

## They fought a war

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Okay, so nobody can stop Willie Totten. Alcorn's defense did, however, make each pass an adventure (photo by Mark Gail).

game, Alcorn State moved 68 yards in eight plays to take an early 6-0 lead in the first three minutes. Junior tailback Perry Qualls, who scored a school-record five touchdowns, capped the march with a nine-yard run. George Green's extra-point attempt failed.

When Mississippi Valley's offense hit the field after the ensuing kickoff, there were chants of "SWAC-busters" from the MVSU contingent. The moment of truth was at hand.

How would Jerry "World" Rice fare against Alcorn defensive back "General Ike" Holt, both considered first-round draft picks?

Could MVSU's offense run havoc over Alcorn State, as it had done all year against all of its foes?

Or would Alcorn's patented "Tomahawk Defense" prove to really be an immovable wall of granite?

In 10 plays, the Delta Devils moved 90 yards in just 1:53 to score on their first possession as had Alcorn. Quarterback Willie Totten hit Cleo

Armstrong in the end zone with a 14-yard pass, putting MVSU ahead 7-6 following Emmitt Matthews' extra point.

But Qualls, called by one sportscaster "the most underrated running back in Mississippi," then shifted into high gear, scoring the next three touchdowns of the game. The 5-9, 191-pound junior from Forest, Miss., scored on a five-yard run with 7:37 left in the opening quarter, followed by a touchdown run of three yards and a 10-yard touchdown reception from Richard Myles, both in the second quarter.

The Braves entered the locker room at intermission holding a commanding, though surprising, 28-7 lead.

"They're beating us down," Cooley told his team during the break. "They're just beating us down."

But Valley has been down at the half before. Showing their ability to score as quick as a flash of lightning, the Delta Devils stormed back in the

second half, scoring the next three touchdowns en route to knotting the score at 28-28.

Totten connected with Rice on a 35-yard scoring toss and ran in himself from the one-yard line, both in the third frame, to narrow Alcorn's lead to 28-21. The score was tied at the 14:56 mark of the last stanza when fullback Carl Byrum ran in from the five.

"The kids got complacent after the first half and Valley adjusted," said Casem. "Mighty Mo turned against us and it was hard to get her back on our side. But we've got all winners and that's why we were able to come back and seal our victory."

Qualls, who rushed for 211 yards in 37 carries and made five receptions for 79 yards, put the Braves ahead for good with 1:51 left in the game on a one-yard plunge. The winning ASU drive consumed seven minutes, eight seconds, 15 plays and 80 yards with Qualls carrying the ball 11 times and gaining 73 yards.

"If you've got a cannon, you shoot it," marveled Casem. "Qualls is a cannon. He's a winner. You have to go with your winners."

So spectacular was Qualls that he overshadowed the one-on-one battle between Rice and Holt, the matchup that was the subject of most of the pre-game hoopla. Holt managed to hold Rice to eight receptions for 134 yards and one touchdown, marks far below the wide receiver's usual pace.

Holt had the last laugh, too, when he intercepted a Totten pass intended for Rice and raced 29 yards for the final touchdown. When it was over, the commander-in-chief of the Braves' "Soul Patrol" defensive secondary considered his performance against Rice just a normal day's work.

"They call Rice 'All-World'," Holt said after the game. "I knew that, to beat him, I'd have to be 'All-Universe.'"