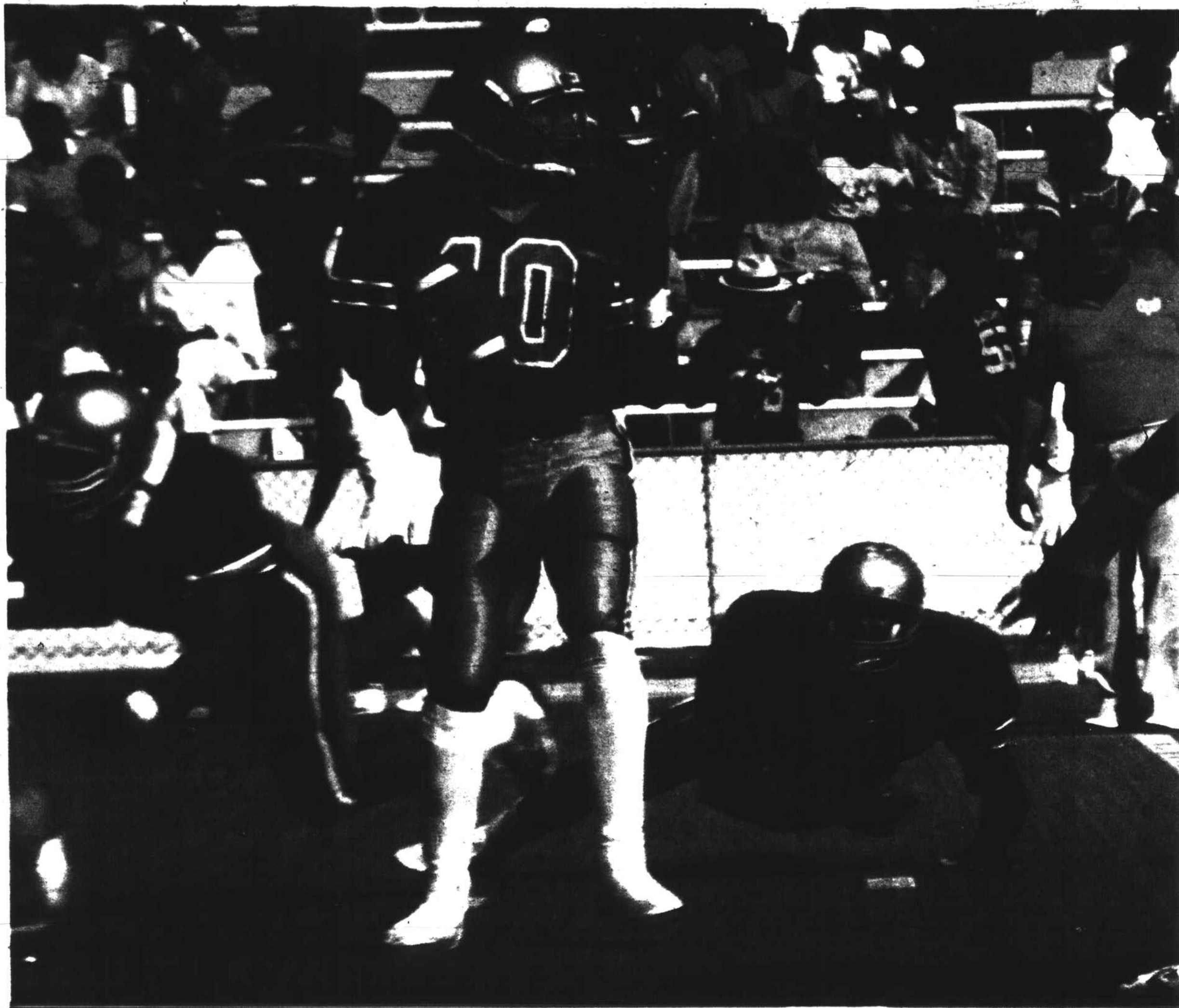


Much Ado About Norfolk

By FREEMAN PLEASANTS



Norfolk State quarterback Willie Gillus searches for a receiver against rival Virginia Union (photo by Joe Daniels).

At last year's Virginia Union-Norfolk State football game in Richmond, someone unveiled a green and gold (Norfolk State's colors) sign with this message directed at the Union coach:

"Won't you come home, Will Bailey, won't you come home?"

Now, after cryin' nearly a whole decade long, the legions of fans at Norfolk State have gotten their wish.

Native son Willard Bailey, NSU Class of '63, has come on home. And this is one coach worth doin' the cookin' and payin' the rent for.

In 13 seasons at Virginia Union, a private school with nowhere the financial clout or resources of Norfolk State, Bailey produced a 106-32-4 record, making him the most successful coach in NCAA Division II, based on percentage.

Decorating the great record at Union were five CIAA championships, including the last three in a row, and five consecutive trips to the select, eight-team Division II tournament.

"At Union, a lot of common people did uncommon things," says Bailey. "I was only one of many. Jesse Chavis was just as valuable as myself. So many of our victories at Union were the result of that great man."

Chavis, Bailey's right-hand man, top recruiter and drill-sergeant defensive boss, passed away two summers ago, a victim of cancer.

In Chavis' place, Bailey hired two long-time friends, Tom Morris and John Wright, whom he made sure he brought along to Norfolk State.

"Tom and John are cut from the Chavis mold. I'm so fortunate in that regard," says Bailey. "In preparing for