

## FOOTBALL

# He's bagging records these days, not groceries

By RON MORRIS  
Special To The Review

For a young man who envisioned a year of bagging groceries, Earl Harvey has done quite well for himself as a college quarterback this season, thank you.

In his freshman year at North Carolina Central University in Durham, N.C., Harvey has bagged 11 school and two NCAA Division II records. With 3,190 yards passing in 10 games, Harvey is on a pace to leave his name scattered throughout the Central, CIAA and NCAA record books before he departs.

"If you had told me a year ago that all this was going to happen, I would have said you were crazy," says Harvey, who only 12 weeks ago left his home in Fayetteville to attend the only school that made him a serious offer of a scholarship to play quarterback.

"To tell you the truth, when we started off this year, we didn't know who our quarterback would be," says Central Coach Hank Lattimore. "It started out with (backup Anthony) Hamm getting most of the attention. Then Harvey started moving up into the race for a starting position. Now, here's a freshman we're talking about who has set some NCAA records."

Harvey's performances have left several opposing CIAA coaches a little dazed. Each probably thought he had seen the last of Central's vaunted passing game when Gerald Fraylon departed at the end of last season.

"It's been four years since we had a team without a Fraylon," Lattimore said quite prophetically in the preseason. "I imagine people have forgotten that anybody else can play quarterback at Central."

"But I'll tell you something: I think this kid's going to change the minds of a whole lot of people."

It didn't take long for Lattimore's prediction to come true. When Harvey passed for a school-record 389 yards in a 41-40 Central loss on Oct. 26, Elizabeth City State Coach Thurlis "Moose" Little had seen what Lattimore spoke about.

"We finally got rid of Fraylon, now we have to face this guy three more years," said Little, who favors a prolific passer himself with his Mississippi Valley-patterned "Nasty" offense. "That's not a pleasant thought."

The thought of Harvey carrying his 6-foot-3, 195-pound frame onto Central's O'Kelly Stadium field every Saturday for three more seasons is most pleasing to Lattimore. So happy is Lattimore with Harvey's progress at quarterback, the Central coaching



## Shades Of Fraylon

Harvey rolls out to pass against archrival North Carolina A&T (photo by Joe Daniels).

staff is gearing its no-huddle offense more and more to the passing game.

In Central's 55-0 victory over Bowie State on Nov. 2, one in which Harvey threw for a school-record tying four touchdowns in only three quarters of action, the Eagles experimented with not using running backs. In effect, Lattimore -- like Little -- is testing the virtually untested CIAA waters of a wide-open passing game.

"We work hard on our passing game," Lattimore says. "There's no question about it, we do put a lot of effort and time into our passing game. It takes about three coaches, and we don't have many coaches, to work with the passing game."

"Because of that, he's under

pressure. I imagine he goes into every ballgame feeling that pressure. He knows he is the focus of our offense and I think he has accepted that well.

"But it hasn't been easy for him. He's had some difficult ballgames and he's taken some hard licks out there. But he's gotten right back up and gone back after it."

Accepting the pressure did not come easy for Harvey. His quiet nature combined with the uncertainty of his abilities left Harvey gun-shy at the outset. Unsure of himself, even in an interview situation, Harvey said he didn't have many alternatives to college.

"Really, this is like a dream to me," Harvey said in the pre-season. "When

I was in high school, I just had plans to get out and get a job, go to work. I figured I'd be bagging groceries or in the army right now."

He certainly never figured to be leading a North Carolina Central football team into New York's Yankee Stadium for a meeting with powerful Grambling State. For a kid who had never left the state of North Carolina and never flown on an airplane, quarterbacking a college team under those circumstances was probably too much to ask. Following a 45-14 loss to the Tigers, one in which the admittedly scared quarterback threw four interceptions, Harvey thought maybe he should bag football.

"I felt so bad after that game because it was a dream to play against Grambling. The only time I had ever seen them was on TV," says Harvey, who was in tears following a 15-of-33 passing performance that netted only 207 yards passing.

Two weeks later in a loss to Winston-Salem State, Harvey threw three interceptions and managed only 147 yards passing. Against Elizabeth City, Lattimore had to bench Harvey early in the game.

"He's emotional; he wants to do well," Lattimore says. "We had to take him out of the ballgame until he settled down. He was off-target and he was missing people. We told him to just settle down and things would work out."

Those games have been the exceptions for Harvey, whose best qualities are a strong and accurate arm. Generally, Harvey has been cool under the pressure of running a no-huddle offense in which the quarterback calls every play at the line of scrimmage. Early in the season, Lattimore was sending most plays to Harvey from the sideline. By the third game, Harvey was on his own.

"With each game, his play selection has been better," Lattimore says. "He's looking at the (defensive) coverage well now. He's more confident in what he's doing."

The freshman has to be a quick-witted quarterback because the Eagle receivers run their own patterns, in effect taking whatever the secondary gives them. Under these circumstances, Harvey sometimes has to try to read his teammates' minds. He did an excellent job of this in his first season.

Harvey's new-found confidence is beginning to show in all areas. The modest rookie enjoys talking freely about how Central's offensive line and its receivers should get credit for his success. Harvey has been sacked only

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