

Coach Willie Ashford An Integral Part Of The Tiny Viking Organization

BY SAMUEL G. PURYEAR JR.
Chronicle SportsWriter

To say that Coach Willie Ashford Jr. hasn't become an integral part of the Tiny Viking organization and local little league sports, would be like saying the Republicans haven't placed America in the crutch during the last 12 years.

Danny Kaye, a noted comedian once said, "The greatest natural resource that any country can have is its children." Ashford adheres to this provident philosophy and has done so since he first began coaching as an assistant to James "Skeet"

Williams and John Isabelle in 1977.

Sanguine, amiable and jovial are three simple terms often tossed around when describing this 15 year veteran of the Pop Warner league. "I had a lot of help when I was growing up playing sports. This is my way to give something back," said Ashford.

Ashford, a native of Winston-Salem and graduate of Atkins High, developed into a shrine bowl caliber football player while playing with the likes of Hubert "Twitt" Alexander and Carl Eller. After high school, Ashford stayed around the

city and was hired at R.J.Reynolds where he has been employed for 34 years.

Ashford works an eight hour job, five days a week but still manages to schedule three team practices during the week.

"My wife has been very supportive.

The day that I can't put together something special for the kids will be the day I give it up," said Ashford.

Earlier this week, while visiting a Viking practice, the milieu surrounding Ashford was one of belief,

concern and support. Ashford used selective acrimony while discussing last weekends 12-0 loss to the Falcons but also mixed his message being sure to placate the feelings of his young team in preparing for this week's contest against the Rams.

"You can't fool these kids, you have to give them what you've got," said Ashford.

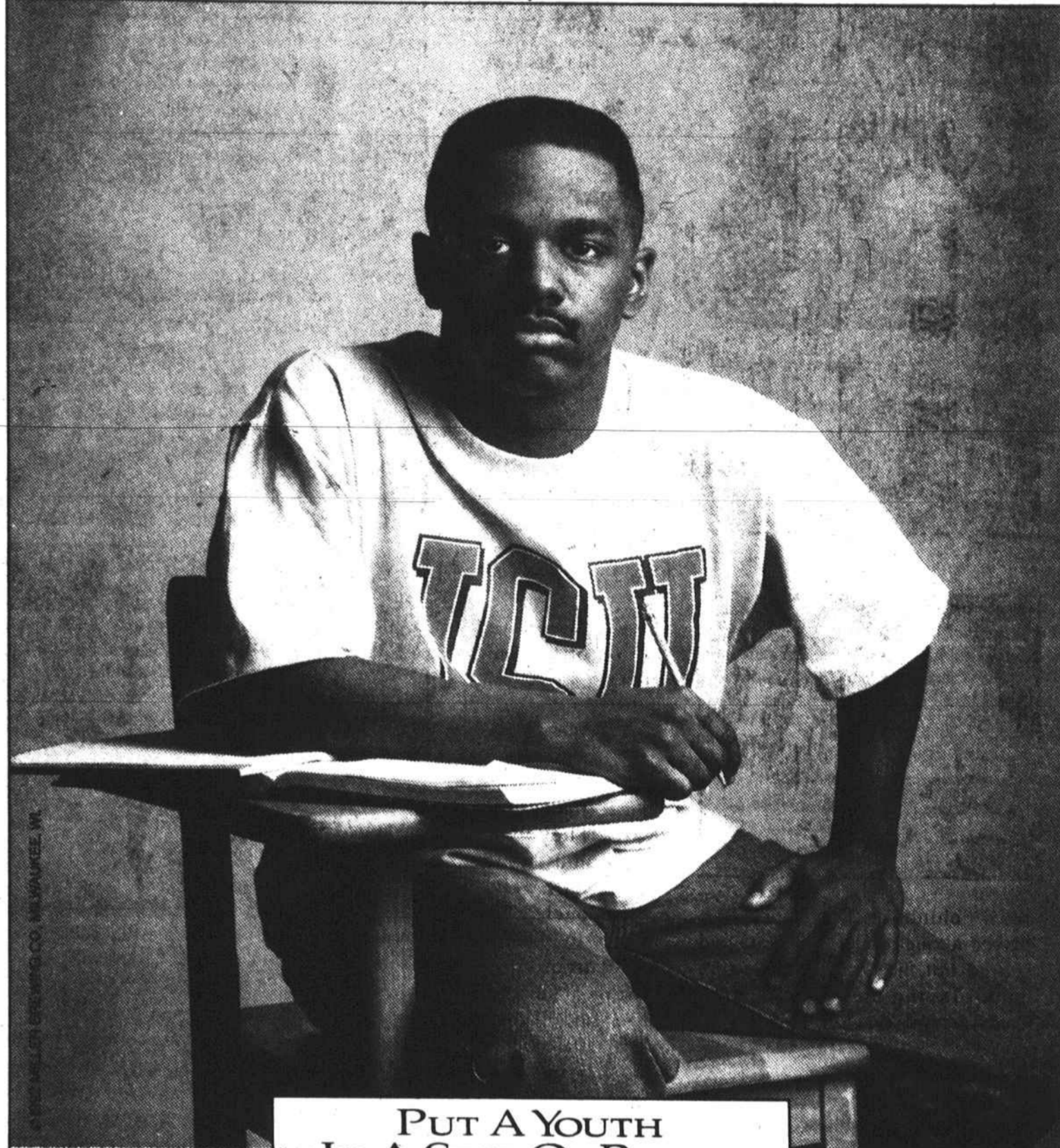
Ashford first got into little league coaching when his oldest son, Willie Ashford III, who is currently assisting his father coach the team, became involved with the Pop

