

College Football

Vintage Hooker guides A&T by Rams

By DAVID BULLA
Chronicle Sports Editor

GREENSBORO -- The eerie, refracted sunlight made it seem as if a dust storm had descended on the campus of North Carolina A&T State University late last Saturday afternoon.

Could this portend something ominous for the Aggies? Perhaps another blown lead against arch-rival Winston-Salem State? No, because it wasn't freaky weather after all, but a rare A&T victory over WSSU that set off the dust cloud. Aggie coaches, players, alumni, students, fans and even a few street people celebrated in Aggie Stadium's parking lot of gravel, dirt and grass. Waiting for the traffic to ease, many were savoring their favorite plays from the pigskin delicacy that had just been cooked up inside.

When Stoney Polite broke the plane of the stadium's south end zone at about 4:30 p.m., the victory signified that A&T had its football house in order after a half-decade of renovations prompted by Jim McKinley's absconding to Texas. At the end of the 1981 season, McKinley had left the once-proud program in serious debt and woefully short on talent.

"I think of this as a major hurdle," said Coach Mo Forte, who last year guided A&T to its first winning season since 1980. "We just beat someone we hadn't beat in five years."

"But more than anything, I felt we needed to beat Winston-Salem State in order to continue obtaining our goals. When you're talking about being in the running for the MEAC title -- and we are -- you have to beat good football teams. We did that today."

WSSU, one of the best Division-II programs in the country, came into the game ranked fourth in the Sheridan black-college poll, while the I-AA Aggies were ranked eighth in the same poll. Comparing Division I-AA and II programs is like comparing tobacco and tomatoes, but WSSU has had the edge in this rivalry over the last decade. The Rams have won six in that span, although most of the games have been close, with the last eight meetings decided by an average of eight points.

Last week's game was no different as the rivals baked up another one of their classics. A&T's 36-35 decision at Mississippi Valley State last November had been a whopper of a win, quarterback Alan Hooker said. It gave the



A&T's Broderick Rouse, above, blocks Tyrone Smith's PAT; at right, Alan Hooker gets the word from the Aggie bench; WSSU's Dana Walker executes a play-action pass (photos by James Parker).



Sheridan Poll		
Ranking	Record	Points
1. Delaware State	2-0	130
2. Grambling State	1-0	119
3. Tennessee State	3-0	93
4. N.C. A&T	2-0	82
5. Central State	1-0	65
6. Jackson State	2-1	64
7. Mississippi Valley	1-0	63
8. W-S State	1-1	36
9. Southern U.	1-1	28
10. Norfolk State	2-0	22

Aggies a winning season. But he said the win over WSSU was even bigger, for Hooker and his Aggie teammates knew that, with a victory of this stature early in the season, a I-AA playoff berth was now a viable goal. (For the first time in the history of the league, the MEAC champion will get an automatic berth in the Division I-AA playoffs.)

What allowed the Aggies to quench their four-year thirst for victory over the Rams was the play of Hooker, who spices up his store of offensive tricks by scrambling in a way that would

make Fran Tarkenton envious. Hooker had plenty of help from a beefed-up Aggie defense that limited the potent WSSU ground attack to 96 yards on 41 carries.

Hooker was unstoppable early in the game, completing his first eight passes for 103 yards and leading the Aggies to a 14-3 lead at the end of the first quarter. The junior from Liberty finished with 17 completions in 25 attempts for 223 yards and two touchdowns. He threw two interceptions.

"Alan Hooker certainly lived up to his

billing," said Ram Coach Bill Hayes, who lost to Forte for the first time. "I also think A&T played really hard. They were hungry."

A&T gobbled up almost half of its 429 total yards on the ground. Indeed, running back Stoney Polite chewed up more yardage (123) than all of the Rams combined.

The Aggies' first drive showed how well-prepared their ground game was for this one. Polite scored the game's first touchdown on an eight-yard run that completed an eight-play, Please see page B6

Sports Beat

Barber sees a new confidence in hungry Aggies

By DAVID BULLA
Chronicle Sports Editor

GREENSBORO -- Chris Barber, a senior defensive back for North Carolina A&T, had seen the Aggies blow three consecutive games to Winston-Salem State.

He didn't want it to happen again, but last Saturday the pattern was developing once more. A&T, behind the able arm of junior quarterback Alan Hooker, scored first and built a 14-3 lead by the end of the first quarter. But the Rams scored the next 12 points and slowed the Hooker-led Aggie offense until late in the third quarter.

Although Barber and his defensive teammates never quite shut down

WSSU wide receiver Masha Paul, the Aggies limited the Rams to only one scoring drive over the last 22 minutes and 50 seconds of the game.

Barber, the former Parkland standout, said it was a case of A&T wanting the game a little more than it had a year ago.

"The past three years we came out fired up, but the Rams have great teams every year," the Winston-Salem senior said. "They were great again, but we wanted it a whole lot more this year."

