

# A&T exposes Rams weakness

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"They did a good job throughout the whole first half. But the defense stayed out on the field too long and eventually they wore down."

"I think the game got away from us in the third quarter," Blount added. "I thought after the half we should have been in position offensively to do something with the ball. But we just couldn't seem to find

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—Kermit Blount, WSSU Coach

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When you look at it that way, the defensive unit that has been assembled by second-year Coach Morgan Faison is developing into a dominant unit.

If the Rams offensive unit continues to sputter this season the Rams will need the defense to rise to the occasion.

Through two games the Rams' offensive unit has scored a total of only 14 points. The Rams managed only one touchdown on offense against Fort Valley in the opener and the defense contributed a touchdown and a safety for the 15-10 victory.

Against A&T the Rams offense only contributed one touchdown.

Surely Coach Blount and his troops can point to the fact that they lost Richard Huntley and Haywood Cloud from the offensive backfield. Huntley carried the bulk of the load for four years at WSSU and finished as the second leading all-time rusher in college football history. So obviously those were some big shoes to fill.

However, the Rams did return their entire receiving corps and quarterback Carl Walker. WSSU also returned a huge, talented offensive line.

So then, the Rams weren't exactly starting from scratch.

Going into spring drills Blount and his staff knew where they needed to find help. Finding it was another matter. The Rams looked at several players in-house and then hit the road looking for players to fill the gaps in the offensive backfield.

Although Eric Hendley proved to be an adequate tailback in the Rams' season-opening victory when he rushed for 119 yards, the jury is still out on whether he can give the Rams the big-play strike that the tailback must provide in the freeze-option attack that Blount's team runs.

If you were to judge the offense on its performance against A&T you might just say that the Rams' offense just doesn't have the continuity or explosiveness it needs to make a run at the CIAA championship.

Several times the Rams

were in position to deliver the big play, but each time in quarters 1-3 WSSU came away empty.

There is an old axiom in coaching that states that coaches must always put their players in the best possible position to win. Sure great athletes make great plays. But it is very hard for an athlete to make an outstanding play if he's not in position to do so.

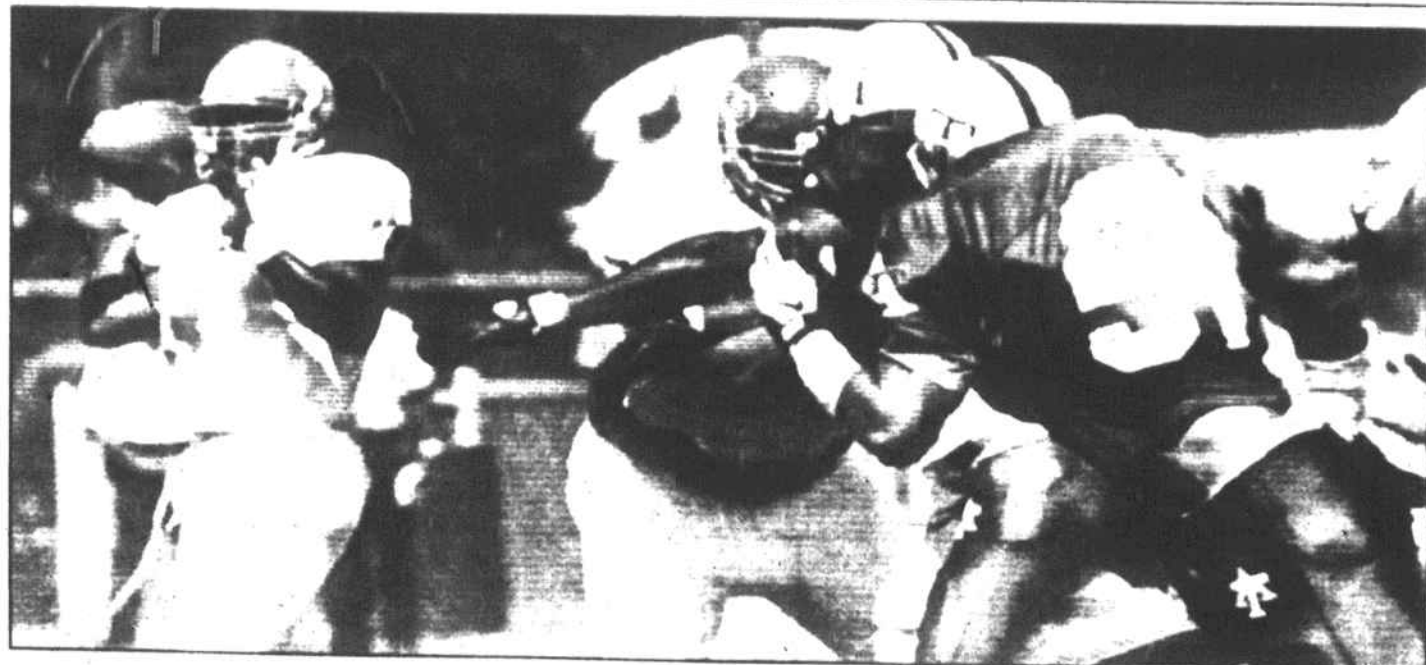
One of the biggest raps

like last year and the previous two under Blount, the Rams just can't find a way to get their backs and tight ends involved in the passing game. If you looked at the Rams' passing scheme you'd probably wonder if Blount has ever seen the "West Coast" style of offense that is so popular in the NFL. Quite a few college teams have been able to take the offense, which was popularized by Bill Walsh during his glory days at San Francisco, and integrate it into their third-down packages.

Last year, WSSU's tight ends caught a grand total of three passes during the football season. This year, the Rams look to be on track to continue that trend of keeping it out of the hands of the tight end. That's also the case for the running backs. Most of their catches in past years have been either on screen plays (which Blount didn't use against A&T) or on desperation attempts when the quarterback is about to be sacked.

If WSSU is to be a factor in the CIAA race and post a winning record this season Blount will have to deal with these issues.

With the defense playing as well as it has performed thus far, the Rams will be in a lot of games this year. Yet the offense has to find a way to increase its production to keep the Rams in the CIAA's upper division.



Travis Pender was called upon for his first action of the '96 season last Saturday against A&T and responded by completing 10 of 19 passes. Pender, who last played for WSSU during the '94 season, showed a little rust but provided a spark for the Rams in the second half. Photo by Joe Daniels.



Carl Walker left the game with a separated shoulder and will likely be out of the Rams' lineup for more than a month. Walker was under constant pressure from A&T's defensive unit. Photo by Ronald Filmore, Jr.

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#### Sports Quiz

by Larry Duncan

1. What golfer's nickname was Emperor Jones?
2. In what sport do you her- ringbone to get uphill?
3. Where is Wembley Stadium?
4. What team did the St. Louis Browns (baseball) eventually be- come?
5. For whom did the Seven Mules block?
6. Who was "The Galloping Ghost"?
7. Who was the first American world chess champion?
8. What country took part in the 1952 Summer Olympics after a 40- year absence?

#### Sports Quiz Answers

1. Bobby Jones; 2. skiing; 3. Lon- don; 4. the Baltimore Orioles; 5. the Four Horsemen of Notre Dame; 6. Red Grange; 7. Bobby Fischer; 8. the Soviet Union