

# Wildcats Look To Defense for Success in '88

By Malcolm A. Pharr

The Wildcats of Bethune-Cookman College posted a 4-7 record a year ago for fifth-year Coach Larry Little. The defense that carried the Wildcats in 1986 faltered last season as they ranked last in total yards allowed in the conference, with 356.9 yards per outing. The offense, which ranked fourth, was led by the departed Greg Ross. Ross passed for nearly 210 yards per contest last season and earned second team All-MEAC. The rushing game was also something to be desired as the 'Cats only managed

102 yards a game.

This season Little and the Wildcats hope to bring "The New Wave" to Daytona Beach, Florida, along with winning ways as they try to capture the conference title as they did in 1984.

Senior QB Anthony Thomas (6-2, 200), who alternated starts in 1986, played a reserve roll last year. In 1986, Thomas was true on 85 of 175 tosses for 1,139 yards and nine T.D. passes.

The Wildcats have experience in the backfield with senior Kevin Finnie. Finnie has led the "Cats in rushing the past two seasons. He has picked up over

1300 yards in the last two years. Junior Marty Butler returns to give the "Cats experience and talent at the runningback position.

The Wildcats are blessed with three gifted receivers in senior James Jackson, junior Stevie Thomas and Labrone Sumpter. Last season Sumpter caught 26 aerials for 234 yards and a score. Thomas hauled in 20 passes for 289 yards and two scores. Jackson took in 15 passes for 202 yards with one going for a TD. Sophomore tight end Edwin Clapp is the likely selection for his position. This season Clapp may get to show his

versatility as a receiver, as well as a blocker.

Bethune Cookman is big up front this season and their size will present problems for MEAC foes. Seniors Mike Floyd (6-4, 255), Chris Holmes (6-0, 250), Fred McPherson (6-2, 286), John Brown (6-6, 285) and junior Micheal Willis (6-2, 240) should protect the talented Wildcats backfield.

The key to the Wildcats charge may be on the end of senior Manny Manolas' foot. He is considered the best kicker in the leagues 18 year history having connected on 23 of 27 extra points and ten of 15 field goals a year ago. Manolas

holds the MEAC distance record with a 53-yard FG.

Defensively the Wildcats are not as optimistic as they would want to be. The defense which they had shortcomings in last season may well repeat itself this season.

Seniors Reggie Boyd (6-2, 260), Louis Jones and Gerard Kineard should man the line for the Wildcats. Junior Godfrey Story (6-4, 220) adds quickness and strength to the Wildcats machine.

Junior Amos White (6-0, 190) averaged seven tackles per outing last season from his linebacking position. What White lacks in size he makes up for in

aggressiveness and determination. Seniors Boris Johnson (6-2, 212), Ron Edwards and Dwayne Donaldson are likely starters at the other linebacking positions.

Three seniors in Andre Pugh (6-3, 185), Jeff Alexander (6-0, 190) and Al Armenteros (6-0, 190) will provide a wide range of pass coverage for the "Cats. Junior Kevin Grisby is a strong candidate to fill the one vacancy in the secondary.

The Wildcats will have no problems generating offense, but they key to this season is just how stubborn can their defense be in 1988?

## Bulldogs Set To Make History Repeat Itself

By Malcolm A. Pharr

Since the origin of the MEAC there has been not team as dominant on the gridiron as the Bulldogs of S.C. State. Every imaginable team record (offensively & defensively) has a touch of red and blue "Bulldogmania" in its confines. S.C. State has nine conference crowns to its credit and are runners of a five-year championship streak that will probably never be broken, or challenged.

The 1987 edition of the S.C. State Bulldogs posted a 6-5 overall record under the direction of head coach Dennis Thomas. Thomas in his third-year as the Bulldogs mentor hopes to have the Bulldogs, and their eleven returning starters, in position to regain the respect that they received during the 1974-1978 and 1980-1983 campaigns.

The Bulldogs are not worrying about finding experience at the helm because a pair of senior

signal-callers will vie for the starting job. Lance Salters (5-10, 170) and Tyrone Gilmore (5-8, 179) will compete, and possibly share the duties as quarterback. Salters completed 52 of 122 passes for 757 yards and five touchdowns. He also rushed for 130 yards and scored four times. Gilmore connected on 47 of 100 passes for 603 yards and a score. He also rushed for another score.

Senior runningbacks Clyde "The Glide" Norris (5-10, 175) and junior Zach Whitley are the top returning rushers for the Bulldogs. Norris gained 239 yards on 45 attempts, scoring twice in the process. Whitley rambled for 199 yards on 43 carries a year ago. The fullback slot will be shared between seniors Ron Geohaghan and Rod Kinlaw.

Junior flanker J.W. Montgomery, snared 11 passes for 146 yards last season for the 'Dogs. Senior Fred Jones could get the nod at split end, and Darryl

Mendenhall and Al Odom will seek positions as well.

Senior tight end Rodney McLaughlin (5-11, 230) is one of the more sure-handed receivers

in the MEAC. McLaughlin caught 20 passes for 339 yards and a TD in 1987.

The Bulldogs look strong in the trenches with senior guard Bobby Irby (6-0, 249), junior tackle Eric Douglas and Honorable Mention All-MEAC center Kenny Pate (6-2, 265). Sophomores Milt Gooch and David Brandyburg could fill the voids left through graduation.

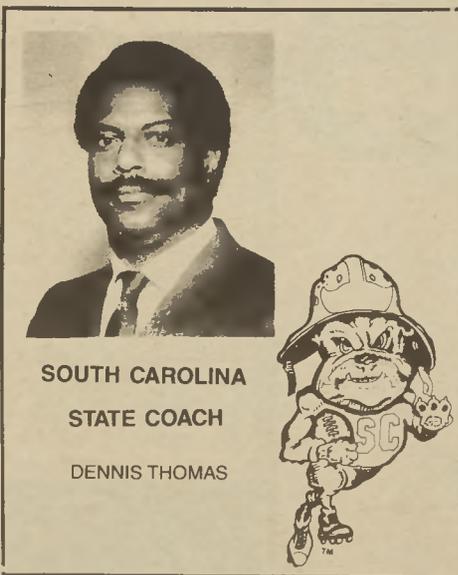
Quarterback Lance Salters was last seasons part-time punter for the 'Dogs. This season the job is his alone. Placekicker William Wrighten, who made 16 of 25 extra points, while connecting on five of five field goals.

The Bulldogs defense, which has been historically their strong suit, should be even stronger this season with the return of All-MEAC nose guard David Ammons (6-2, 272) and Marco Elliot (6-2, 294). Juniors Cornelius Bobo, Matthew Murphy and John Lomax are seeking the final tackle slot.

If there is a weakness on defense this season it is the defensive backfield. All of the starting linebackers were lost last season. Ricardo Smith, Reggie Kennedy and Jimmy Buchanan will try to revive this area in the "Bulldogs House". Sophomore Carl Jinks, Ezra Sutton, and Greg Henderson could be very important in the defensive scheme of things.

There is only one defensive back returning for the Bulldogs. Sophomore Jamal Isom (6-3, 180) must rely on junior safety William Weaver (6-3, 190), who had two interceptions last season, to give him support in the Bulldogs secondary. Corner spots could belong to Rod Brown and Pat Robinson.

The Bulldogs are tough in spots. If injuries can be kept down then they have a legitimate chance to challenge the pack for the crown. If injuries occur to two or three key players Coach Dennis Thomas could hit the recruiting trail in early September.



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