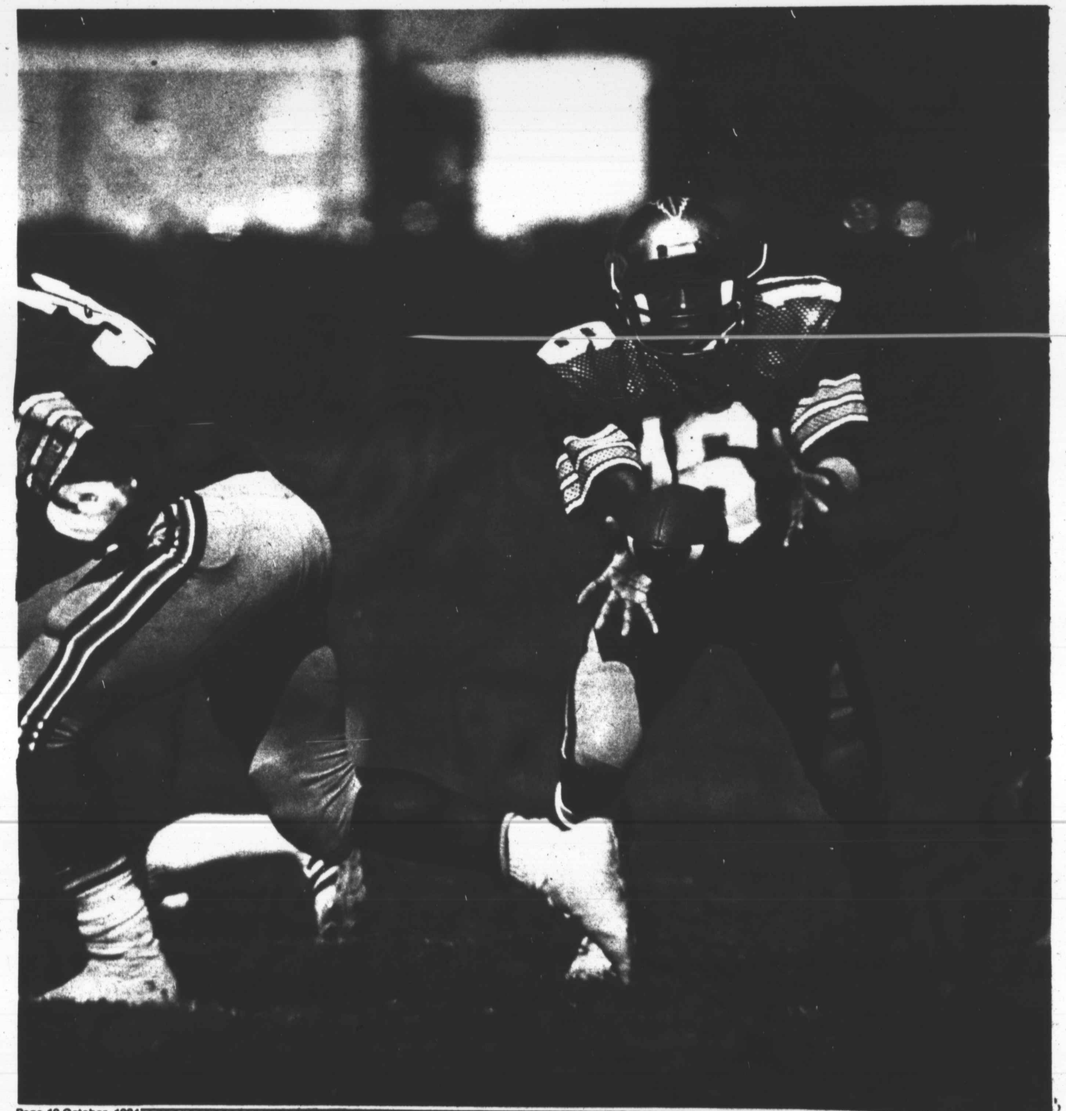
COVER STORY

THE YEAR OF THE QUARTERBACK

The cream of a bumper crop key their teams' attacks

By SAM DAVIS



THE YEAR OF THE QUARTERBACK *CONTINUED*

Black-college quarterbacks, by and large, used to be the guys who took snaps, handed the ball off and, if they were lucky, went on to become defensive backs in the pros.

No more. In fact, there are so many talented quarterbacks at black schools this year that even the stodgy, old NFL has to take notice.

Although there is no apparent glut of superior quarterbacks in the major colleges (Division I-A), this year's edition of black college football features some of the finest signalcallers to come along in a while – and at least a few coaches who are daring and innovative enough to let their passers strut their stuff. In fact, it might be argued this year is the best-ever for quarterbacks in the black college ranks.