Warner Organization. "I became involved at first as a supportive parent," said Ashford.

Since Willie III, Ashford has seen his three other kids, including his only daughter, who was a cheerleader, participate in the Pop Warner program. Ashford doesn't profess to have any "outré coaching methods, just simple love for the kids.

"My approach to the kids is the same regardless of the sport because I try to be as fair and sincere as possible to the kids," said Ashford. "I treat them the way that I would like

to be treated." If noted comedian Kaye could perform one great pantomime, in one last act, for one good man, he would act out a figurative man of grand stature, not a loner but a realist, not insouciant but concerned, not captious but understanding and most of all it would describe a hortatory individual trying to develop more out of his kids than merely turning them into professional athletes.



Savannah State College Plays At Home

Savannah State will be playing in Ted Wright Stadium for the first time this season on Saturday. The Tigers opponent for this sold out contest will be Livingstone College (2-4; 1-2 CIAA) from Salisbury, North Carolina. Livingstone has the CIAA's leading rusher in its backfield, Rob Clodfelter. Clodfelter has gained 803 yards on 152 carries in six games for an average of 133.8 yards per game. Savannah State, on the other hand, has the SIAC's top ground gainer (Lucius Cole) in its backfield. Cole has carried the ball 114 times in seven games and picked up 850 yards for an average of 121.4 yards per game. The Tigers, ranked 16th in the nation (NCAA Division II), are 1-1 this season against non-conference opponents.

Alabama A&M University (1-6; 1-3 SIAC) travels to the land of the unbeaten (Fort Valley) with the intentions of playing the spoiler role. The Bulldogs have not beaten Fort Valley State College (4-3; 3-0 SIAC) since 1988 and will definitely

have their work cut out for them. Fort Valley has not lost to an SIAC opponent in its last six outings. A victory will put the Wildcats one step closer to putting their paws on the 1992 SIAC Football Crown.

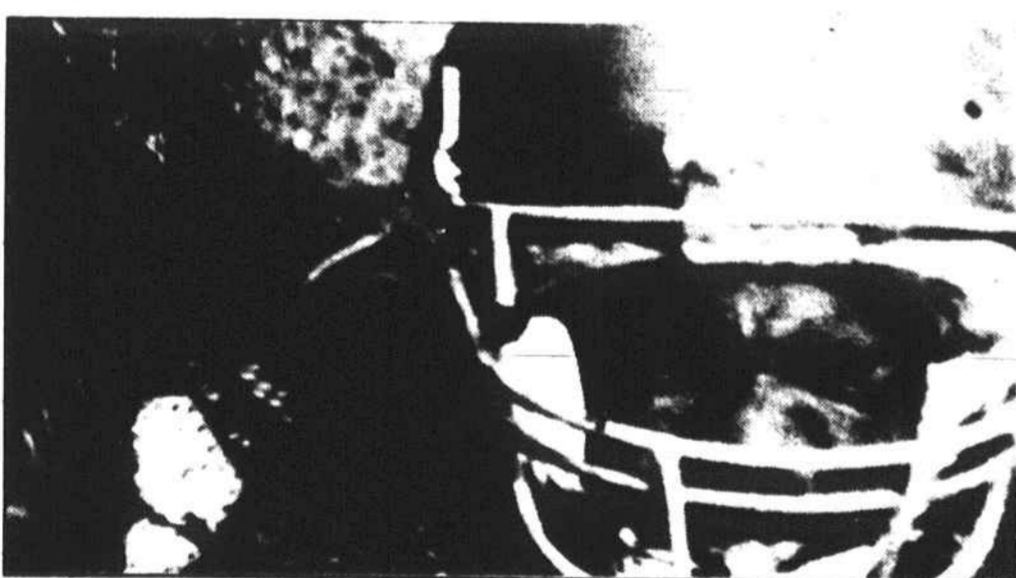
Albany State College (3-2-1; 3-1-1 SIAC) has rebounded from a dismal 1-2-1 start and will put their two-game winning streak on the line Saturday in Daytona Beach, Florida. The Rams will be the homecoming opponent for the winless Wildcats have struggled ever since former head coach Larry Little left at the end of the season to take the same position with the Ohio Glory of the now defunct World League of American Football.

