

SportsWeek

Scores, Standings, Columns, Features

CIAA Football

Rams, formation click in spring victory over alumni squad that impresses Hayes

By ROBERT ELLER
Sports Editor

Winston-Salem State's defending CIAA Southern Conference championship team on spring practice Saturday night by convincingly beating a group of former Rams 34-21.

In quite a contrast from last year's inaugural contest, when the present-day Rams won only on the scoreboard, they dominated every phase of the game this time.

"The kids played well and the alumni had a lot of fun," Head Coach Bill Hayes said Monday. "I was pleased with the aggressive play of our defense and our execution on offense was good also."

Hayes watched his team build a 21-7 halftime lead on a rainy night in Bowman Gray Stadium as starting quarterback Mike Winbush threw scoring passes to Bobby Clark and James Watson, the latter covering 95 yards. Then he used his second units on both offense and defense in the second half.

Hayes had praise for a number of his players. "Winbush played well. He executed the offense excellently. That is something we have been working on this spring and we only had one fumble," he said.

The coach also liked what he saw from his trio of running backs who were rookies last season. "(Ed) Byers, (Leonardo) Horn and (James) Johnson all ran well, and the play of the offensive line was a pleasant surprise," Hayes said.

Due to injuries and graduation, only Wayne Artis of the starting offense line had very much game experience. But Hayes said the new group blocked very well. "We moved Julius Sampson from linebacker to right guard, Keith

Holland from the defensive line to left tackle and Cornelius Holmes from defensive end to tight end and they all seem to have adjusted well," he noted.

Hayes was even more pleased with the play of center Barry Turner, a freshman who was red-shirted last year. "Barry played so well that we may move Danny Moore (a two-time all-CIAA pick) to guard," he said. Rookie guard Eric Hagins also played well, said Hayes.

Part of the reason his team was able to move the ball so effectively, Hayes said, was that the

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players and the coaching staff are more comfortable with the wing-T offense than last year, when it was unveiled for the first time.

"Mike (Winbush) has had a year and two springs with the offense now and so have the other kids," he said. "And we coaches know more about it now."

"We think we can move the ball now both in the air and on the ground," Hayes said, noting that the team passed for more than 250 yards and rushed for 200 more.

Hayes also saw bright spots at areas that he felt might pose problems next season. "The defense was most impressive," he said. "Linebackers Dwayne Smith, Angelo Spruill, John Coles and Derrick Beasley did a fine job. They showed good quickness and anticipation. If they play like that (during the regular

season), it will take a lot of pressure off our defensive line."

Among the remaining questions, Hayes is not sure where David Pearson, who is returning to the team after sitting out last year, will play. Pearson was the starting strong safety for the Rams as a freshman but played in the offensive backfield this spring.

