

Perfect debut for Ram football

For the first time since 1991, the WSSU Rams are off to a 3-0 start on the gridiron.

Jaye Cole

ASSISTANT EDITOR

jcole109@wssu.edu

The 2010 Rams football squad, which has been re-appointed to Division II CIAA Athletics, has already turned the tide of last year's losing season.

The Rams only managed to put up a single win during their 2009-10 run.

During the offseason, the Rams underwent a number of administrative, personnel and coaching transitions. Winston-Salem State brought in veteran coach and Fayetteville native Connell Maynor as head coach, offensive coordinator and the quarterbacks coach.

Maynor engineered the 2009 CIAA Champion Fayetteville State University Broncos offense.

The Rams won their first game of the season 47-13 against conference rival Virginia Union on Aug. 28 at the A.J. Simeon Stadium in High Point.

"People didn't expect us to win...but we did," Maynor said.

WSSU outscored the Virginia Union Panthers every quarter, and dominated nearly every aspect of the game.

Maynor used a balanced attack on offense, with his team accumulating 207 yards in the air and 186 yards rushing. A couple of touchdowns on the

ground from running back Nic Cooper, a junior business administration major from Clinton, N.C. helped to solidify their victory at the inaugural Furniture City Gridiron Classic.

Sept. 4, their next contest, in Greensboro, pitted the Rams against the Aggies of N.C. A&T.

The fierce rivalry, also known as the 'I-40 Showdown,' would give WSSU an opportunity to show the world of college sports how they would fare against a Division I-AA team.

The WSSU football team did not disappoint.

In front of a near capacity crowd, the Rams displayed what Coach Maynor described as "intestinal fortitude."

"With A&T, we had to come from behind and won in the fourth quarter, and that shows that these guys aren't quitters," Maynor said.

Defensive back Alton Keaton, a junior accounting major from Fayetteville, and fullback Tyrone Goldston, a freshman accounting major from Goldsboro, turned in solid performances to aid in the Rams victory.

However, it was the efforts of quarterback Kameron Smith, sophomore economics major and a transfer from the U.S. Naval Academy that secured a win for the Rams.

Smith mustered up a 78-yard

game winning drive that included a 13-yard pass, and finally a 7-yard scramble into the end zone. His scoring drive and the point after touchdown put the score at 21-14, leaving the Aggies 41 seconds to answer.

"We didn't have to win the A&T game. That's not a conference game for us," Maynor said.

"But that was big for them, for bragging rights for the student body, for the community and for Ram pride. That's what that 'W' did."

Sept. 11 the Rams marched into the NCCU O'Kelly-Riddick Stadium where they extended their streak to 3-0. They ousted the Eagles 34-27.

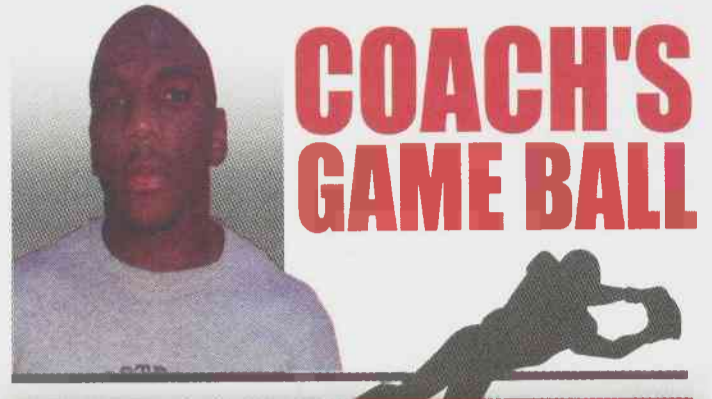
A host of Rams displayed their physical prowess as WSSU mounted a come from behind victory that stunned yet another Division I-AA football team.

"Our goal is to get better every day, and every drill that we do, individually so that we can get better as a team so we can win games," Maynor said.

Maynor said he implements that philosophy when it comes to winning football games.

"We can't look ahead trying to go 10-0 and we're in week five.

"We gotta stay focused and take it one day at a time, one game at a time, and respect all and fear none."



Awarded to Alton Keaton

Pamela Manneh
ARGUS CONTRIBUTOR

Fayetteville native Alton Keaton was selected as the Coach's Game Ball recipient because of his outstanding performance Sept. 4 during the "I-40 Showdown" against NC A&T. Keaton forced one fumble and assisted in five tackles.

"The returning player is no stranger to big games," said Rams defensive coordinator Kienus Boulware. "He really drove the defensive line into momentum," Boulware said.

"His ability to lead vocally and physically really contributed to the big win. I am completely honored and if it were not for his dedicated teammates the big win wouldn't have occurred. No team is perfect. We still have glitches to iron out, but it feels good to know that the campus is recognizing individual and team success."

An essential key defensive player, Keaton a junior accounting major, was the Most Valuable Player at Douglas Byrd High School.

Keaton is a cancer survivor.

After 38 years, baseball returns to WSSU

Jordan Holloway

SPORTS REPORTER

jholloway106@wssu.edu

Let's Play Ball!

Baseball fans wait every spring to hear those words. Now Rams fans only have to wait until the spring to hear those words.

For the first time since 1973 Winston-Salem State will have a baseball team.

WSSU is now one of eight schools that have a baseball program. The CIAA requires colleges and universities to have a baseball program to join the conference.

The Rams will be led by Kevin Ritsche, interim head men's baseball coach.

He is no stranger to WSSU. Ritsche has served as assistant professor of exercise science in the Department of Human Performance and Sport Sciences since 2006.

Ritsche was also a standout player on the diamond where he played catcher and was also a two-time Academic All-American while playing at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, Minn. in 2003 and 2004.

He is working on his doctorate in Exercise Physiology.

According to a recent WSSU press release, Chancellor Donald Reaves is excited about a WSSU baseball team.

Having played baseball as a little leaguer Reaves said baseball is a great game.

Reaves said he hopes a WSSU baseball team

will generate more interest in the sport.

"We took 10 guys from the 40 that came out [for tryouts]," Ritsche said. "Out of the 40 people only a dozen had high school baseball experience."

When WSSU returned to the CIAA, the conference had to revise the schedule it had originally planned to use.

"Even though the schedule isn't done yet we are preparing our players as if they are going on the field tomorrow," Ritsche said.

The season opens with a conference game against Shaw University Feb. 9, 2011.

One of the biggest challenges that the Rams baseball team will face during the season is keeping the interest of the student body.

"Everybody loves to win, so I feel that if we win then we will keep the attention of the school and be able to compete with the basketball and football teams when it comes to being a popular sport on campus," Ritsche said.

The new baseball team will face another challenge.

"We have been using the old practice football field below the C.E. Gaines Center.

"Even though we cannot use the field for hitting or outfielders practice it's better than not having a place at all," Ritsche said.

The team also needs a field for home games.

"Athletic Director Bill Hayes is working very hard to find us a quality place to practice and play our home games," Ritsche said.

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