THE YEAR OF THE QUARTERBACK

From Page 11

time in control of himself on the field."

Though McKenzie, a pre-med major, has the ability to make it as a pro, Gorden says, he has other options if the NFL balks.

"Sure he wants to play pro football," says Gordon, "but ff he doesn't get a fair chance, John will go to medical school and become an orthopedic surgeon."

Over in Lorman, Miss., has-been Alcorn State is a "will-be" again thanks in part to Richard Myles, another SWAC field general who ranks among the elite in black college football. Myles, a senior, has enjoyed a stellar career and should leave Alcorn as the Braves' all-time passing leader.

Further to the east, they call Tennessee State's football team Blue Tigers. But it's TSU's opponents who ought to claim that hue, since the Tigers, at this writing, are the top black college team in the nation and have not one, but two quality passers to drive opponents crazy.

Although senior Kenneth Biggles starts for the team, his backup, Gilbert Renfroe, is almost his equal in talent and shares much of the time behind center. Biggles, a 6-0, 195-pounder, is more of a sprint-out passer, while Renfroe a 6-3, 180-pound junior, is a classic dropback passer with a strong arm.

In Tennessee State's first four games of the season, Biggles passed for 855 yards on 66 completions out of 110 attempts and 10 touchdowns. Renfroe has chipped in with 27 of 54 passes for 357 yards and six TDs.

James "Hollywood" Woody of Central State of Ohio is another black-college quarterback blessed with both a strong arm and swift feet. A senior, Woody has been instrumental in the unbeaten Marauders' rise to the top of Division II football.

"Woody brings a variety of skills to our offense," says Jimmy Joe, offensive coordinator for Central State and brother of Head Coach Billy Joe. "He's smart and he has good agility and quick feet.

"But most importantly," says Joe, "he is very intelligent. We have a complicated system of audibles and it takes a lot of intelligence to handle our offense."

Joe also praises Woody for using good discretion in running the offense. "Woody knows when to pass and when to run," says Joe. "He won't force a pass.

"Woody has a rifle arm," Joe adds. "He can put the ball on the money, but he also has touch on his passes when he needs it. I would be very disappointed if he isn't drafted by the NFL. I think he would fit in well because we run a pro offense."

There are at least four other quarterbacks that rate above the rest of the pack in black college football and stand chances of landing jobs in the NFL, CFL or USFL.

Last year, Kevin Parker of Fort Valley State ranked first in the nation among Division II passers. The 6-1, 188-pound senior completed 87 of 168 tosses for 18 touchdowns and only eight interceptions a year ago.

Coach Doug Porter of Fort Valley describes Parker as an "outstanding talent."

"Offensively, Kevin Parker is our team leader," says Porter. "He is an excellent leader and he isn't going to hurt the team by making mistakes."

What really separates Parker from the run-of-the-mill quarterback, however, is his ability to make the most of a bad situation, Porter says.

Yet, in spite of his talent, the English major would be better suited to play pro football in Canada, says his coach.

"Kevin would like to have the opportunity to play in the NFL," says Porter. "But, the Canadian League offers a better opportunity."

The same applies for Gerald Fraylon of North Carolina Central, Bernard Hawk of Bethune-Cookman and Pat Spencer of Delaware State.

Fraylon, who has already established himself as the career total offense leader in the CIAA, is most aptly described as a "winner." His completion percentage hovers somewhere below 40 percent, but Fraylon is fiercely competitive and find ways to beat you. Fraylon has led the Eagles to a 23-8-1 record in games he has started.

Hawk, a first-team all-MEAC performer in '83, is an accurate passer who also is swift afoot. The 6-foot, 190-pound junior has passed for 2,878 yards thus far in his career, completing 206 of 432 attempts and throwing 25 touchdowns against only 15 interceptions.

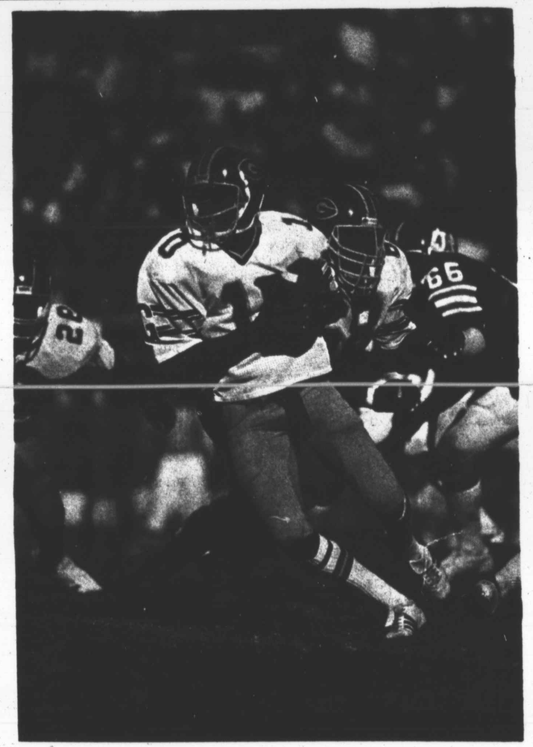
Pat Spencer of Delaware State doesn't boast the lofty statistics compiled by other top quarterbacks in black college football. It isn't that he's less talented; his team simply doesn't pass very often, opting to grind opponents down with its running game. However, when DelState does elect to pass, Spencer, a junior, has completed more than 50 percent of them and has been instrumental in the Hornets' resurgence over the past two years.