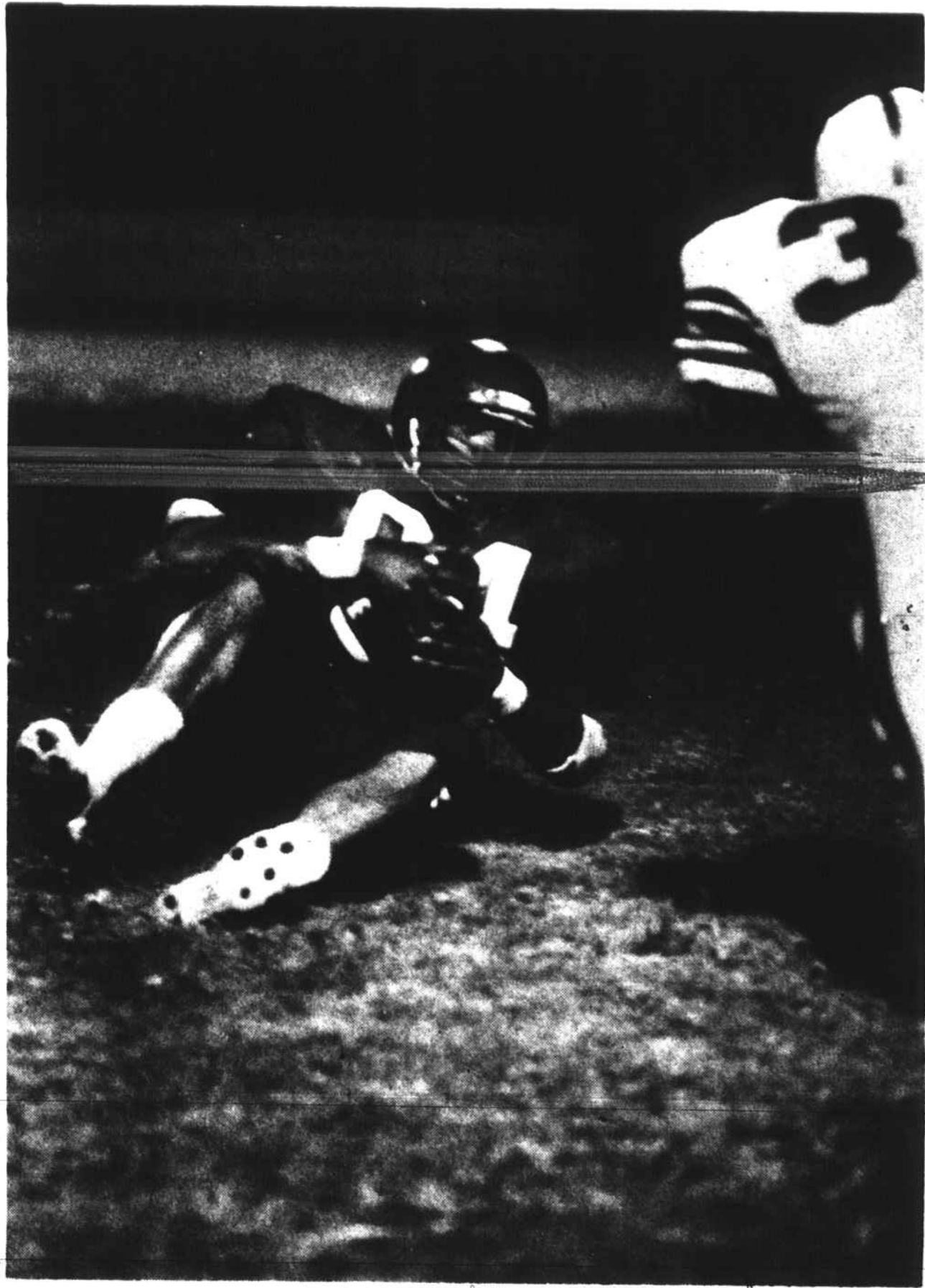
"David really likes to play offense," Hayes said. "He is quick and he could give our starting backs a run for their money. We may still move him back on defense but I think he prefers offense."

Hayes also was happy with the play of wide receiver Terry Clarkson. A transfer from West Virginia State, Clarkson caught one pass for a 60-yard gain and Hayes said he has great hands.

As for the alumni, the play of Harrison Stokes brought a smile to his former coach's face. Stokes was a standout linebacker during his career with the Rams and spent time in the Kansas City Chiefs' training camp. He moved to fullback for the alumni contest and rushed for nearly 100 yards.

"I started to wonder if I had used him at the wrong position for four years," Hayes said, laughing. Mike Ferguson also had a good game for the alumni as did Sidney Wilkins, who caught a 65-yard scoring pass from Allen Ward against the Rams' second unit late in the game.

Overall, Hayes said, the spring drills went well and, while not making any bold predictions for next season, the coach didn't tell a sob story, either. "We need a placekicker and we have a lot of work to do," he said, "but we have some good material for next year and our offense has developed to the point that we can cause a lot of conflict for a defensive team."



Sitting Down On The Job

The Ram's Keith Holland (94) came up with an errant football before trying to roll over and go for more yardage (photo by James Parker).

Black College Sports

Bayou Classic fuss: Is it over?

By BARRY COOPER
Syndicated Columnist

It is not official yet, but sources say the controversy surrounding the date of the popular Bayou Classic football game has been settled. Grambling and Southern will again meet on Thanksgiving weekend this year in what has become the biggest black college football game ever. More than 70,000 people are expected to attend when the schools square off on Nov. 24 at the New Orleans Superdome.

The game will again be played on the same day the NCAA Division I-AA playoffs begin, and Grambling and Southern will remain ineligible for those playoffs.

However, the good news is that the other Southwestern Athletic Conference teams will be free to participate. At least, that's the word from highly-placed sources at Grambling and Southern. According to the sources, the NCAA will soon push through a new rule that says at least five members of a conference must have completed their football schedules the week before the playoffs begin in order for the league champion -- or another team in the league -- to be considered for the I-AA playoffs.

