

Delaware State ready for playoffs

MEAC champs to play the University of Delaware on Friday

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The match-up between the Delaware State Hornets and the University of Delaware Blue Hens will finally happen and it's the first round of the NCAA D-I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) National Tournament.

The historic game will kick-off on Friday at Delaware Stadium in Newark, DE. Kickoff is 1:30 p.m. and the game will be televised live on ESPN HD and simulcast on ESPN 360.

Hornet head coach Al Lavan was interviewed during the live selection show on ESPNU and expressed excitement about the Hornets opportunity in the FCS playoffs.

"It feels great to have an opportunity to play in the post-season," said Lavan. "We are glad to go where ever the schedule takes us. I can only say that we will be at the site that we are designated to play and our kids will play hard. We are honored and happy to be heading north."

The Hornets got their first trip to the playoffs by securing the MEAC football title and automatic berth with a DSU record 8-0 conference mark and 10-1 overall. The Blue Hens earned an at-large bid, finishing the regular season with an 8-3 overall record and 5-3 finish in the Southern Division of the Colonial Athletic Conference (CAA).

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Delaware State is ready to run wild in the Div-IAA playoffs.

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Recently the Hornets/Blue Hen match up received national media attention including a feature article on ESPN.com and

highlighted on ESPN's Outside the Lines. The schools are separated by 45 miles, but have never competed in football. This is a historical match-up for the entire State of Delaware, but most of all it is the first step for both in the national championship race.

Note: The Sports Network announced that Delaware State University football coach Al Lavan has been selected one of 16 finalists for the Eddie Robinson Award, given annually to the National Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) Coach of the Year.

In four years, Lavan has taken a program that had one winning season in the eight years prior to his arrival and turned the Hornets into MEAC champions. The Hornets are 9-1 heading into the final game of the regular season and have earned their first berth in the FCS playoffs. Lavan is 28-15 overall and 24-8 since 2005. He has Delaware State ranked No. 10 in the country for the first time since 1987.

The Hornets have wins over two Top-25 teams this season and the Hornets are presently on a school record nine game win streak.

Lavan served as the interim head coach at Eastern Michigan before coming to DSU. His 35-year coaching resume includes nine years as a Dallas Cowboys assistant for Tom Landry and a stint with the 1990 San Francisco 49ers Super Bowl champions.



Blount is happy with the way his Rams fought this season.

WSSU comes up short to Norfolk State finale

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

One yard short. That is exactly the deficit that the Rams were unable to make up last Saturday at Norfolk State as WSSU's bid for a new set of downs with under a minute to play and down by three points deep in Spartan territory ended WSSU's season with a 23-20 loss to Norfolk State University in Division I-FCS collegiate football action.

For the sixth time this season the Rams allowed their opponent to score first as Norfolk State's Daryl Jones found the endzone from one yard out at the 4:43 mark of the first half as the Spartans capped an 11-play, 46-yard drive with a score for an early 7-0 lead.

It would take the Rams eight minutes to answer the Norfolk State challenge as fifth-year senior quarterback Monte Purvis (Winston-Salem/ Parkland), playing his last game as a Ram, found Bryant Bayne in the back of the endzone for a 34-yard touchdown. Purvis' eighth passing touchdown of the season.

As the Rams attempted to tie the score at 7-7 with a routine extra point, the game would get interesting when Terrell Whitehead returned the blocked PAT 83 yards for a defensive point after touchdown en route to a 9-6 lead for the Spartans.

WSSU refused to allow a three-point swing affect their offensive momentum as Monte Purvis and the Rams took the lead from the Spartans only 54 seconds later when Purvis scored his team-leading 10th rushing touchdown of the year from 12 yards out to give WSSU a 13-9 lead following a Matt Mitchell extra point.

The Spartans wasted no time in showing why they sat atop the MEAC standings for 10 weeks

as they were able to capitalize on a WSSU special teams mistake with under one minute to play in the half as they handed punter Jamaine Mack and the Rams their first blocked punt of the season.

NSU turned the blocked punt into a 15-yard touchdown pass from Casey Hansen to Jamar Johnson as the Spartans retook the lead at 16-13 headed into the locker room at half-time.

Another Johnson touchdown reception, a 21-yard strike, increased the NSU cushion to 10 points at the 5:05 mark of the third quarter as NSU strung together a 10-play, 69-yard scoring drive on their second possession of the second half.

As they have done all season, the Rams responded as WSSU defensive end and NFL prospect William Hayes scored his second career touchdown as he returned a Keith Newton-forced NSU fumble 24 yards for a touchdown to trim the Spartans lead to a manageable three points, at 23-20, as the third quarter came to a close.

Offensively the Rams would become stagnant as WSSU was unable to record a score on their final four possessions of the quarter as Monte Purvis was able to gain only nine yards on a fourth down and ten yards to go situation with less than one minute to play in the contest sealed WSSU's fate and saddled the Rams with the 23-20 loss.

"These young men fought hard for us all year," said WSSU head coach Kermit Blount. "Obviously you don't like to finish games this way when you believe that you should have won, but these young men really played their hearts out this season and I, and my staff, are extremely proud of them."

Hill

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night.

"We're starting to play well at the right time," said Mt. Tabor head coach Barry Stewart. "We weren't quite gelling at the beginning, but I'd say we're coming together pretty well right about now."

I would have to agree, coach. So are the Carver Yellowjackets. This is nothing new for coach Keith Wilkes and his team. They always find a way to advance in the playoffs. They're so good that I usually expect them to compete for state title each year. I really do.