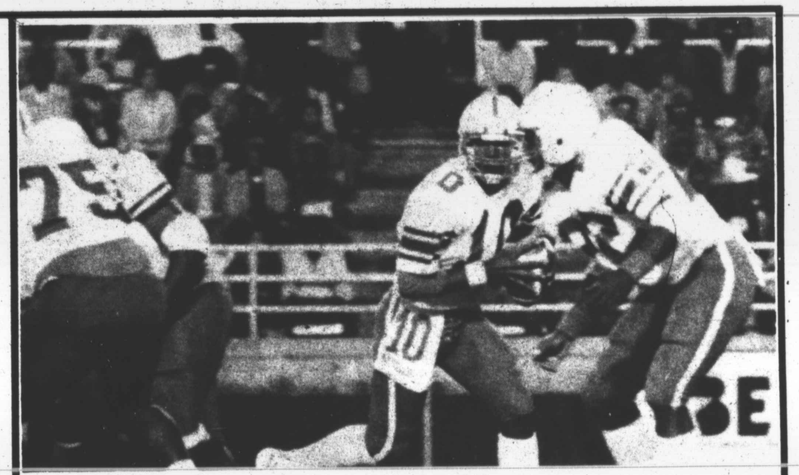
Look for a winner and you'll find a good man behind center.

Any conversation concerning quarterbacks in black college football has to begin with junior Willie Totten of Mississippi Valley. Totten has virtually rewritten the record books while playing for the Delta Devils and Coach Archie "Gunslinger" Cooley. He is far and away the finest quarterback in black college football – maybe in the nation.

"Anytime you talk about Willie Totten, you're talking about the best," says Cooley. "He's like a coach on the field. He's been around me long enough to know what types of plays and formations to use and he also has the intelligence to read defenses".

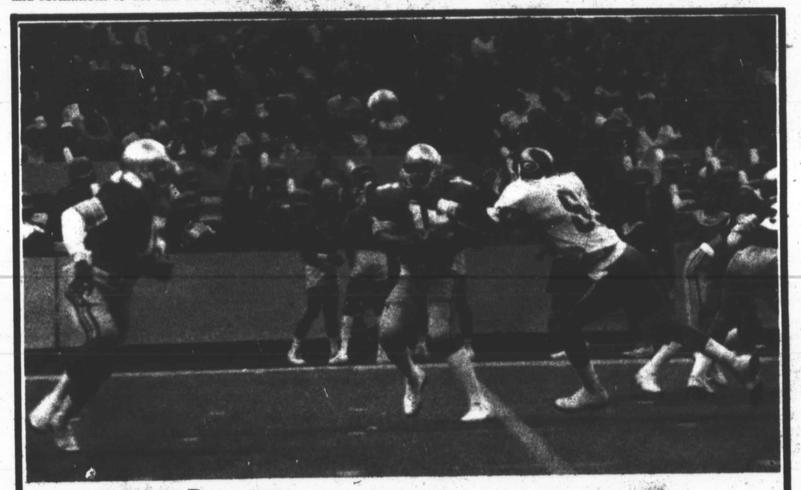
Totten led the nation (Division I-AA) in passing last year and has been even better in '84. He threw for 2,566 yards and 27 touchdowns last season while giving up only nine interceptions. His 62.4 completion percentage helped him to a record rating of 167.5.

But what Cooley likes most about Totten is the fact that he's a winner.



The Best In The Land

Doug Flutie, move over. You've got nothing on Mississippi Valley's Willie Totten, who threatens to shatter every NCAA passing record in sight (photo by James Terry).



Cool Under Pressure

Alcorn senior quarterback Richard Myles, facing page and above, keeps his cool under pressure, even when pain seems inevitable (photo by James Terry).

"Totten came from a winning program in high school," says Cooley of the 6-2, 205-pounder. "He was a running quarterback in high school, but he had so much athletic ability that it was pretty easy for him to adapt to a passing offense."

Although Totten is the premier quarterback in the SWAC and the best in black college football, there are several other fine quarterbacks in Mississippi.

Jackson State's John McKenzie plays in the same conference with Totten and, while he doesn't have Totten's numbers, he's good. Like Totten, McKenzie has the physique to take poundings in the NFL.

McKenzie's coach, W.C. Gorden, says his passer has all the tools to make it as a pro.

"John McKenzie personifies what it takes to be a good quarterback today," says Gorden. "He's a fine passer and an outstanding scrambler. John can throw play-action passes with the same effectiveness as a drop-back passer can."

Yet, Gorden feels McKenzie's best attributes are his savvy and intelligence.

"John has great charisma," Gorden says. "He reads coverages well and is very competitive, while at the same

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