In a sense, the victory over WSSU validated the belief that Mo Forte had successfully rebuilt the Aggies' football program. Forte has come a long way in a year's time, for the A&T

alumni were restless when the Rams rallied from a 19-0 deficit to win 34-25 last year in Winston-Salem. That came in the midst of a four-game losing streak to open what seemed certain to be A&T's fifth straight losing season. But after a 51-24 loss to South Carolina State, the Aggies have put together a string of eight wins in nine outings.

WSSU Coach Bill Hayes felt A&T was a strong team all along.

"I thought they were a good football team last year," said Hayes, who had a four-game winning streak against the Aggies snapped. "They just didn't know it. Some of their kids buckled under a little pressure, but they didn't today. They know

how good they are now."

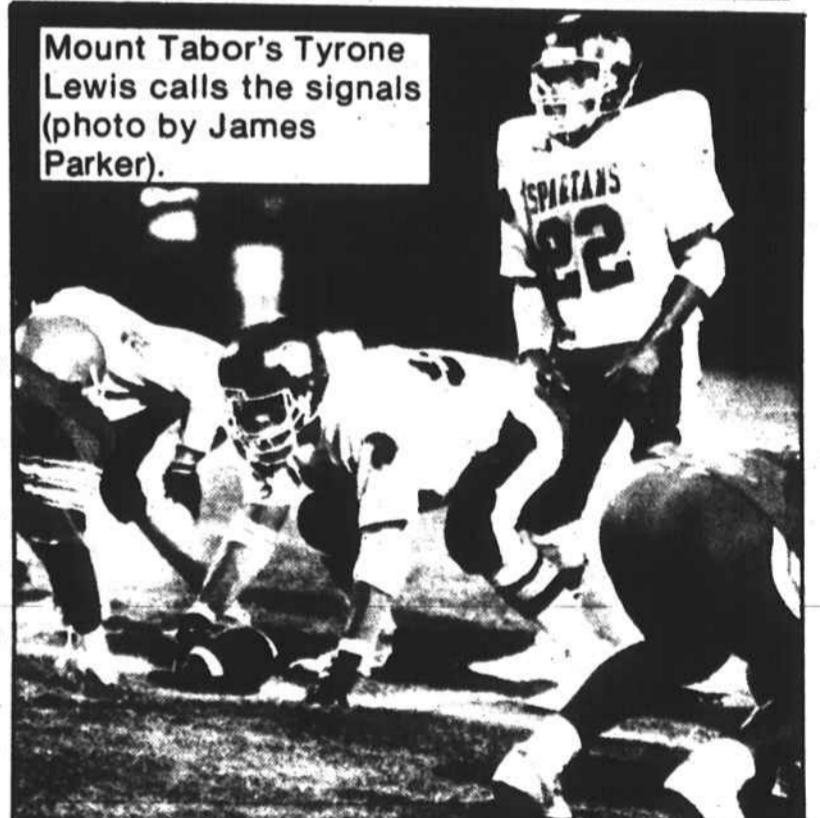
Barber, who had five tackles and three breakups, said that there are major differences in this A&T team and the ones that he's played on the last three years.

"One of the big things is we're more confident," he said in a celebratory Aggie locker room. "In the past, we were kinda laid back. We waited around to see what other teams were going to do to us and then reacted. Now we're going out there and initiating the action."

"We also had some attitudes that individuals came first, the team second. That's changed now."

Barber said this A&T-WSSU con- Please see page B7

Mount Tabor's Tyrone Lewis calls the signals (photo by James Parker).



Prep Spotlight

McKoy's recovery dooms Spartans

By KENNETH RAYMOND
Chronicle Sports Writer

Sometimes athletics and academics mix in rather unique ways, as they did last Friday night when Carver linebacker Rodney McKoy's good reading led to a rendezvous with destiny.

McKoy found himself at the right place at the right time against Mount Tabor. For on second down and nine to go on the Carver 16-yard line late in the fourth quarter, Spartan quarterback Tyrone Lewis pitched the ball to the ground. McKoy, who led Carver in tackles last season and has the lead in that department again this year, picked up the ball and rambled 65 yards to the Spartan 19-yard line with less than two minutes to play.

The Jackets made the most of a golden opportunity that left the Spartans blue. With the final seconds ticking off the clock, place-kicker Stephon Debnam nailed a 27-yard field goal. His boot with five seconds left propelled the undefeated Yellow Jackets past the previously unbeaten Spartans 3-0.

McKoy said that he saw Lewis coming and read the play all the way.

"I saw what he was going to do by the way they Please see page B4

Local Sports

Former East standout Jones to play Irish pro ball

By DAVID BULLA
Chronicle Sports Editor

Jeff Jones remembers well a pair of East Forsyth overtime losses to Greensboro Page in 1982.

