

SPORTS

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Rams open season with back-to-back losses

By Steven J. Gaither
SPORTS EDITOR

Starting the 2008 season by losing back-to-back games to two of the Football Championship Subdivision's (Division I-AA) worst programs is not what WSSU head coach Kermit Blount had in mind.

The Rams scored just 22 points in their first games and came up short in losses against N.C. A&T (14-8) and Savannah State (16-13). Despite the slow start, Blount remains optimistic.

"We're 0-2 and could very easily be 2-0," he said. I'm going to take every negative and turn it into a positive. I believe in doing that and that's the way our football team has to go."

Much of the Rams' problems can likely be attributed to youth.

Gone from last year's team is current Tennessee Titans defensive end William Hayes, as well as offensive mainstay Jed Bines and quarterback Monte Purvis.

Prior to the start of the season, redshirt freshman Tienne Jefferson was tabbed to replace Purvis over redshirt junior Jarrett Dunston. However, in both of the Rams' first two games, Dunston has replaced Jefferson in the second half.

Dunston led the Rams downfield on

the team's final possession in both games, only to come up short. Still, Blount said that there will be no quarterback controversy.

"We're looking for edges, and we're looking for ways to jumpstart our team," he said.

"It just so happens that we gave Jarrett the opportunity to play, and we were able to push to football down the field and score.

"We're gonna play who we feel is ready that week to play, the guy that gives us the best opportunity to win."

One of the few offensive bright spots on the offensive side of the ball has been redshirt-freshman running back Nic Cooper. A week after taking his first college handoff, the 6-foot, 230-pound running back from Clinton, N.C. made his home debut by rushing for 144 yards and two touchdowns.

Cooper said he was happy to get back on the field after sitting out last year but admits that the team has a lot of work ahead of them.

"I know that we're a better team than what people presume we are and what we've shown on the field," Cooper said.

"It's all about us coming together, listening to coach and doing whatever he says do."



Photo by Garrett Garms

Running back Nic Cooper escapes the grasp of a Savannah State defender. Cooper ran for 144 yards in the Rams' 16-13 loss.

WSSU Rams Football 2008 Schedule

Date	Opponent	Site	Time
Sept. 6	North Carolina A&T	Greensboro, N.C.	6 p.m.
Sept. 13	SAVANNAH STATE	HOME	6 p.m.
Sept. 20	MORGAN STATE	HOME	6 p.m.
Sept. 27	SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	HOME	6 p.m.
Oct. 4	HOWARD	HOME	6 p.m.
Oct. 9	Florida A&M Televised on ESPNU	Tallahassee, Fla.	6 p.m.
Oct. 25	BETHUNE-COOKMAN Homecoming	HOME	2 p.m.
Nov. 1	Hampton	Hampton, VA.	2 p.m.
Nov. 8	Delaware State	Dover, Del.	1p.m.
Nov. 15	North Carolina Central	Durham	1:30 p.m.
Nov. 22	NORFOLK STATE	HOME	1:30 p.m.

Home games at Bowman Gray Stadium

Volleyball Match
vs.
Wofford College

Gaines Center
Sept. 24 at 7 p.m.