

Playoffs begin for ASU, FSU

Other key games can determine which teams control own destiny

By Tony McLean

NEW HAVEN, Ct. (BASN) -- For the Broncos of Fayetteville State and the Golden Rams of Albany State, the real football season starts this Saturday. Both teams will begin first round play in the NCAA Division II playoffs.

For the CIAA champions, they will travel to California, Pa. to face California University of Pennsylvania on Saturday. Kickoff is set for 12 noon ET. FSU (8-3) has previously made the playoffs in 2002 and 2004, losing at Carson-Newman both seasons.

The Broncos, who enter the game on a six-game winning streak, are the No. 6 seed in Super Regional One. They've won nine of their last 10 and six-straight on the road. The Broncos' last road loss came against Shaw, 19-12, on Oct. 12, 2008.

California is the runner-up in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference after losing in Saturday's league championship game to Shippensburg, 42-35. Ironically, the winner of the FSU/Cal game will play the top-seeded Red Raiders next Saturday.

The Vulcans' (8-3) offense is paced by quarterback Josh Portis and senior wide receiver A.J. Jackson. An All-PSAC West first team selection, Jackson had conference-bests in receptions, receiving yards, touchdowns and receptions per game.

As for ASU (8-2), seeded third, they will host sixth-seed West Alabama (7-4) Saturday at 1 p.m. The Golden Rams will make their sixth consecutive appearance in the Division II playoffs and first-ever meeting against West Alabama.

Last season, the Golden Rams fell to Tusculum College in the first round, 34-22. Last week, West Alabama knocked off Region and national top seed North Alabama. The winner will play at second-seed Carson-Newman next Saturday.

The Division II championship game will be played December 12, at 1 p.m. (EST) at Braly Municipal Stadium in Florence, Ala. and will be broadcast live on ESPN2.

OTHER KEY GAMES

MORGAN STATE at SOUTH CAROLINA STATE

The top-ranked Bulldogs (8-1, 6-0) need a win either Saturday against the Bears (5-4, 3-3) or next week vs. North Carolina A&T to take the MEAC crown and earn its second straight automatic bid to the Football Championship Subdivision (formerly Division I-AA) playoffs. They enter the contest on a five-game winning streak where they have outscored opponents by a 37-12 score. Buddy Pough's squad has also won a league-record 17-straight conference games.

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M at ALCORN STATE

Much like SCSU, the Panthers (6-1, 5-0) need a win in one of its final two games to claim the West Division title and a spot in the SWAC Championship Game in Birmingham in December. If Prairie View wins the division crown, it would be only the second time that a team other than Southern or Grambling State (Arkansas-Pine Bluff in 2006) has

advanced to the title game since the championship game was re-introduced in 1999.

JACKSON STATE at ALABAMA A&M

The two-time defending East champs and 2007 SWAC Champions (3-5, 3-2), control their own destiny toward a divisional three-peat. JSU can clinch with either a win over the Bulldogs (5-4, 2-3) Saturday and a loss by Alcorn State to Prairie View A&M or wins over Alabama A&M and Alcorn State or a loss to Alabama A&M and a win over Alcorn and an Alabama A&M loss to Mississippi Valley State .

Yes, there will be a quiz at the end of the day.