"When I became head coach at Union, I was entering a situation I was familiar with," says Bailey, who served seven years at VUU under Tom Harris. "At Norfolk, it was like starting all over again."

Inheriting a team with 17 starters returning from last year's 5-5 campaign, Bailey has wasted no time in bringing the Spartans' program to the high standards he established at Union.

At press time, Bailey's Spartans were 8-1, nationally-ranked in Division II and drawing an average of more than 20,000 fans at Foreman Field. For the Oct. 27 Homecoming contest against Howard, a turnaway mob estimated at 27,500 showed up to witness another

Of course, for years, Norfolk State has ranked among the top two in the nation in attendance in Division II.

The only difference now is that those folks have plenty to cheer for.

"Hopefully, our attendance will help us get some of those playoff games at home," says Bailey. "It would be nice to have the crowd cheering for our side, for a change."

Because of bewildering poor attendance in Richmond, Union was forced season (photo by Joe Daniels.) to play four of its five playoff games on the road. Each time the Panthers neutral site. were defeated.

Under the Division II playoff format, schools with impressive turnstile counts are rewarded with home games in the first two rounds of the playoffs.

Page 8-November, 1984



The Wizard

Bailey: Working his magic at his alma mater with basically the same talent Norfolk had during a mediocre '83

If it continues its winning ways, Norfolk would have an excellent chance of hosting first- and second-round games before rabid, pro-Spartan audiences.

That would make the CIAA's first-Only the championship game is at a ever national football title in Division

II a very real probability.

But all this is happening so soon. Last year the Spartans were a struggling 5-5 ballclub that lost four of its last six games (including setbacks to arch rivals Union, Virginia State and Hampton) under Coach Dick Price.

Now, with virtually the same cast, the Norfolk fans are talking not only CIAA, but national championship.

Can any one man have made that huge a difference?

"The players respect Coach Bailey.

While its defense remains steady, Union's offense has sputtered (photo by Joe Daniels).

Meanwhile, at Va. Union the party may be over

FREEMAN PLEASANTS Review Staff Writer

Turn out the lights. The party's

For the first time in six years, there will be no post-season football to toast at Virginia Union University.

When VUU lost, 6-0, to Norfolk State on Oct. 20, it was like two ships passing in the night ... one era (Union's) fading, another (Norfolk's) on the rise.

"Right now, we're just trying to salvage a winning season, said first-year Coach Joe Taylor.

A "winning season" is small consolation for a program that won three straight CIAA titles and made five straight trips to the NCAA Division II playoffs before Coach Willard Bailey left

Richmond last winter to revitalize Norfolk State.

Under Taylor, a former Bailey assistant at VUU, the Panthers were a top-heavy favorite to defend their CIAA title this season. With about half of last year's starters returning from a 10-2 club, Union looked like a sure winner, even minus the Bailey in-

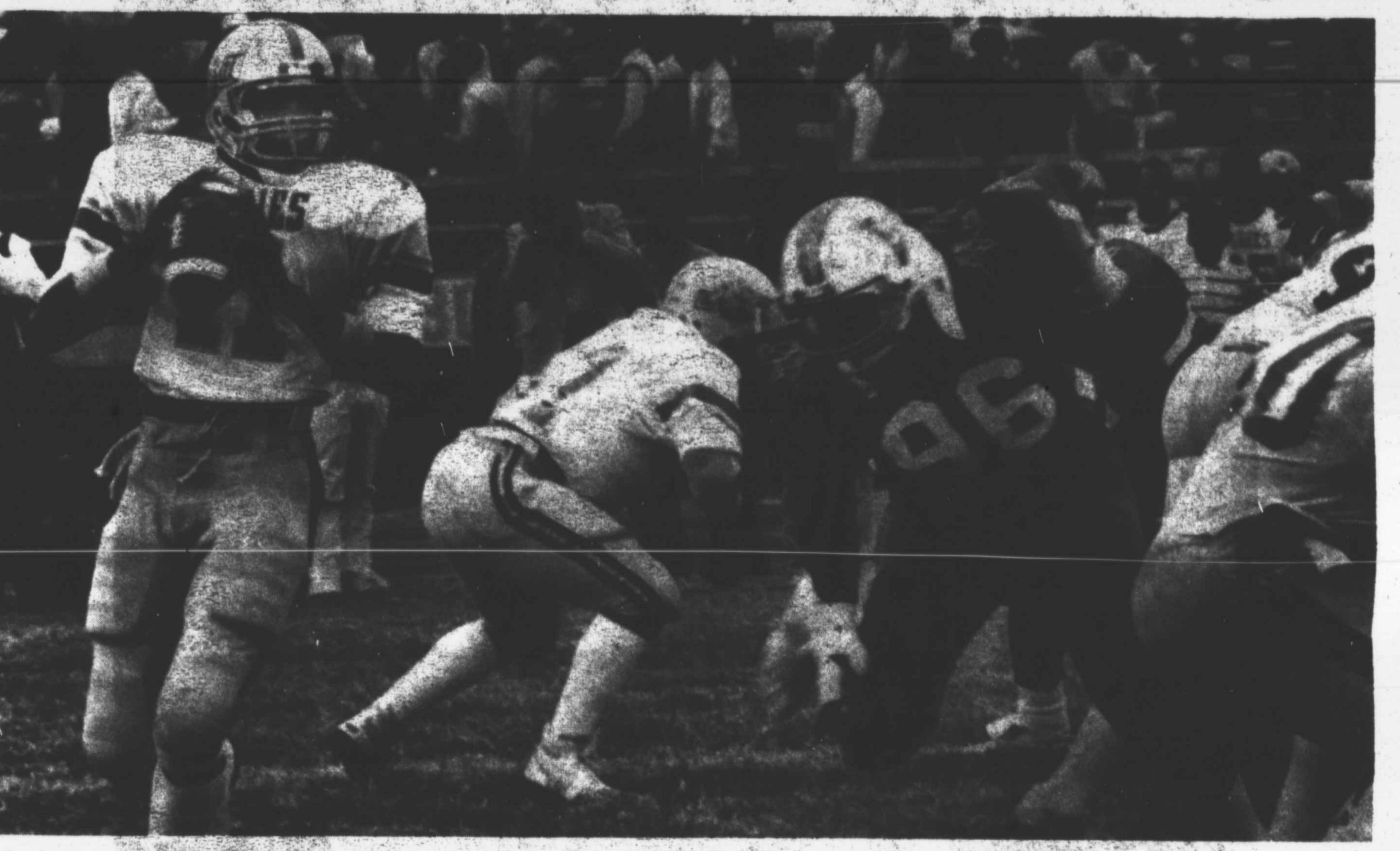
But it wasn't to be, despite the CIAA preseason rankings.

