Braves knocked over by Winston-Salem State

By Nick Phillips

The UNCP football team posted the first touchdown of the afternoon against Winston-Salem State, but it turned out to be the last touchdown of the afternoon for the Braves as No. 7 WSSU walked out of Grace P. Johnson Stadium with a 34-7 win on Nov. 5.

Winston-Salem State totaled over 42 minutes of possession in the win, controlling the clock and the ball for the win.

Running back Travis Davis’ 130-yard ground provided most of the offense for the Braves, who also saw quarterback Luke Charles throw for 140 yards, while Jamelle Banks’ only catch of the game was the first second quarter score.

Defensively, Fred Williams climbed over 100 tackles for the season with 12 stops on the afternoon for the Braves as DeVaunte Bush tallied a pair of quarterback sacks.

“I thought that we were ready to play but, by the way we played, we obviously weren’t,” UNCP head coach Pete Shinnick said.

“We just didn’t play well enough and it seemed like everything went well for Winston-Salem State. That 18-play drive in the first half took the wind out of us a little bit. We did a poor job of executing our game plan. We just had zero momentum offensively,” he added.

Charles capped a 12-play, 91-yard scoring drive with the five-yard touchdown pass to Banks to give UNCP a rare bright spot on the gloomy afternoon.

The Braves’ early lead was just the second time all season that Winston-Salem State failed to score on an opening possession, but they seemed to have no problem finding a way to tie the score and go from there. The visitors added a touchdown to cap a nine-play, 52-yard scoring drive just before the half.

The Rams continued in the third quarter, with a pair of scores, while the Braves saw four of their five second half possessions last five plays or less.

UNCP closed out its 2011 regular season on Nov. 12 when they hosted West Liberty in a contest slated for a 1 p.m. kickoff inside Grace P. Johnson Stadium.

By Nick Phillips

Editor

The UNCP football team totaled 20 points in the first half, but Winston-Salem State tallied 20 points in the game. A Braves field goal in the third quarter proved to be enough to push the visitors to a 23-20 win on Oct. 29.

In that first half, the Braves racked up over 300 yards of offense before the defense was able to hold on to the lead despite a second half comeback attempt by Newberry to seal the win.

In all, UNCP totaled 466 total yards of offense, distributed almost evenly down the middle with Luke Charles throwing for 255 yards in the air and the Braves running backs picking up 211 yards on the ground.

Charles finished 14-for-24 passing with two touchdowns and an interception on his first in 112 pass attempts since his last interception at Catawba Oct. 1.

Travis Daniels notched 169 rushing yards, while Elliott Powell added 27 yards for the extent of the ground attack.

Charles spread the ball to seven different receivers in the contest, with T.J. Johnson finishing with 105 yards, including a 65-yard touchdown catch in the Braves’ opening possession.

Joe Burnett hauled in 79 yards on 11 passes to run his season total to 90, giving him a school-record for tackles in a season. Williams was one of four Braves to finish the afternoon with double-digit tackles.

“I was very, very excited for our guys,” UNCP head coach Pete Shinnick said.

“We went into a place that is not easy to win in and found a way to come out with the victory. We got a big defensive stop in the fourth quarter and our offense was able to hold onto the ball after that,” he added.

Scoring

The UNCP defense opened the game by forcing a quick three-and-out by Newberry before the offense got going, engineering a quick, six play drive for a 47-yard touchdown catch.

Just as quickly, Newberry needed only two plays to answer with their own score to temporarily tie the game before the Braves took the lead with Charles finding Burnett for a 34-yard touchdown pass.

UNCP place kicker Taylor Baskett kicked off in a game earlier this season. Baskett was the man of the afternoon for the Braves on Oct. 29, helping drive field goals in the three-point win.

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Quarterback Luke Charles readiness to throw a pass as he is pressured by the Winston-Salem State defense on Nov. 5. Photo by Nick Phillips

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