

Rams take on Spartans

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going into the playoffs with the right mental attitude."

The Rams also are going into the game with nearly a five-yard average per play on the ground, and their vaunted T-Bone attack will be put to the test by the Norfolk defense. Led by linebacker Leon Smith and defensive back Glenn Jones, the Spartans have given up less than one yard per rushing attempt.

Probably the biggest question is whether the Rams can get their passing game going, which would open up the running lanes for Hayes' frighteningly deep (for opponents) stable of runners. From their past four performances, the Rams look capable of exploiting a surprisingly weak Norfolk secondary.

"We've been building toward this all season," says Hayes. "We have to execute and play the best game we've played this season. It's also important that we eliminate mistakes."

Despite its success in recent games, says Ram quarterback Winbush, his team will have to work on several key areas if it plans on winning the championship.

"We have to polish up on our game a little," says Winbush, who threw for 146 yards and two scores against St. Paul's. "Winning it all will make me very happy. For us to do that, we'll have to balance both our running and passing."

Winbush, who chose to return to the team after a substantial offer to play winter baseball in the Texas Rangers' farm system, has shown his maturity as of late and has been able to use play-action passes for quick strikes. A good day passing the ball from Winbush would certainly give the Rams a needed boost.

Winbush is a football player, says Hayes. When the going gets tough, he's going to be there for us."

While Norfolk has shut down opposing running games throughout the season, the Spartans haven't seen a team that runs the ball as well as Winston-Salem State all season. Led by Leonardo Horn, Ed Byers and Lonnie Pillely, the Rams' ground attack has the ability to strike from anywhere.

Another key for the Rams will be getting the football to wide receiver Masha Paul. Last week



Thomas "Truck" Turner finds running room against St. Paul's in the Rams' 51-0 romp last Saturday. Turner's tough inside running will be needed again this week in the CIAA championship game (photo by James Parker).

against St. Paul's, Paul made two receptions for touchdowns. He had another wiped out by a penalty as well as a 57-yard punt return for a touchdown nullified by a penalty. A converted wide receiver, Paul gives the Rams the deep passing threat.

"We really need to get the ball to Masha Paul," says Hayes. "When he gets it, he knows what to do with it."

On the other side of the coin, the Spartans have the premier runner statistically in the CIAA. All season long, the Spartans have relied on fullback Tony Johnson to carry the load.

"We've got to stop Tony Johnson," Hayes says. "He provides most of their yardage on offense."

Quarterback Raynard Revels has done a steady job of running Norfolk's Wing-T attack, but doesn't pose a serious passing threat.

Mammoth tackle Ernest Hines

(6-7, 270-pounds) anchors the Spartans' offense line. Offensively, Norfolk relies on steady play. The Spartans don't pose the big-play threat, but they don't make costly mistakes either.

Defensively, the Rams go into the championship game with a unit that has allowed only 17 points in its last four games. Against St. Paul's last week, the Rams never allowed a drive inside their 20-yard-line.

The outcome of the Rams' matchup against Norfolk will likely be determined by how Bailey chooses to defend WSSU. If the Spartans use a defense stacked to stop the run, they might be in for a long day.

"For some reason, people still want to play nine men on the line against us," says Hayes. "The way our passing has been clicking, everything we've tried to do has worked."

Shaw picked in CIAA South

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"I'm going to put our success on their shoulders," Reynolds said. "Those two have been with me for four years and I think they are capable of giving us the leadership we need."

Lacy and Shepard are the perfect complements for each other. Shepard provides strong leadership as the Bears' playmaker, while Lacy has a deadly outside game.

"We have a good attitude as a whole and I think that will help us this season," said Lacy, who averaged 18 points last year and made all-CIAA. "We're playing good defense and we're beginning to come around offensively."

While Lacy believes being rated first in the Southern Division will add some pressure this season, he said the Bears are capable of living up to that ranking.

"Being ranked number one is really an honor," said Lacy, who played his high school ball at Philadelphia's Overbrook High School. "I think we can live up to that prediction if we play as we're capable of."

Shepard, who hails from New York City, agreed. "We should be ready when the season begins," said Lacy. "We've played a lot among ourselves and we're blending well together. We've worked hard on our defense and our goal is to be a strong defensive team."

Shepard said the fact that both he and Lacy are seniors should help the team.

"We've been here for a while and we know the system," said Shepard. "We are trying to show the younger players that we can be good leaders. It's going to take a little time for us to get everything down, but we're going to be all right."

Meanwhile, St. Augustine's, which made it all the way to the Division II championship game last season, was predicted to finish second in the South, despite losing four starters. Al Coates is the only starter returning to Coach Harvey Heartley's team,

but the Falcons are expected to get a lot of service out of last year's reserves.

"This is an untried team," said Heartley. "We've played well in practice, but that doesn't mean anything because we haven't played anyone. We've had some very fine teams the past four or five years, so the tradition is still there."

"We have some players coming back that are really going to blossom," Heartley said. "They don't have much varsity experience, but, with the guys we had on the team last year, it was hard to give the reserves playing time."

Missing from the Falcons' roster is 6-9 Ken Bannister, who now starts for the New York Knicks and Anthony Rogers, a member of the Detroit Clippers of the Continental Basketball Association.

Still, Heartley said his team won't worry about its predicted second-place finish.

"I don't put much on the pre-season rankings," said Heartley. "You never know how the kinks are going to work out."

Though his team doesn't have the size of a year ago, Heartley said, it is better in other areas.

"We're not as big as we were last year," he said. "We're going to miss Bannister inside. Power-wise, we don't have the inside game, but we're probably faster than last year."

"I have some juniors and seniors that have been with me for a while," Heartley said. "We're not that young in terms of classification. We just don't have that much playing experience."

Last year's Southern Division co-champion, Winston-Salem State, was picked to finish fifth. Rounding out the coaches' predictions are Fayetteville State, third; Livingstone, fourth; Johnson C. Smith, sixth, and North Carolina Central, seventh.

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IN honor of Spencer Barnes, the Pepsi Cola Bottling Company will make a cash contribution to the Reynolds High School Athletic Program. Congratulations, Spencer Barnes... the Pepsi Prep Athlete of the Week!

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