

INTERVIEW

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you've got to have something upstairs to do well.

"We have a very complex offensive scheme," he says. "I didn't think I would adjust to it as fast as I have and I didn't think I would play as much. I thought this year would be a learning experience. But Coach Forte has brought me a long way."

Forte, on the other hand, says he couldn't keep a player of Hooker's ability on the sidelines for long.

"It doesn't matter what classification he is, Alan Hooker is a leader," Forte says. "We knew that he had the ability to play football at A&T right away, but he had to earn the starting quarterback position.

"At the beginning of the season, he didn't win the starting job," says Forte. "In the first game of the season (against Winston-Salem State), Alvin

Grier played as good a game as anyone. Since that time, Hooker has come on to beat Grier out."

Hooker saw his first action of the season as South Carolina State routed A&T in Greensboro. Although Hooker obviously didn't lead the team to a miraculous comeback, he did play well. From that point on, Hooker has been the starter.

In the six games he's played, Hooker has passed for 746 yards. While he's thrown 10 interceptions, his completion rate of 48.6 and six touchdown passes are impressive for a first-year signal-caller.

Forte made it clear that Hooker was the Aggie quarterback of the future by shifting Grier, a two-year starter, to wide receiver.

"We told him (Grier) that we needed his athletic ability at another

position," says Forte. "Being a team player, Grier was willing to move over. Since that time, we've been fairly successful with Grier at wide receiver and Hooker at quarterback."

Despite the stiff competition between the two, Hooker says he and Grier, a senior, get along well on and off the field.

"We're on a buddy-buddy system," Hooker says. "When the season started, he came out and worked hard and it made me work hard. He's helped me out a lot and I've learned a lot from him.

"It helps to have Alvin in the huddle," says Hooker. "He helps me to make the calls and tells me when I'm making a mistake. Off the field we stick together a lot."

The first weeks of both his athletic and academic careers might have seem-

ed like one big safety blitz, but Hooker says he thinks he's adjusting well. While he's making his presence felt on the field, he says he's most concerned with his school work.

"The hardest thing is having time to study," he says. "In high school there was time to relax after practice and I could study when I felt like it. But here you don't have time to relax. After football practice, usually I have to get right into my books."

While it remains to be seen whether Hooker will become a college star, one thing is certain: With him behind center, A&T is a better team.

That alone, says Forte, should be enough to fill seats in Aggie Stadium.

"He's going to help our athletic program considerably," says Forte. "When you pay to see Alan Hooker play, it's worth the price of admission."

Virginia Union

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circumstances that no man could overcome?

Or is the Union era of domination in the CIAA over?

"We've contacted 150 prospects, and, from what I can judge, we have as

good a chance as anyone to sign them," said Taylor of his recruiting. "We depend heavily on our alumni to recommend kids to us, and they're hanging in there."

Taylor has faith in his ability to get

the job done at Union and carry on a great tradition. But with each loss, the mystic invincibility Union has enjoyed so long in the CIAA is eroded just a little more.

Fun time is over in '84. Now it's up

to Taylor to blow up some deflated balloons and launch the slogan: "We'll Revive in '85."

In college football, party glasses can be filled just as easily as emptied; and lights can be turned back on, too.

INSTANT REPLAYS

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- Dec. 17: Alcorn State at Michigan.
- Dec. 18: North Carolina A&T at Georgia Tech.
- Jan. 8: Morgan State at Kansas.
- Feb. 13: Maryland-Eastern Shore at North Carolina State.

Norfolk And The MEAC

The Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference probably views Norfolk State like a man who's been fasting for a week views a sirloin steak.

What choicer morsel could the struggling skin-and-bones league dig into better than fat, juicy Norfolk, with its rabid fans, attractive playing facilities and strong athletic teams (especially in basketball and football)?

Norfolk could also benefit from the move up, particularly where television exposure and the big

bucks they can bring during basketball season are concerned.

The powers that be in the CIAA probably aren't so high on the idea, though.

Reflections On The Game

I normally don't devote space in my column to anyone but me, but Staff Writer Lonza Hardy, who happens also to be sports information director at Alcorn State University, wrote an opinion piece recently that I thought you might find interesting:

The competitive nature of our society dictates that there must be winners and there must be losers. That's the name of the game. In the Alcorn State-Mississippi Valley State football classic, though,

perhaps everyone was a winner, particularly the fans.

Such enthusiasm and excitement as were witnessed in the days leading up to the Alcorn-Valley showdown were not only unprecedented but once inconceivable.

Whoever thought that two tiny Mississippi schools from two tiny Mississippi towns called Lorman and Itta Bena could hold the entire country in a state of awe and attract such an array of people as were gathered at Mississippi Memorial Stadium in Jackson on Nov. 4?

Indeed, the crowd of 63,808 included people from all walks of life -- and from all races -- with one ultimate goal: to see football at its best.

This writer believes that the Alcorn-Valley game was more than just a game -- it was a precedent-setter. It showed that sports is, and should be, colorless and that the en-

joyment of athletic competition should not hinge on the size or division of the teams in the competition but on the quality of the product on display. If the two teams competing on any given day have a quality product, that product should be put on display and true sports fans should flock to the stadium in masses to see the contest.

Whoever said that SWAC football, as well as football in the MEAC, the CIAA and the SIAC, cannot be as exciting as football in the SEC, the ACC and the Pac 10?

He obviously didn't consult with those in attendance at the Alcorn-Valley game.

Yes, Mississippi Valley won the pre-game media blitz and Alcorn State won the football game, but the biggest winners of all were surely the fans. The excitement of the game reached the limits of the law.