Last year, Jackson State, which won the SWAC title, was denied an automatic spot in playoffs because not enough league teams had completed their regular season schedules in time.

But this year, that won't be an issue, providing the NCAA rules as rumored. One thing is certain, though:

Grambling and Southern plan to continue playing on Thanksgiving weekend, and would rather split gate receipts of nearly \$1 million than go on to the playoffs, which pay little money.

This year's Grambling-Southern game has been officially scheduled for Nov. 24.

A third SWAC team, Alabama State, also will play a game after the NCAA deadline. The Hornets, still working toward full status as a member of I-AA, plan to continue their Thanksgiving Day game with Tuskegee, sources say.

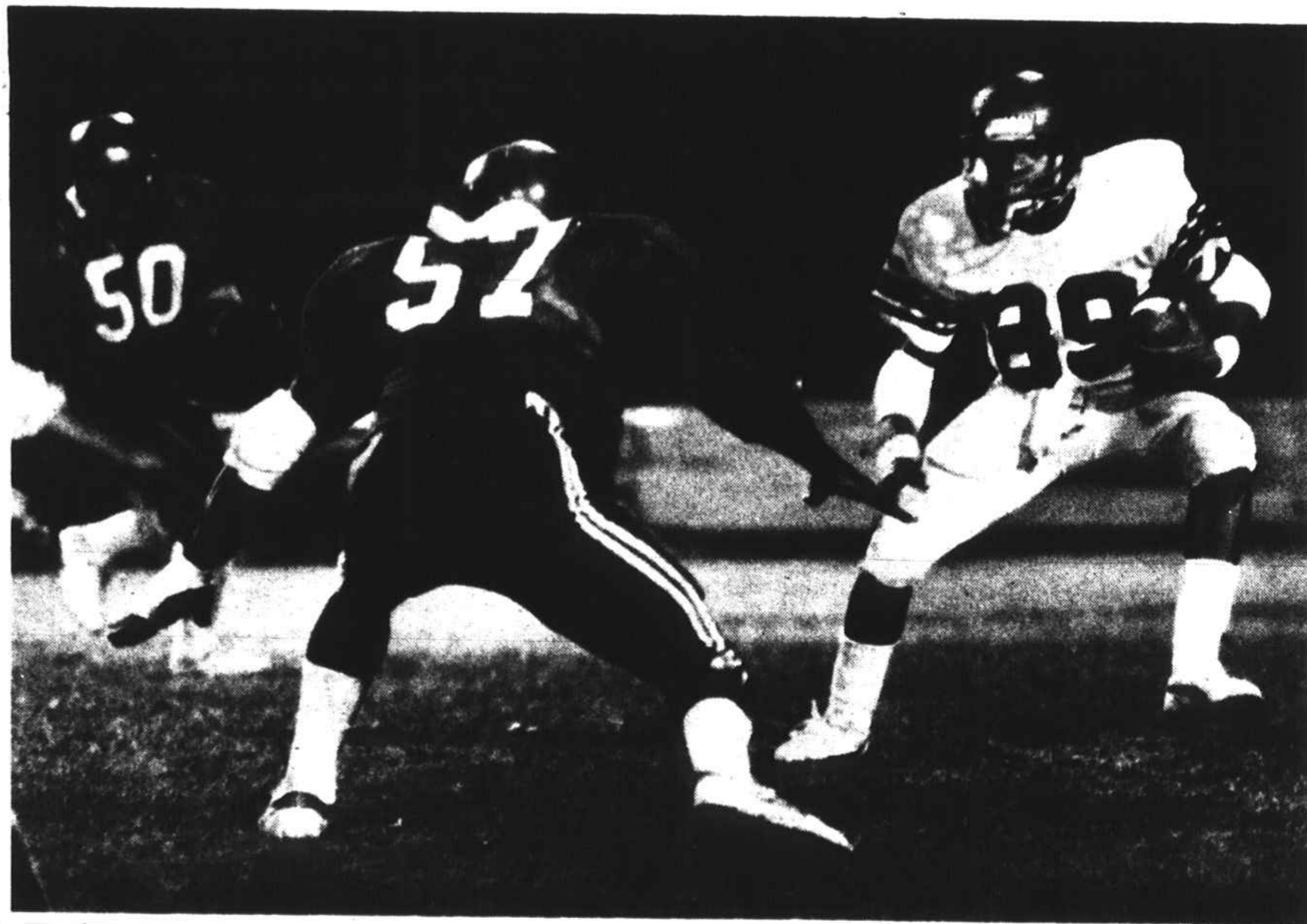
However, if pushed through, the new NCAA rule would still make the SWAC eligible for the playoffs, and the league likely would regain its automatic invitation to the playoffs.