Following a season-opening, 52-0 rout of J.C. Smith, the Panthers had to rally to tie Fayetteville State, 22-22, in Fayetteville. Then came a 12-7 loss to Hampton Institute, at home. It was one of only a handful of losses at Hovey Field in the last Please See Page 16

BLACK COLLEGE SPORTS REVIEW

INTERVIEW

A blue-chipper who's hooked on blue and gold



Hooker against Elizabeth City: Glad he made the choice to attend A&T (photo by Joe Daniels).

By SAM DAVIS Review Staff Writer

Alan Hooker may, in some people' eyes, have assured himself mention i "Ripley's Believe It Or Not" when he signed an athletic grant to attend North Carolina A&T last January.

After all, how could a small, predominantly black institution sign one of the state's most highly recruited athletes from right under the nose of the publicity-rich Atlantic Coast Con-

state 3-A football championshi

academically to hold his own at any

made a spur-of-the-moment decision, well from the start. After talking with can go after more top players," Forte he says he gave A&T a good look from the start and his decision was well thought-out.

"I made a decision to attend a school where I would get a good education and also make a contribution to the football team," says Hooker. "I Forest, East Carolina, N.C. State and A&T. I chose A&T because I wanted to leave my mark on the program I became a part of."

The coaches at N.C. State suggested during his prep career at Eastern Ran- that Hooker pursue a course of study dolph High, Hooker had displayed other than his chosen major of comboth a strong throwing arm and the puter science if he signed with the ability to run the football, faring well. Wolfpack. Wake Forest didn't have a enough at both to rush for some computer science major, so that 1,091 yards as a senior and throw for climinated the Deacons. East Carolina Liberty, N.C., so it, too, was stricken from the list.

Another factor that figured in his decision was the way A&T Head Coach Mo Forte and his assistants dealt with Hooker on their visits with him.

"Coach Forte related with me as a

him a few times, I felt like I had known him all of my life."

That differed dramatically from the way other coaches approached you?" "

Coach Forte never promised me

continues. "We can say to these kids, "If A&T is good enough for Alan Hooker, why isn't it good enough for

Since arriving on campus in Greensboro, Hooker says he's had to anything," Hooker says. "He told me make a lot of adjustments to college narrowed my choices down to Wake that I would have to work for football. Yet, he remains confident

> "I made a decision to attend a school where I would get a good education and also make a contribution to the football team."

-- Alan Hooker

everything I got, but that if I put in a about his decision attend A&T. good effort I could make a big con-

By signing Hooker, Forte says, his

ability. If we can get one more player like him each year we are going to build a very strong program.

"Coming in, I didn't have any expectations," says Hooker. "I came in with an open mind. That way, there wouldn't be any disappointments."

In high school, Hooker relied on his

mental than high school," he says. "In high school, the big guys and the fast

Please See Page 21

November, 1984-Page 9