

Pirates get caught up in Richmond's Web

Spiders score 31 unanswered points, defeat Hampton 38-10

By Ronald Clark

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HAMPTON, Va., Nov. 26, 2005 – The #2 Hampton Pirates entered the Division I-AA playoffs in the midst of an undefeated season. The #12 Richmond Spiders couldn't have cared less. Playing with a huge chip on their shoulders, the Spiders were able to wear down a highly ranked Pirates defense by doing what the Pirates do best, which is running the football, in winning their first-round game 38-10 at Armstrong Stadium.

"No matter who the running back is, our O-line always gets the job done," said Spiders running back David Freeman, who led the Pirates with 117 yards rushing.

And he wasn't the only one to find success against the highly touted Pirates defense. Fellow running back Tim Hightower and quarterback Stacy Tutt, rushed for 73 and 61 yards, respectively. Coming into the contest, the Pirates' defense was ranked #5 in Division I-AA, but the Spiders (9-3) made them look like that ranking had been earned prematurely.



HAMPTON, Va. - Hampton wide receiver Onrea Jones hauls in this 44-yard reception over Richmond defender Joe Mallory in the second quarter, which led to a Pirate touchdown and a 10-7 lead.
Photo by Lawrence Johnson of All-Pro Photo for HBCSports Press Association.

However, the game didn't start off that way. Early on, it looked to have the makings of a defensive struggle, with both defenses able to keep the opposing offense in check. After the Pirates (11-1) went three and out on their first series, Cameron Muro's punt was fumbled by Ryan Mace and the Pirates recovered the ball on the Richmond 29-yard line. But, on the ensuing play, quarterback Princeton Shepherd's pass was intercepted by Joe Mallory, giving the Spiders the ball again on their own 25-yd line.

They were again stopped on a three and out as the Pirates defense was looking like its usually dominant self. The Pirates' next drive went 54 yards on 10 plays but Andrew Paterini uncharacteristically missed a field goal from 20 yards. Richmond eventually scored first, with an 80-yard drive that ended on a 1-yd touchdown run by Tutt with 2:58 left in the first quarter giving the Spiders the 7-0 lead. Hampton answered with a 44-yd field goal by Paterini, with 14:48 left in the second quarter cutting its deficit to 7-3. On second down of the Spiders' next drive, Tutt was intercepted by Kensley Dougan, putting Hampton on the Richmond 21-yd line. Again, the Pirates' special teams failed them, as Paterini

missed another field goal, this time from 34 yards. Entering the game Hampton head coach Joe Taylor, knew that only a few plays would alter the game's outcome.

"Four to five plays determine a game and they can usually be found on special teams," said Taylor.

With the defense playing well and the offense desperately needing a touchdown, the Pirates turned to backup quarterback Antwan Smith at the end of the first quarter, and as he has all season, he delivered. He completed his first pass for 44 yards to Onrea Jones and ended the drive, connecting again with Jones for a seven-yard touchdown pass. With the score 10-7, Richmond's Joseph Fore kicked a 22-yd field goal to end the first half scoring, and both teams entered halftime with the score 10-10.

The second half was all Spiders, as both their offense and defense stepped up. Aided by multiple miscues by the Pirates, including an onside kick they couldn't recover, a 4th and 2 conversion that failed, and an interception by Smith, Richmond was able to take advantage of a defense that seemed fatigued and uninspired. Scoring on two of their first three possessions in the second half, the Spiders opened up a 24-10 lead and never looked back. Richmond rushed for a total of 251 yards and Tutt finished 12-of-19 for 102 yards and threw two interceptions.

"Momentum is so important in games like this," said Spiders head coach Dave Clawson. "A lot of stuff we called for [Tutt] in the first half was more perimeter-oriented. In the second half we tried to run a little bit more downhill, with a little more misdirection, and were more effective."

Hampton never got anything going after halftime, with every Hampton possession of the second half resulting in a punt or a turnover. Their potent offense, led by 1,000-yard backs Alonzo Coleman and Ardell Daniels, was totally out of sync. Coleman and Daniels combined for a season low 46 yards on 20 carries. The only bright spot for Hampton was the play of Jones, who had a career high 192 yards receiving on 11 catches. The Pirates' perfect season and dream of a national championship, was no more, but Taylor didn't want them to be discouraged.

"I told them to keep their heads up," said Taylor. "Playing 12 games and dropping only one is nothing to hold your head down about. They had an outstanding year. I'm proud of them."

Richmond will host their second-round game next Saturday against Furman.