Braves score 33 on Classic three-peat

By Nick Phillips

The third time was still not the charm for Fayetteville State, as two late fourth quarter scores pushed the UNCP football team past the Broncos with a 33-27 win in the third annual Two Rivers Classic as both teams opened their 2011 seasons Sept. 3 in Fayetteville.

The Braves have now won the three games in three different ways. In 2009, UNCP fought to a double overtime win before winning last year’s game by a 39-0 score as the defense shut down Fayetteville State.

This year’s game was looking like it was heading for a repeat of the series opener, as the two teams traded scores before the UNCP defense shut down the hosts in the second half for the win.

Offensively, the Braves were the much better team, as they totaled 536 yards, but a pair of UNCP miscues handed the Broncos 13 free points.

The Braves 536 yards of total offense was one yard short of the school record for total yardage, a mark set back in 2009 in the first installment of the Two Rivers Classic.

UNCP senior running back Travis Daniels finished with a game-high 20 carries for 129 yards and a touchdown, matching a UNCP-record with his fourth career 100-yard rushing game. Sophomore back Elliott Powell finished just under the career mark with 96 yards on 13 carries for the Braves as well.

In his first college start, redshirt-sophomore Luke Charles was a very efficient 19-for-35 as he tallied 270 yards in the air and had two touchdown passes.

Charles spread the ball around to eight different receivers, with sophomore Donald Britt being his favorite target, as Britt finished with nine receptions on six catches.

Te’vell Williams and Don Whittington each had only two catches, but each had a touchdown catch for the Braves.

Darcus Elliott led the UNCP defensive front with seven tackles, all solo, which were solo tackles.

The third time was still not the charm for Fayetteville State, as two late fourth quarter scores pushed the UNCP defense shut down the Broncos 13-2 after their two-point conversion was blocked.

The first Braves miscue of the night came with just over two minutes to go in the half, when Britt mishandled a punt return and saw Fayetteville State fall on the ball in the endzone. The Broncos took a seven-point lead after their two-point conversion was good.

UNCP wasted no time tying the game again, running the two-minute offense to a five-yard, 54-yard drive that ended with a Charles fade pass to Whittington in the back corner of the endzone to send the game to halftime at 20-20.

The only scoring of the third quarter saw the Braves take the lead on a Taylor Basket 25-yard field goal as UNCP took a 23-20 lead. Early in the fourth, Fayetteville State regained the lead on the second UNCP miscue of the night, this time a high snap on fourth down as the Broncos fell on their second free ball in the endzone of the game.

Daniels gave the Braves the lead for good at the 8:41 mark of the final quarter, breaking off a 15-yard touchdown run that completed an 80-yard drive.

Basket added three insurance points with a 27-yard field goal with under two minutes left in the contest.

Wingate leads the all-time series 3-1, with UNCP’s lone win coming at home in 2009. Wingate comes into the contest at 0-2 in 2011.

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