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Head football coach Pete Shinnick wanted to make one thing clear to his team immediately following the Braves 28-23 loss to Wingate Sept. 18. Their season was not considered a failure just because of the loss.

“We aren’t going to let one game affect us. We did not play as well as we are capable of, and sometimes you win when you do that, and sometimes you lose when you do that,” Shinnick said following the game. “This time we lost,” Shinnick finished.

Facing their second regional rivalry game three weeks into the season, UNCP couldn’t combine their offense and defense in the loss. Despite leading in most statistical categories, the Braves ended up on the wrong end of the scoreboard and dropped their all-time record to 1-3 against Wingate.

Offensively, the Braves rushing attack was held to its lowest total yardage since November of 2008, as Wingate held the UNCP thoroughbreds in the backfield to only 143 combined yards.

Senior Keith Gore carried most of the load for the Braves’ running backs, finishing with a career-best 99 yards in the game. In contrast, junior Travis Daniels and senior Rashon Kennedy were held to just 31 and 26 yards, respectively, on the ground.

The game started bright for the Braves, with Quentin Pate intercepting a Wingate pass on the game’s opening possession before Kennedy scored from one yard away to give UNCP the early lead. The ensuing extra-point attempt was blocked, which turned into an ominous sign for what was to come.

Little did the Braves and their traveling faithful know that the 6-0 lead would be the only lead of the ballgame for UNCP. Wingate then shot back with a pair of touchdowns to take the lead for good. Following the Braves’ touchdown, Wingate embarked on a 54-yard drive that was capped off by a Nelson Woods touchdown before again driving the length of the field and going 92 yards for the score. Wingate quarterback Cody Haffly’s 10-yard touchdown pass was part of his 295 yard, two touchdown day.

UNCP drove back down the field and gained three points thanks to a Taylor Baskett field goal just before the half to pull within a touchdown at 14-9. The Braves received the second half kickoff, and appeared to be moving the ball before Smith threw his first interception in 111 consecutive pass attempts to give Wingate the ball.

Ten plays later, Wingate extended its lead when Haffly threw his second touchdown pass of the game to stretch the lead to 21-9.

UNCP again tried to dig itself back into the game as Gore busted loose out of the backfield for a 51-yard gain to set the Braves up with a first and goal situation in...