



BYNUM AVOIDS TACKLERS...Senior tailback Lloyd Bynum dodges tacklers for a possible score. [photo by Clay Harris]

Varsity Team Off To A Good Start

The Gryphons bring in a solid nucleus of proven veterans to the 1976 season. Also the coaches are pleased with some young players. Rocky Mount is the pre-season pick of Division I coaches to head the conference race. The "Gryphs" were expected to have an explosive offense and a weak defense.

Tarboro

Instead of explosive offense it was the traditional Gryphon defense which prevailed in the season opener over Tarboro 14-0. The "Gryphs" enjoyed a strong first half as Quarterback Lindon Willis tossed a pair of touchdown strikes to sophomore Mike Lewis. Kicker Rocky Speight added the point after touchdowns as he is expected to do all season. The win avenged an 8-0 loss to Tarboro last season. Junior Jim Laughridge and Sophomore Mike Lewis were cited as "Gryphons of the Week."

New Hanover

A long Gryphon drive ending in a one yard run by Mike Upchurch was all the "Gryphs" needed as the defense kept New Hanover scoreless. A couple of dropped Gryphon passes kept

the score close. After the game Coach Walt Wiggins stated, "We are happy to get the win. Our defense played super...Our offense bogged own again and I don't know why." Seniors Mike Upchurch and Dennis Colt were chosen as "Gryphons of the Week." Final Rocky Mount 7, New Hanover 0.

Goldsboro

Goldsboro, ranked number three in the state, shut out the Gryphons 19-0 on three big plays. One touchdown came on a freak play when a Goldsboro ball carrier fumbled the ball and it was picked up by a teammate and run in for the score. Coach Walt Wiggins said at the half, "We've out played them except for that long touchdown pass." He was referring to a 48-yard bomb from quarterback Steve Brown to wide receiver John Fredrick. But the second half was all Goldsboro. The Gryphon's feelings were summed up by junior guard Pat Warren when he stated, "All we need is a break." Gryphons of the Week were junior linebacker Peter Allen and junior end Terry McKnight.

Needham Broughton

The Gryphons offense exploded in the first period with a 20-yard pass from Lindon Willis to Dee Whitley and a fine open field touchdown run by Lloyd Bynum of 45 yards. In the second quarter a fumble recovery by Dennis Coit set up another score. Willis passed to Mike Lewis down to the 21 yard line. A Gryphon penalty brought the ball back to the 35 yard before Terry McKnight pulled in a Willis aerial for the score. The Gryphon offense slowed down in the second half and was held scoreless while Raleigh's offense picked up and scored on a fourth quarter run by Marvin Cobb. Penalties killed the Gryphons offensive drives but again defense came through in the clutch. Final Rocky Mount 14, Broughton, 6.

Coaches and players appear confident, but not over confident that this year's squad has the makings of a championship team. Many pollsters have picked the Gryphons among the top five teams in the state. At this point in the season Coach Wiggins stated, "We're going to get better."

JV's Play Well

The Rocky Mount Jayvees opened their season by blitzing Tarboro Vikings 40 to 6.

The Gryphons scored first when Sylvester Cooper intercepted a deflected pass and scampered 15 yards for the touchdown. Quarterback Marty Hendershot connected with Anthony Pinknett for the two point conversion.

Rodney Birth scored on a 45-yard run in the second quarter and Cordell Davis scored the two point conversion.

Junior quarterback Billy Luther hit Linwood Silver for a touchdown in the third quarter making the score 24 to 0.

Tailback Cordell Davis dominated the fourth quarter by scoring on two runs of 25 yards each. Davis accounted for one conversion and Luther hit Pinknett for the other making the Gryphs lead 40 points. Tarboro finally scored in the last minutes of the game.

The Goldsboro Cougars outlasted the Gryphs Junior Varsity by a score of 14-6 September 9. The Cougars recovered a Billy Luther fumble and rambled in for a touchdown.

In the third quarter the Cougars mounted a drive that ended with a 35-yard counter up the middle for six points. The

Gryphs struck back when Kelvin Hart caught a 20-yard touchdown pass from Billy Luther but were unable to score again.

The Broughton Caps watched the JV Gryphs roll up a 36-6 victory September 15.

Billy Luther hit Kelvin Hart with a 40-yard touchdown pass to open the scoring in the second quarter. Luther then threw to Anthony Pinknett for

the two-point conversion. Sylvester Cooper's four yard plunge gave the Gryphs a 14-0 halftime lead. Luther found Pinknett in the open again for a score, and Linwood Silver added two points.

The Gryphons scored two touchdowns of 20 and 10 yards on the shifty runs of Silver. Rodney Birt completed the scoring with another conversion. Broughton scored in the last seconds of the game.

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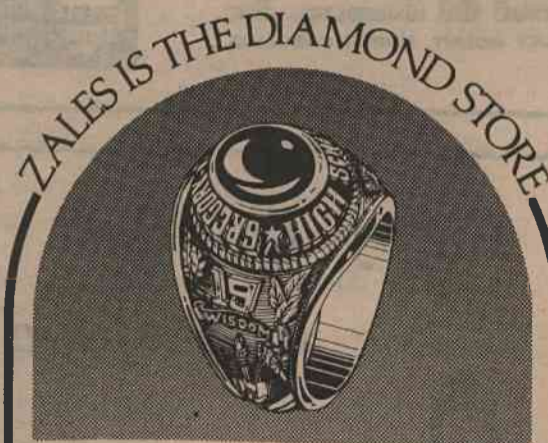


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