompson finished as Coca-Cola MVP for

Virginia Union. He guided Virginia Union to 328 offensive yards in the victory over WSSU. Thomas Coleman led all receivers with five receptions for 105 yards. Ralph Hunter made two critical interceptions to disrupt the Rams' offense.

Standouts for the Rams include quarterback Josh McGee who gave a gutsy performance leading the Rams in the first half of the game before a game-ending injury.

He finished the half with an injury to his left thumb. His performance in the red zone and leadership on the field gained him Coca-Cola MVP for Winston-Salem State. Calvin Bryant led the Rams' defense with 16 tackles.

### Women's volleyball made great strides this season

By **Donutea Johnson**  
Argus Reporter

The CIAA recently held its 47th Volleyball Championship Tournament in Winston-Salem on Nov. 2-3.

The Winston-Salem State Lady Rams qualified for the championship for the first time since 1988, but lost their last three games of the season, finishing with a record of 10-13.

The Lady Rams improved dramatically from last year's team, which finished 3-23. This year's record is a considerable improvement because this year's team included eight freshmen. The

Lady Rams look forward to big things from their young team in the future.

The two dominating forces in the tournament were top-seeded Shaw University and St. Augustine's College.

The two finished the regular season undefeated in their division as Eastern and Western division champions.

In the end, the Lady Falcons won their astonishing 19th championship, also winning the right to go the NCAA Division II Regionals.

St. Augustine's Karina Soto was named MVP.

### Several Rams receive CIAA awards, including Defensive Player of the Year

By **Andre' Chinn**  
Special to the Argus

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association hosted a banquet to tip-off the CIAA championship between Virginia Union University and Winston-Salem State University.

The Winston-Salem State football players entered the banquet flashing their two rings from the 1999 and 2000 championships, while the Panthers entered with their heads high after beating the Rams 24-22 in the first meeting between the two.

Jeremy Strayhorne, a freshman defensive back for WSSU said, "It was kind of funny peacefully breaking bread with the enemy that you are going to battle against on Saturday, but I had a nice meal."

Ralph Hunter, a free safety for Virginia Union said, "It's nice coming to Winston-Salem and eating with the defending champions that you upset, and holding your head high because you knocked them off their pedestal."

Jeffrey W. McLeod, an assistant to the commissioner of the CIAA, introduced guest speaker Mel Blount with a football Hall of Fame video about his career. Blount, one of the greatest players in black college sports, was drafted from

Southern University in 1970 by the Pittsburgh Steelers. He earned five Super Bowl rings and finished his career holding the Steelers' record as all-time interception leader at 57. In his speech, he talked about living in a changing world and giving thanks to God for all accomplishments.

Yancey Thigpen, a former WSSU football star who also played for the Steelers, attended the banquet as well.

After dinner, WSSU Athletic Director Percy Caldwell presented DeAngelo Bridges with the Courage Award. Bridges suffered a mild stroke in the middle of the 2000 season and with hard work he returned to play again for Fayetteville State University during the 2001 season.

Edward McLean, CIAA president, presented the 2001 All-Conference Awards to players from various CIAA schools. Six WSSU players were among the awardees. Tight end Arnell Wooten; Center Marcus McNair; Guard Ronald Pegues; and Place Kicker Ashton Oakley were awarded first team offense honors. Defensive end Robert Mackey and Safety Stephon Kelly were awarded first team defense honors. Kelly was also named the CIAA "Defensive Player of the Year."

### Answers to November's sports trivia

1. C. Pete Richardson was head coach of WSSU's football team before Kermit Blount.
2. A. Richard Huntley is the all time leading rusher in WSSU's history - 6,286 yards.
3. C. Eleven Rams have gone on to play professional football in the NFL.