Clark Atlanta University (4-2; 2-2 SIAC) hopes to stay in the thick of the conference race with a victory over College (0-7; 0-3 SIAC). The Panthers have won two games in a row and another victory will give them their best start since 178. The Golden Bears of Miles College are trying to snap

an eight-game losing streak, dating back to last season.

Hampton University (6-0-1; 5-0-1 CIAA), ranked #2 in several black college football polls and #7 in NCAA Division II, brings its fine tuned offensive scoring machine to the deep south (Alabama) to take on Tuskegee University (2-4-2' 2-3-1 SIAC). The Pirates average average margin of victory is 50.6 points per game (51.3-10.7). Golden Tigers are 2-0 at home this season.

Morris Brown College (3-4; 11-4 SIAC) will be playing at Morehouse College (4-3; 2-1 SIAC) in a newly renewed rivalry. These two teams are doing battle on the gridiron for the first time since 1989. Craig Cason is 5-2 at home since taking over the Maroon tiger program a year ago and Greg Thompson of Morris Brown has only lost to Morehouse once in this career. The year was 1986 and Morehouse beat Morris Brown 19-0.



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Weston Travels salutes Rodney for his outstanding performance on the field and in the classroom at Winston-Salem State University.

The Rams are now 5-2 overall for the season. WSSU faces Bowie State at home on Saturday at 7:00 p.m. at Bowman Gray Stadium.



Rodney Witherspoon

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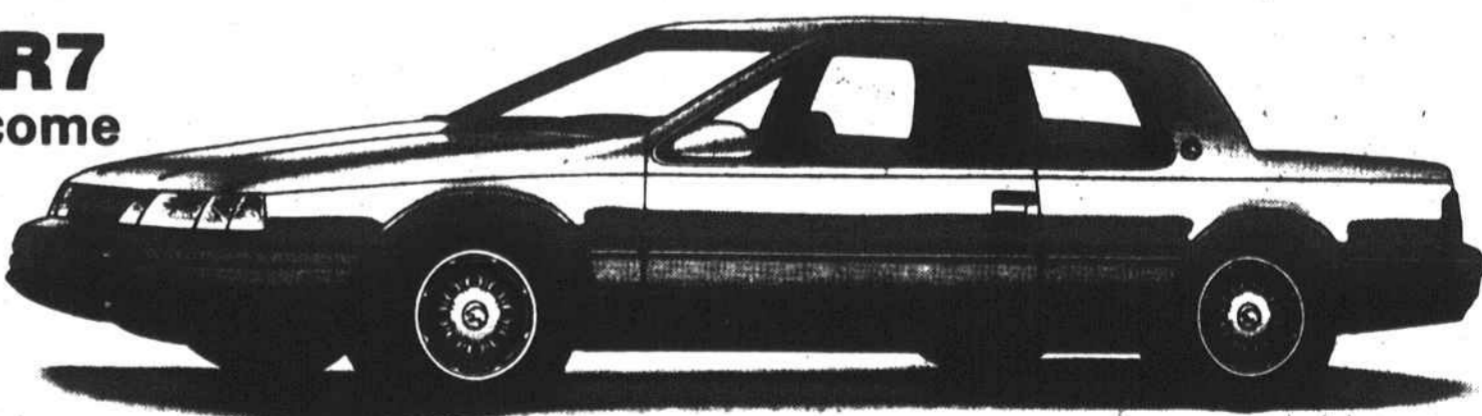
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