

Woody well aware of challenge to lead BC program to next level, at outset of first full season

Written by Levi Johnson, Sports Editor
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James Woody tends to be the eternal optimist. However, he's also apparently a realist.

And after finishing out the second half of the 2011 season at 1-5, with the tag interim head coach attached to his name, the then new football coach at Benedict (BC) knew the days ahead would challenge him in his attempt to take the BC grid program to the next level. Overall, the Tigers ended the '11 campaign with a lowly 2-8 worksheet.

But even with a mindset that feeds off taking the most hopeful view of matters at hand, Woody knows that it's not in his or the team's best interest to go into the upcoming campaign overly optimistic.

"I like where I am and the players and coaches who I have to work with. It's a good situation for us to try and improve this football program but I know it won't be easy for us to get it where it needs to be," said the Benedict helmsman, at the outset of his first full season in Tigerland.

Even with super-gearred up preseason hype from players, including one who guaranteed the Tigers would win a Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) championship this season, Woody refused to fall prey to the pretentious expressions of those youngsters he and staff have to coach up.

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"Winning a championship; that is usually what you want and expect to hear from your players as they get ready to start the season," the Tigers coach said. "But right now, we're a work in progress."

"We had a tough summer camp and the players worked really hard," the BC coach said. "They're making the sacrifices to change things for the better around here. Right now that's all I can ask of them. Hopefully, by the time the season starts, we'll be ready to go out and do our best against the schedule we'll have to face."

In assessing his overall team, Woody quickly pointed out the defense as the unit of real strength for his Tigers.

On the offensive side of the ledger, the new BC grid boss mentioned the competition between Marcus Graham (6-1, 190, redshirt freshman), Christopher Thomas (6-1, 203, sophomore) and Teddy Joseph (6-2, 190, junior), for the starting spot as field general.

"They all bring different strengths to the position but it's still a wide-opened race (as to who will go into the season as the number one guy)," Woody said.

In talking about the kicking game and special team's play, Woody cited the consistency of placekicker Eduardo Hernandez (5-10, 180, freshman).

"We feel good about our kicking game and special team's play; it's just a matter of us improving from day-to-day, to become an overall better football team," the Benedict coach concluded.

Woody and the Tigers kick-off the 2012 season next Saturday night (Sept. 1), when they collide with the Virginia Union Panthers, in Richmond, Va. Action is set to start at 7 p.m.

Benedict is slated to get the home phase of its schedule underway when it challenges Bowie State in a nationally-televised game (via CBS) set for Thursday night (Sept. 6), at Charlie W.

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Johnson Stadium. Kick-off time is scheduled for 8 p.m.