In one of those games, the Eagles were up by two with three seconds left and still lost. He says those were two of his unluckiest games.

But his own fortunes seem to have changed four years later. With a little luck from the Irish Professional Basketball League, Jones hopes to one day play pro ball in the United States.

Jones, the former East and UNC-Asheville standout, signed a contract to play with the Galway entry in the Irish league this summer and flew to Europe

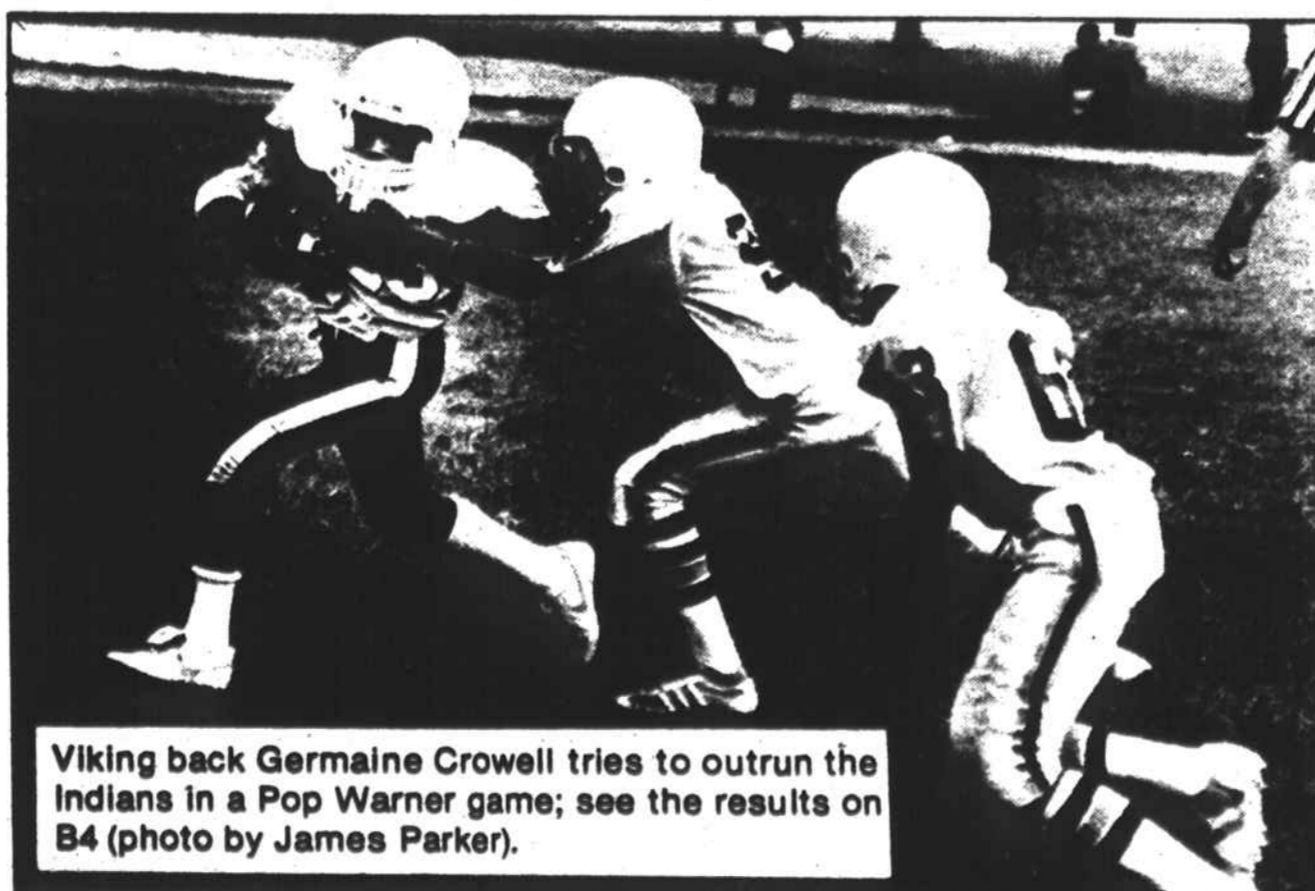
last week. (Galway, located on the Atlantic Ocean, is in the Republic of Ireland, 115 miles west of Dublin.)

"I see this as another steppingstone," he said before leaving last Friday. "My goal is to get a shot at the NBA."

Jones, who played in the Big Apple and Wayne Robinson leagues this summer, said he was first contacted by the Galway team after playing in the Shamrock Games at Worcester, Mass., earlier in the summer.

Playing basketball once a week in the Irish league will not be Jones' only obligation. He'll also have to help coach his team and give clinics to high school students.

"The other Americans I've Please see page B4



Viking back Germaine Crowell tries to outrun the Indians in a Pop Warner game; see the results on B4 (photo by James Parker).