



A&T's defense celebrates.

Aggies

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ankle sprain, started the game slow.

A rash of penalties and incomplete passes plagued the Aggies during the game's opening drive, which stalled and ended with a fourth down punt that never materialized.

Delaware State defenders came at A&T punter Antonio Moore so hard that he had no choice but to try and throw a pass, but as he let the ball go he was knocked out of bounds and the pass went awry for an incomplete, giving the Hornets excellent field position on the Aggies 21-yard line.

Six plays later fullback Kevin Hanks put Delaware State on the board with a one-yard touchdown. Aaron Quinn's PAT was good and the Hornets were up 7-0. The fans in the stands were left wondering whether a game that was supposed to be a gimmie for A&T would turn out to be a long afternoon.

Seventeen seconds later Romando North erased any thoughts of a letdown in the minds of Aggie fans and pumped life back into the hearts of his teammates when he ran back a kickoff 98 yards for a score.

With good blocking up front the junior found a seam up the middle and used his speed to outrun several Hornet players who tried in vain to get a hand on the lightning-quick North.

Darren Dawkins PAT tied the score at 7-7. Though the Aggies had new life they still struggled to get on track offensively. Their only other score in the first half came on a 24-yard field goal by

Dawkins in the second quarter, which gave A&T a 10-7 lead. By halftime Adrian Parks, who started at tailback in place for the injured Smith, only gained 19 yards on seven carries while starting quarterback Jason Battle was 4-11 for 57 yards in the air. The second half would prove to be a different story for both Aggies, though it started off much the same as the first.

The Hornets, who had their own miscues offensively, scored first when wide receiver Tommie Mims caught a nine-yard pass from quarterback Rahsaan Matthews. Quinn's PAT gave Delaware State a 13-10 lead with 10:17 remaining. Despite some improvement the Aggies were unable to get anything going offensively on the ensuing series.

Delaware State could have increased their lead during their second drive of the quarter but wide receiver Kevin Franks fumbled at the goal line as he tried to stretch and break the plain as several Aggie defenders pinned him.

The ball landed in the end zone but was booted out of bounds for a touchback, and A&T took over on their own 20-yard line. Behind the bullish running of Parks and fullback Eric Farmer the Aggies marched 80 yards down the field, ending with Farmer's one-yard plunge to start the fourth quarter.

Dawkins' PAT helped put A&T up 17-13. The Aggies padded their lead with eight minutes left in the game when Battle, who dropped back to pass but could find no receivers, quickly tucked the ball and scampered 13 yards up the middle dodging several Delaware State defenders on his way to the end zone.

The sophomore finished the

game with 123 yards passing and 51 yards rushing with one TD. After a sluggish first half, Parks netted 74 yards on 11 carries in the second half, giving him 93 total yards for the day. Farmer backed him up with 17 carries for 78 yards and a TD.

North, a wide receiver, finished the afternoon with 152 all-purpose yards and one touchdown while doing a little bit of everything, from kick-off returns to carrying the ball and making a couple of catches. Though they won, A&T head coach Bill Hayes said he was a little wary in the beginning.

"I thought (Delaware State) did a good job preparing for us," he said. "I was worried (at first). You get flashes of all the hard work you do going down the drain."

With the loss Delaware State's (3-6 overall, 3-3 MEAC) hopes for any postseason play were dashed.

A&T (8-1 overall, 6-0 MEAC) on the other hand goes into Saturday's game tied with FAMU for first place and is guaranteed a spot in either the playoffs or the McDonalds Heritage Bowl in Atlanta, Ga.

The matchup between the two teams will take place in Aggie Stadium with the kickoff at 12:30 p.m. FAMU, ranked No. 8 in the latest USA Today/ESPN Coaches Division I-AA poll, has the most potent passing attack in the MEAC while A&T, ranked No. 23 in the same poll, is the conference leader in yards gained on the ground.

Saturday's battle against FAMU will give A&T a chance to avenge a lopsided loss to the Rattlers last season when coach Billy Joe's team ran up the score in the game's final minutes.

North Forsyth

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got another score on a pass from Kiser to Masencup. The Vikings gave up their only points of the game when Southeast scored on a safety. On the play, Kiser made a check-off while the Vikings were trapped inside their five-yard line and Funderburk was trapped in the end zone for a safety.

Southeast was unable to build any momentum and North's defense closed out the game without giving up any points.

"I think we have something to look forward to for next year," Hall said. "Really, I have mixed emotions about the season. I feel that a 6-4 record is pretty good. I'm pretty content, but not satisfied. I had higher expectations, but I'm pleased."

"When I think back to our first scrimmage and where we are now, I'm elated about things. I thought we could have been at least two games better, but that motivates me to work harder and to get ready for next year."

Hall said the Vikings' players now know what to expect from his staff and that should help prepare the team for next season.

"For one thing, we know exact-



Walter Funderburk

ly what we want to do," he said. "Now we can mold the kids to fit what we need them to do. We know what type athlete we need for the position, the kids know exactly what we're looking for and the kids will be able to expect for themselves."



Photo by Bruce Chapman

A&T's defense started slow, but picked up the slack as the game progressed.

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Carver varsity

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Jason Pender played real well for us. He stepped up and took on their linebackers so T.J. could gain a lot of yardage."

Wilkes also said his defense played well. That unit, which gave up less than 150 total yards to the Eagles, hasn't gotten as much publicity as the offense but Wilkes said it has adjusted well to coach Drew Buie's schemes and is playing well at the right time.

"I think coach Buie has done an outstanding job with those guys," Wilkes said. "They don't get a whole lot of recognition, but they have gotten better as the season has gone along. We're getting solid play from a lot of people and it's very important in the playoffs to get contributions from a lot of different people."

The Yellowjackets, who finished the regular season with a 9-2 overall record and 6-0 mark in the conference, go into the playoffs this season as a No. 4 seed in the East. The seedings this season were determined by the team's finish in its conference and overall record. Last season Carver was the No. 1 seed and hosted four playoff games. Carver will host at least two games if it is victorious and could earn a third game if higher-seeded teams are knocked off.

"We're really not concerned with seeds this season," Wilkes said. "We're concerned with getting out to a good start in the playoffs and being consistent."

"I told the players before the start of the season that they can't think about last year's state championship. They have to focus on this season and what they're doing right now. We have to continue



Peoples

carving out our own identity. The seniors on this team have to step up and provide leadership and realize that this is their team."

Among those that have done so lately is Jason Brayboy, the quarterback. Brayboy has avoided making mistakes in recent games and is coming into his own as a leader.

"Brayboy has a lot of talent and brings a lot to the team," Wilkes said. "But now he has to take it to another level. He hasn't

been in the big games like some of our kids who have been in the program for four years. As the leader he has to accept a lot more responsibility and focus on doing the little things that it takes to win championships."

Wilkes said the same applies to several defensive players.

"They have to recognize the urgency of playing your best each game," Wilkes said. "You have to play like each game could be your last and not hold anything back."



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