Football ends season with resounding win

By Nick Phillips

The UNCP football team ended their 2011 season with a 51-10 win over visiting West Liberty on Nov. 12, holding West Liberty to its lowest point total of the season as the Braves finished the year 8-3 overall.

The Braves tallied 422 yards of total offense as they finished off their third winning season in the last four years, bouncing back from a 5-5 record in 2010.

Senior Travis Daniels punted the ball on the ground for 159 yards on 28 rushes while adding a touchdown in the blowout win, as redshirt-sophomore Demonte Terry grabbed 70 rushing yards of his own.

Quarterback Luke Charles threw for 185 yards, as the redshirt-sophomore connected for two touchdowns—pass one each to senior Joe Burnett and freshman Michael Isbell.

Fred Williams and Dar- cious Elliott led a busy defen- sive unit, with Williams forming a wall with Chris Schroll to lead the Black and Gold as Burnett caught West Liberty an afternoon when he forced a fumble and blocked a punt and recov- ered it in the endzone for a touchdown.

The UNCP defense also received a sack from both Joshua Gooding and Matt Johnson, while Sean Rush and Austin Bollard each came away with an inter- ception.

“I am very excited for our guys to be able to send out our senior class with an 8-3 record,” UNCP head coach Pete Shimnick said.

“(It) also gave them the opportunity to bounce back from a loss but also, to their credit, a 5-5 season a year ago. It wasn’t the prettiest of games that we have played offensively but, for us to rush for more than 100 yards more than (West Lib- erty) says a lot about the way we play on offense. I am really proud of our de- fense. They continued to get better and better as the sea- son went on,” he added.

In a game that saw the first half feature three fum- bles by each team and a West Liberty interception, the Braves finally got the scoring going in the second quarter. Charles found Bur- nett for a six-yard touch- down connection at the 9:04 mark to cap a five-play, 70- yard drive.

Neither team would find points again until just before the half when UNCP senior kicker Taylor Baskett pushed through an 18-yard field goal to give the Braves a 10-0 halftime lead.

Daniels added his only touchdown, a 10-yard scram- ble, early in the third quarter before West Liberty finally got on the scoreboard with a 42-yard field goal at the 2:32 mark.

Charles found Isbell for a 26-yard touchdown strike midway through the final period to finish off a 42- yard drive before Elliott blocked the West Liberty punt and fell on it in the endzone less than a minute later at the 6:51 mark.

West Liberty scored their only touchdown of the game with three minutes re- maining to cap the game and the season’s scoring.

Braves trio to cap careers playing senior bowl game

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Daniels and two senior teammates will play one final collegiate game, as they will take part in the 2012 Hansen Senior Bowl in Virginia Beach, Va.

Placekicker Taylor Bas- kett, receiver Joe Burnett and Daniels will play in the NCAA-sanctioned game on Jan. 16.

The 2012 Hansen Bowl will be an historic event with NAIA, NCAA Division II and NCAA Division III All-Stars playing to- gether for the first time after the demise of the Cactus Bowl for Division II and the Aztec Bowl for Division III.

This is also the first game that will include NAIA players. Baskett has accounted for 253 points during his four-year career, including 139 extra points and 38 field goals.

He was 12-for-15 in field goal attempts in 2011, including a school record 55-yard field goal against Charleston on Oct. 15.

Burnett has played two seasons at UNCP, including an injury-limited junior year in 2010.

In 2011, Burnett hauled in 24 catches for 472 yards and four touchdowns, while also returning 33 kickoffs for 526 yards.

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