"I'm really proud of the way the kids have been playing," said Wilkes. "I challenge them every week, and they always respond well. We've got great senior leadership. And, everyone has come together. They're buying into what we've been telling them. I feel good about our chances. We've been fortunate to have a number one seed.

So, we've just got to take care of home and keep working."

Carver, which has won 12 straight games, will now host Asheville. Asheville defeated Statesville, 24-0 last Friday. Mt. Tabor will host No. 3 Gastonia Ashbrook. Both of those games should be pretty good. I expect our teams to hold court, and move one game closer to a state title. Good luck.

Vick reports to jail

Most of you have already heard the news about Atlanta Falcons quarterback Michael Vick voluntarily surrendering to U.S. marshals before his formal sentencing on a dogfighting charge. He opted to go ahead and get started on his sentence. He was scheduled to be sentenced December 10th on the dogfighting conspiracy charge but decided to surrender in anticipation of a prison term.

I can't say that I would've went to prison any earlier than I had to, but I understand where Vick is coming from. I mean, it had to be difficult to be out, hearing all that is being said and just having to endure it all until he had to formally go to jail.

Besides, I think he's going to get out early on good behavior. I don't think he will do longer than 10 months. The longest he will do is a year if he's giving a two-year sentence. That's just my opinion. I'm no district attorney. Experts are saying Vick could get up to five years.

Vick is being held at Northern Neck Regional Jail in Warsaw, Virginia. I am still tripping off the fact that Vick has to do time for his part in the dogfighting. I understand that he was wrong, but prison is not the answer. I've already expressed my thoughts on this issue. I will stick to my disagreement of the

punishment that the former football star is receiving. It's simply not worth all of this.

I don't know which is worst, Vick being treated like a murderer or Barry Bonds being indicted for lying to a grand jury inquiring about that. I thought I'd let those people know that it's coming. So, be on the look for those stories each week. I hope that all of you enjoy your Thanksgiving, and don't eat too much fried turkey.

JV basketball coverage coming

We will begin JV basketball coverage after the Thanksgiving break. I've gotten a few e-mails inquiring about that. I thought I'd let those people know that it's coming. So, be on the look for those stories each week. I hope that all of you enjoy your Thanksgiving, and don't eat too much fried turkey.

Anthony Hill is the sports editor for The Chronicle. He can be reached at 722-8624 (ext. 111) or ahill@wschronicle.com.

Virginia Union picked to represent CIAA at Pioneer Bowl

CHRONICLE STAFF REPORT

The Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association has announced that the Virginia Union University Panthers will represent the conference as participants in the 10th Pioneer Bowl.



VUU's Lemar Little

The Panthers will face the No. 13 Tuskegee University Golden Tigers on Dec. 1, at Charlie W. Johnson Stadium on the campus of Benedict College, Columbia, SC-2 p.m.

The Panthers, led by head coach Arrington Jones, III, will enter the Pioneer Bowl with much to prove after finishing the season with a 9-2 record; falling short of a bid to the NCAA D-II Playoffs.

The CIAA is optimistic that VUU will bring the conference closer to leveling the score against Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) opponents in this series. Currently the bowl record stands at 7-2 in favor of the SIAC.

"We are both proud and honored to represent our institution and the conference in post season play. We are going to take our best game and bring back a victory," said Jones.

Virginia Union's appearance this year will mark the school's second visit to the Pioneer Bowl. In 2001 Virginia Union faced Tuskegee in Atlanta, GA, but fell to the Golden Tigers, 28-0.

To purchase tickets to this year's game and obtain ancillary event info, please visit www.PioneerBowl.com.

Thompson

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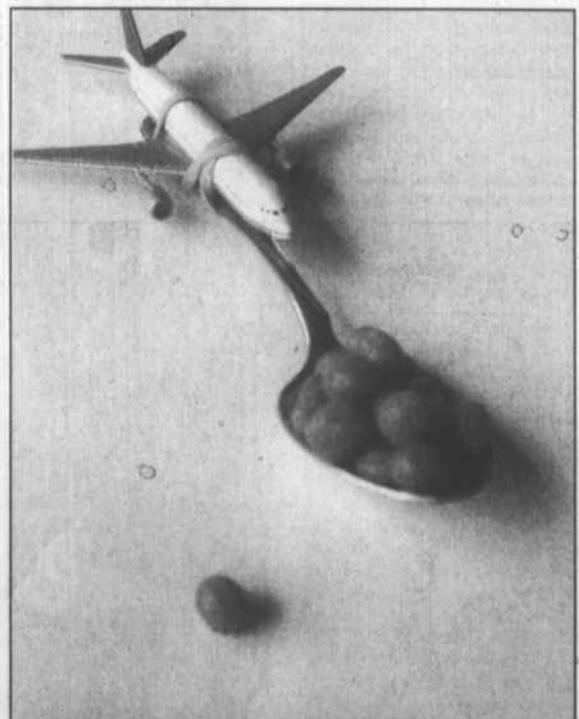
and defeat graciously, convey a high degree of humility and integrity, and demonstrate commitment in the classroom and to the community.

The 10 finalists are as followed: Alex Brink (Washington

State University), Jordan Brown (University of Houston), Quentin Groves (Auburn University), Jacob Gutierrez (University of Oklahoma), Dionte Johnson (Ohio State University), Thomas Keith (Central Michigan University), Micah Rucker (Eastern Illinois University), Jarrid Smith (Florida Atlantic University),

Thompson (Wake Forest University), Robert Valletti (Iona College).

All NCAA Division I schools were eligible to submit nominations for the ARA Sportsmanship Award. The finalists were selected in a blind process. For more information, go to www.arasportsmanshipaward.com.



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