

Basnight, Woodruff put up big numbers in Aggies win over Fayetteville State

By DAMON FORD
THE CHRONICLE

According to the old saying, "you can't teach an old dog new tricks."

North Carolina A&T Coach Bill Hayes doesn't believe that - especially after watching his team beat Fayetteville State 37-20.

The Aggies used strong individual efforts by Rodney Woodruff and Mike Basnight to record their win. Woodruff had 102 yards passing and Basnight chipped in with 132 yards rushing.

Those performances have Hayes convinced that his players are catching on to their new I-Formation setup after years of using the Wing-T offense.

"Rodney and Mike are making the adjustment to a new offense and this is their fourth game in it," Hayes said. "I think as the game went on both of them got better and better. I thought (Rodney's) decision making today was the best it's been all year. I think he's making steady improvement as a field general."

"Mike has usually been an east-west runner for three years running the sweet side of the Wing-T. Now he's running down hill on the sweet side of the I. It's taken a lot of adjustment in his running style but as the game wore on he really started hitting it like we want him too."

Basnight wasn't the only player going damage on the ground for A&T.

Fullback Eric Farmer scored the games first points in the second quarter on a three yard touchdown and gained 17 yards for the day



The Aggies defense closes in on a FSU runner. A&T gave up little ground to Fayetteville's rushing attack.

The two-point conversion made it 13-8 and the visiting Broncos, who had won their first two games were feeling good and looking to leave Greensboro with an upset.

But A&T's Basnight had other plans.

"I was just thinking don't let (FSU) think they're in it and don't let our team get down," he said.

The senior took the ensuing kickoff from his 12 yard line and rumbled up the middle and cut up the left sideline for an 88 yard score of his own. Darren Dawkins' point after kick made it 20-8.

A&T went on to score 17 unanswered points in the second half. The Broncos didn't score again until late in the fourth quarter.

"I thought Ralph (Jackson) had a pretty good game - it wasn't a hundred yards but I thought he had a good running game. In those lead plays if our fullbacks would have blocked better he probably would have got 150 yards."

One of the few bright areas offensively for FSU came from Winston-Salem resident Christopher Stewart, a product of East Forsyth High School.

The 6-5 210 quarterback came in the second half and led the Broncos to two fourth-quarter scores, which brought praise from his coach.

"Chris came in and did a helluva job," Toon said.

Stewart sliced the Aggie defense to complete six of 11 passes for 114 yards, including a 51 yard touchdown pass to Archangel.

"Everyone on the team knows- actually everybody in the CIAA knows- that Christopher Stewart has one of the best arms in the nation," Archangel said. "He knows it, it's all a point of him getting in there and doing the job."

"I just played my game," Stewart said. "It's always good to come off the bench because you get a good look at the cornerbacks and you see what they're doing."

FSU's (2-1, 1-0 CIAA) will be back in the triad this Saturday to face Winston-Salem State University during Homecoming at Bowman Gray Stadium. A&T (3-1, 0-1 MEAC) will be at home again this Saturday at 1:30 p.m. against Norfolk State University.

Hayes says they have a number of things to work on before the weekend.

"First of all we've got to learn how to stop a draw play ... when people spread us out," he said. "We've got to get better with kick-off coverage. I may have to go somewhere and find a kicker that can kick it out of the end zone. Then I won't have to worry about the coverage."

"We've just got to knuckle down and keep our heads on right and make constant improvement and be ready."



Mike Basnight of N.C. A&T pops through Fayetteville State's defense en route to a touchdown.

while tailback Reggie Shuford gained 47 yards and scored the Aggies second touchdown of the quarter to put them ahead 13-0.

The Broncos came right back as Demeco Archangel returned the kickoff 93 yards to put FSU on the board.

"There was nothing to do but run straight," Archangel said. "The offensive linemen could have run through (the hole). It was that big!"

For the game A&T accumulated 407 yards total offense while FSU totaled 222 yards. Broncos head coach James Toon didn't have a lot of answers for why his team struggled offensively.

"We didn't execute," he said. "Our offensive line didn't hold the blocks long enough. Our backs seemed like they were stumbling getting into the hole."

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