Grambling To Play In Hoosier Dome

Grambling and Mississippi Valley will become the first black colleges to play in the brand-new, 75,000-seat Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis when they square off Oct. 13.

Grambling will continue its globe-trotting acts this football season, in addition playing in New York City, Shreveport, La., Dallas and New Orleans.

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Open-Field Standoff

Danny Brilleford (57) of the WSSU Rams football team confronts an alumnae (photo by James Parker).

Ramettes bounce back to take CIAA softball tournament title

By ROBERT ELLER
Sports Editor

Winston-Salem State's young but talented softball team claimed the school's first-ever women's sports title last weekend by winning the CIAA Softball Tournament in Charlotte.

And the Ramettes, none of whom are seniors, took no prisoners en route to the crown, either, rolling through the double-elimination event undefeated.

Coach Tim Grant's club, which entered the event as the top seed in the Southern Division, won with clutch hitting.

After a relatively easy 6-1 win over Elizabeth City, the fourth-seeded team in the North, the Ramettes faced St. Augustine's, the third seed in the South, which knocked off Virginia State to advance.

The Ramettes won 5-4 in an 11-inning marathon as Kenan Menefee knocked in the winning run.

In the semifinals, WSSU squeaked past Fayetteville State 5-4 in nine innings on Faye Strothers' home run. Fayetteville, which entered the event as the South's second seed, had won the last two conference tournament titles.

In the championship game, WSSU faced St. Augustine's, the losers' bracket survivor, and won the title in its final at-bat. Entering the bottom of the seventh inning with the game tied at 2, Strothers led off with a single. Tammy McNair followed with another single, and, after Beverly Bowden flied out, Neice Kemp loaded the bases with another single. Annette Huntley then followed with a sacrifice fly

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-- Tim Grant

that scored Strothers with the winning run in the 3-2 game.

Grant, who saw his team knocked off in the district tournament April 20 and 21, was extremely pleased with the Ramettes' play.

"The girls played with confidence and poise. They played excellent defense and hit well in the clutch," said Grant, whose team entered the district tourney

as the top seed but finished third.

And, ironically, Grant credited the district tournament losses with helping the team in its quest for the CIAA crown. "In the district tourney, we played well on Friday but we were flat on Saturday and lost two in a row," he said. "We may have been a little overconfident after Friday's games."

In the district tournament, WSSU whipped St. Augustine's 9-1 and Campbell 6-5 on Friday but was beaten the next day 6-3 by second-seeded Pembroke and eliminated 7-4 by third-seeded Catawba. Pembroke topped Catawba for the title.

Both Grant and his team were disappointed by the losses, but the third-year coach said there was a silver lining.

"Pfeiffer Coach Jack Ingram told me after we lost that the loss would help us as we went into the CIAA tourney, and he was right," Grant said. "On the way home, the girls started talking about the fact that they should have won and I think they realized that they must concentrate and remain intense for the entire tournament. The district tournament was our first tourney all year and our inexperience showed."

Though WSSU disposed of its over confidence, its confidence remained intact.

"The girls had the district experience behind them and they knew what it would take to win," Grant said. "They played hard and consistent in each game and that's what I had told them it would take to win."

Three members of the team were picked for all-tournament honors. First baseman Menefee batted .500 for the event and hit extremely well under pressure, said Grant. Pitcher Donna Johnson pitched all four games, walking only five batters and hit .416. Leftfielder Strothers hit .545 and, according to Grant, made a number of spectacular defensive plays.

Menefee had hit an amazing .777 in the district tournament.

For the year, the Ramettes posted a 25-8 mark. In Grant's first two seasons as coach, his teams went 21-8 and 17-13, finishing third and second in the tournament, respectively. "We did it right on schedule from third to second to first," Grant said.

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