

Bulldogs prove what wary NCA&T Coach already knew, with win in 25th Atlanta Classic

Written by Levi Johnson, Sports Editor
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ATLANTA - A short time before his North Carolina A&T (NCA&T) team lined up to compete opposite Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) rival South Carolina State (SCSU), Rod Broadway communicated to an Atlanta area reporter that he knew what squad his players would soon be up against.

Broadway's pre-game warning/quote: "I think we understand who we are up against. They (S.C. State Bulldogs) have been one of the premier teams in the conference for a long time. They play well; and they are coached well. We are trying to get where they've been for a long time.

Although the play of Buddy Pough's Bulldogs versus Broadway's Aggies was somewhat short of totally being first rate, it was tough and sound enough in the clutch to spearhead S.C. State to a 29-24 win over N.C.A&T Saturday (Oct.5), in the 25th playing of the Atlanta Classic at the Georgia Dome.

In besting the Aggies (3-1,1-1 MEAC) in the most recent grudge match involving the teams, the 4-2,2-0 Bulldogs ran their record against the Aggies to 12-1 in the last 13 matchups. Overall, the Bulldogs lead the series, which started in 1924, 31-21-2.

On the heels of last Saturday's triumph over NCA&T, which he termed "big time", Tyler McDonald had nothing but praise for the effort he and mates gave.

"We came into this game with somewhat a chip on our shoulders; because of how things went

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up there last year (a 7-17 loss to NCA&T in Greensboro)," said the Bulldogs junior wide receiver whose early fourth quarter catch and 65 yard run to paydirt staked South Carolina State to a 29-17 advantage, with 13:26 remaining in the slugfest.

"North Carolina A&T is a tough team; but today I thought we were a little tougher. We definitely made the plays when we had to have them."

On such impacting play happened late in the third quarter when SCSU senior safety Darrius Drummond broke through to block an Aggie punt that rolled out of the end zone, which registered a safety for the eventual winners.

While reflecting on the Drummond game-impacting play, Buddy Pough, during postgame comments heralded it as a "key play" in the outcome of the game.

"I have to give my whole team credit," the Bulldogs coach said. "We didn't play a perfect game; but when we had to stand up and be counted, I thought we did what we had to do against a very good team. That play that Drummond made was a good example of the big plays we got when we needed them.

"Going forward, this game was very important for us to win. We had to have it as we head into the rest of our schedule, which will be a challenge to us."

While talking to media, during his postgame session, Rod Broadway credited his team for strong play but admitted it has to find a way to win the tougher games.

"If you're going to compete for championships in this league, you've got to beat South Carolina State," the Aggies helmsman said. "We've closed that gap. We are up there with the top teams in this league. We just have to win more of these close games."

Richard Cue, who engineered South Carolina State to the classic win, cited the Bulldogs belief

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and togetherness, as "big factors" in the outcome.

"Coming in we had a strong belief in how we were going to play," said the S.C.State No.1 quarterback, whose passing helped propelled the Bulldogs to the win; and allowed him to be named the Bulldogs' Most Outstanding Player. "I think my play was one of my better games; but this was definitely a team win. We made some mistakes but overall, we played tough and smart enough in a game that we had to have." In his aerial exhibition, Cue was 17-28-0, for 236 yards, which included 2 touchdowns.