Daniels runs Brave against Wingate State

By Nick Phillips

Travis Daniels is really strong. And not just in the physical sense.

The senior running back set a new school record with four rushing touchdowns while totaling 147 yards as the UNC-P football team erased an early deficit and defeated visiting Griffins State 42-34 on Sept. 24.

Daniels also broke a pair of career records in the game as well, surpassing former Brave Rushon Kennedy atop UNCP’s career rushing yards and rushing touchdowns lists. Daniels has now carried the ball 377 times for 2,375 yards and 25 touchdowns in his three-plus years for the Black and Gold.

After Griffins State came out and knocked the ball out of the mouth with two touchdown drives, including one that went 95 yards, Daniels put the Braves on his back and carried them into the end zone – again, again, again and again – until the deficit was erased.

Sophomore quarterback Luke Charles finished with 204 passing yards and a touchdown, while defensively, redshirt-sophomore Fred Williams (16 tackles), freshman Darus Elliott (14 tackles) and senior Justin Buell (10 tackles) led the UNCP charge.

“We have a lot of faith in Travis Daniels, and the reason we do is because he works his butt off. What you see on Saturdays is what he gives us every time we line up in practice,” UNCP head coach Pete Shinnick said.

“It feels good to be able to set the record and come out with a win,” Daniels said.

“We came out a little flat but we picked it up in the second half,” Daniels said.

Flat indeed, as Griffins State took the opening kick-off and marched right down the field for a 60-yard touchdown drive that had the Braves’ defense defense shaken.

“We’ve got to play fast and play physical, and obviously that first drive was not what we were looking for,” redshirt-sophomore Fred Williams said.

“It was a wake up call coming back to the sideline and our coaches in our ears about the simple things we’re supposed to be doing but we were not,” Williams added about the opening drive.

Down two touchdowns, Daniels got the Braves going in the right direction with two minutes to go in the first quarter when he scored from six yards out to cap a 71-yard drive.

Griffins State answered back with another touchdown drive to up the lead back to two touchdowns, but Daniels was far from finished himself.

With 7:40 to go in the final period, Daniels set up a couple of his linemen and cut outside to get into the endzone and bring the Braves to a 21-14 deficit at halftime.

The Braves were forced to punt in their opening possession of the third quarter, but the ball hit off a Griffins State defender and UNCP fell on the loose ball after the drive, bringing the score to within one.

A bad snap forced the extra point attempt to be no good, but unlike recent weeks, it would not come back to haunt the Braves.

Daniels’ final touchdown of the night came with 3:18 to go in the third quarter when he scored from seven yards out to finish off an 89-yard drive and give UNCP its first lead of the game.

The back and forth battle continued, as the Braves traveled 53 yards downfield looking to add to their lead but were stopped four yards down inside the 10 yard line. Griffins State proceeded to travel 99 yards for a touchdown and retook a one-point lead.

Next it was the Braves turn to drive downfield, moving the ball 71 yards before Charles connected with sophomore Te’vell Williams on a beautiful fade pass in the back corner of the endzone as Williams was able to keep his toes inbounds before sliding into the band section.

Griffins State again answered back with a score with 3:22 to go to regain a one-point lead, but the Braves took the lead for good when Damonte Terry scored from six yards out with exactly 60 seconds left on the clock.

The Braves’ defense that had bent all game came up with a stop in the end, as L.J. Stroman pulled down the Denver player as Griffins State desperately tried to get to the endzone.

By Nick Phillips

Braves blow lead, lose to Wingate in OT

A touchdown early in the fourth quarter gave the UNCP football team a 16-point lead over Wingate. The Braves’ one objective over the next 11:37 should have been to protect the lead back to two touchdowns, but were stopped four yards down inside the 10 yard line. Griffins State proceeded to travel 99 yards for a touchdown and retook a one-point lead.

Taylor Basket field goal put the Braves back in the game at 26-29. Wingate didn’t get on the scoreboard until there was 1:18 left before halftime, when Josh Covington scored from a yard out.

On the other side of halftime, Charles connected with Williams twice to stretch the lead. First, the duo hooked up for a 21 yard score in what turned out to be the only scoring in the third quarter before a 20-yard touchdown pass early in the fourth quarter gave UNCP the 16-point lead.

From there, Wingate added the touchdown, field goal and game-winning touchdown both came with under a minute to go to send the game into overtime.

Looking at the stat sheet, you don’t see any glaring number that points to the UNCP defense not being able to get off the field – it just came down to not getting a stop when they needed to have one.

Both sides ran the exact same number of plays and the time of possession was- it’s overwhelmingly topsided. It boils down to the fact that the Braves defense was un- able to come up with a key stop at the right moment.

That evidence is found when you see Wingate had touchdowns of 63, 70 and 97 yards.

Even in overtime, it took Wingate 12 plays to get into the endzone, and that was after starting with the ball at the 23 yard line.

The Braves jumped out to a quick, early lead after a