All in all, there are a number of quality quarterbacks in black college football. Although they are physically talented athletes, their mere presence on the field means probably as much to their respective teams in terms of sheer savvy and leadership. Whether or not they will have an effect on how the NFL deals with signalcallers from black schools, however, remains to be seen.

But when a young man from Itta Bena, Miss., notifies some lucky pro team next year that "Willie boy is here," it had best listen.

A BUMPER CROP

1. **Willie Totten,** Mississippi Valley
2. **Kenneth Biggles,** Tennissee State
3. **John McKenzie,** Jackson State
4. **James Woody,** Central State
5. **Bernard Hawk,** Bethune-Cookman
6. **Gerald Fraylon,** North Carolina Central
7. **Richard Myles,** Alcorn State
8. **Kevin Parker,** Fort Valley State
9. **Pat Spencer,** Delaware State
10. **Gilbert Renfroe,** Tennessee State



Delicate Chemistry

Part of Grambling's slow start this season can be attributed in part to the loss of last year's quarterback, Hollis Brent (photo by Mark Lyons).

Purzycki

From Page 9

regime, the school's administration went shopping for a new head man. What it came up with was Joe Purzycki, a former University of Delaware player who had enjoyed tremendous success on the high school level and most recently had served as an assistant at his alma mater.

"Patience is what has really turned the program around," said Purzycki of the Hornets' newfound success. "The administration was patient with our program because they knew it would take us a few years to show improvement.

"Our major focus was in keeping our players in school," Purzycki noted following a 56-7 plastering of North Carolina A&T that ran DelState's record to 3-0. "In the past, Delaware State had a lot of turnover each year because the players were not able to remain eligible. They were always playing freshmen and sophomores against juniors and seniors.

"When you look at a team like South Carolina State and see that they have a senior-dominated team each year, it's tough to compete. We realized that, for us to be competitive, we would have to bring our younger players along earlier than we would have liked to."

Although the Hornets took their lumps the first two seasons under Purzycki, they gained a lot of experience in the process.

"When we came in, we told the administration that we were going to take a 2-4-6-8 approach," Purzycki said. "Our plan was to increase the number of wins by two each year.

"By sacrificing and playing younger players the first couple of years, we were able to gradually bring in the players that could help us in the future."

"The focus of recruitment is finding kids that we feel can graduate from Delaware State," Purzycki said. "We stopped taking the high-risk students. One thing about the school is that jocks don't get any breaks in academics and that's the way it should be. We push the idea of the student-athlete."

Though patience has been Purzycki's watchword, the Hornets won ahead of schedule last year, going 7-3-1 and earning him MEAC Coach-of-the-Year honors.

And, considering the 45 lettermen and 19 starters he welcomed to camp this fall, it's no wonder Delaware State picked right up where it left off this year, outlasting South Carolina State 50-36 in a season-opening showdown between the MEAC's best.

"We have a strong nucleus of upperclassmen and that is what has gotten us off to such a good start," Purzycki said. "We have 22 seniors and 25 juniors, and, out of the seniors, only three are fifth-year players.

"It's hard to win games when you're playing young football players," Purzycki said. "The fans and students were tough on us the first and second year, but we knew that once we got into our third year, we'd be alright."

Purzycki won't take all the credit, though.

"Nelson Townsend, the athletic director, is the real architect behind our resurgence," he said. "He convinced the administration to have patience with us and stick with us during the first two years.

Despite Townsend's influence, Purzycki still had his share of doubters when he took the helm.

"After I was hired, there was intense pressure to produce," said Purzycki, who is one of only a few white head coaches at predominantly black institutions. "There were some very attractive black candidates that were passed up when they hired me."

One factor that helped Purzycki win acceptance among Delaware State partisans was the attitude of the players.

"The team was very close and the players knew they were all going to be treated fairly," he said. "The players believed in us and did everything we asked of them. They had confidence in our program.

"Last year, going into our third year, we knew we had to win," Purzycki said. "It was a pivotal year for us. Fortunately, we had everyone behind us and, since then, we've been on a roll."

As for the fact that he is white, it hasn't really affected him or the team, Purzycki said. In fact, he said, it's the least of the problems he's had to face.

"Most people can look beyond that," Purzycki said. "I'm only a small part of the kids' experience while they're at Delaware State. They are going to relate to the people on campus, instructors and administration, so I'm just a small influence on them.

"When you can give a kid a scholarship to play college football and the kid can get a quality education, the parents have to take a serious look at you. Our players help us recruit by talking to the players we bring in and letting them know how we do things."

Now that he and his Hornets have gotten their program on track, Purzycki says, his biggest challenge is trying to win the MEAC title and possibly shooting for a national championship.

"We've gotten to the point where we can contend for the conference crown, but we don't want to stop there," he said. "I'd like to see us challenge for the conference title every year. Then we would have something to shoot for year after year."

"One thing about the school is that jocks don't get any breaks in academics and that's the way it should be. We push the idea of the student-athlete."

-- Joe Purzycki

Reason To Smile

Though DelState's opponents used to laugh a lot, Purzycki and assistant coaches Bill Collier, left, and Herky Billings may get the last laugh in '84 (photo courtesy of Delaware State College).