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Camellia Bowl Special

College Heights Herald

Western Kentucky University

BOWLING GREEN, KY.

TUESDAY, DEC. 18, 1973

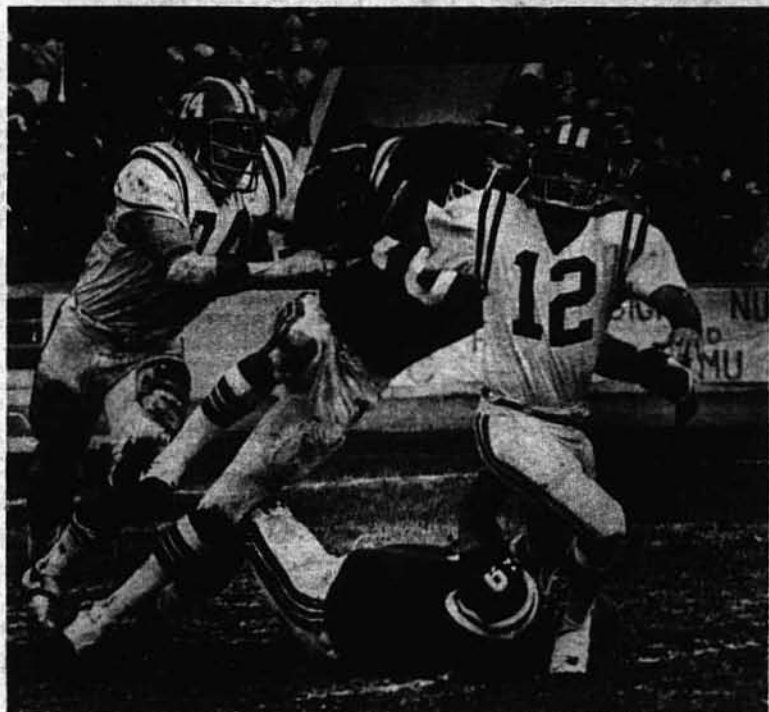


Photo by Mark Gordon

QUARTERBACK Dennis Tomek (12) attempts to escape the vicious pass rush of Louisiana Tech that sacked him six times for a total loss of 50 yards. At right, cheerleader Kelly McKeahan resorts to nail biting during some tense moments of the championship game.



Photo by Verenda Smith

'We just didn't play no ball'

By VERENDA SMITH

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—The time has come, said the walrus, to speak of many things—including why Western was shut out by Louisiana Tech Saturday 34-0.

And not only did the Hilltoppers break their 12-game winning streak, but a clue as to how early some fans waved goodbye to the hopes of the first NCAA championship came early in the second quarter, when a writer described the sea gulls lazily encircling the field as "vultures moving in for the kill."

Louisiana Tech took control of the game early when they took advantage of Western's first three punts, which averaged only 31 yards, to dig their way into Western territory.

"My leg is shot," explained kicker Charlie Johnson as he sat on the bench and watched Walter

Herod take over his job on the field. "Every once in awhile I can really kick, but it's been a long season and my leg is just too stiff."

The Hilltoppers averaged only 33.8 yards per punt during the entire game, with Herod kicking seven times for 41.3 yards and Johnson at 29.6 yards in five tries. Tech averaged 38.1 yards per kick.

It took the Bulldogs only two possessions to get on the board. With the ball given to them inside Western's 47-yard line, McDaniels ran it 37 yards to the 12-yard line. Quarterback Denny Duron was headed for a touchdown when he slipped in the mud, and defensive back John Leathers stopped another TD attempt when he batted a pass out of the air. Tech settled for a field goal, and from then on it was Katie-bar-the-door.

Failing to get a first down (it was their last possession in the half before they would have one), the Toppers punted 31 yards. It was returned to the Western one-yard line, where Johnson grabbed Wenford Wilborn just in time to keep him from scoring.

Instead, Charlie "Quick Six" McDaniels took the ball over the line, and with six minutes left in the first quarter, Tech was on top 10-0.

Early in the second quarter Tech combined two pass interceptions and two plays to become two touchdowns richer, and down 24-0, about all Western had left to battle for was its pride.

Center David Carter said, "We weren't mentally ready. We were too relaxed."

Commenting on the first

—Cont. to Page 4, Col. 3—



Photo by Verenda Smith

CHIN IN HAND, punter Charlie Johnson, gives his attention to the action during Saturday's loss. Johnson punted five times on a rain-soaked field for a 29.6 yard average.

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Leo's view

Westerners who went West got ambushed more than once

By LEO PECKENPAUGH

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—A disappointed group of Western fans, coaches and players sat in disbelief here Sunday afternoon at the Sacramento airport, waiting for a flight from here to Nashville that would never take place, on this day anyway.

The charter flight that was scheduled to depart from Sacramento at 9 a.m. had been delayed because of electronic problems. Truth is, that the electricity in the DC-8's galley was nil and the plan had been grounded by FAA officials until everything was working.

So the Western delegation waited. Until 11 o'clock they sat and replayed the 34-0 whitewash they had suffered at the hands of Louisiana Tech in the Camellia Bowl the day before. Card games were plentiful with players, coaches and others sprawled across the lobby of the airport trying to kill time.

You could pick your game, almost like the gambling mania of Lake Tahoe, Nev., had been the night before as several had made the 90-mile trip—supposedly sightseeing.

Then came word the flight would be delayed another two hours while Capitol Airline

officials tried to repair the aircraft. Western coach Jimmy Feix gave his players meal money, which they promptly used in two of the airport restaurants.

Meanwhile, two hours later, the Capitol officials tried desperately to locate another plane to ship the travel-weary Toppers home, as it became evident that it would take too long to fix the craft. They found a similar DC-8 in Las Vegas, and it appeared that the team would leave around 3:30 p.m.

Word was spread for everyone to meet at gate 25 at 3:30, ready to depart.

Capitol gave all members scheduled to fly out on the charter meal allowances. They ate and returned at the designated time.

But there was no plane, as it was learned that the plane in Las Vegas could garner only five stewardesses. FAA requires that a plane have seven, and again the group played the waiting game.

Down in the airport's cocktail lounge a small gathering watched a pro football game between Buffalo and the New York Jets. Someone noted that the Western-Louisiana Tech game would be replayed on another station. The bartender changed channels and



Photo by Verenda Smith

WESTERN PLAYERS and friends enjoy a friendly game of cards while waiting for their flight Sunday at the Sacramento (Calif.) airport. The flight never took place, Sunday at least, and the team was forced to stay in Oakland. Left to right are, Bob Sandige, Paul Bushong, Bill Bushong, Tom Ward and sportswriter Clark Hanes.

within minutes the place was packed. Tension mounted as if the game had yet to be played. The Western people watched intensely, maybe hoping that their proud offense wouldn't play so poorly the second time around.

They did, and the lounge emptied late in the game, when

their team was being soundly thrashed.

But good news was on the way. Good news for a few anyway. Because after a nine-hour wait, the group was going to be sent to Oakland via buses and housed in the Hilton Inn. They would leave Monday morning, via the same plane.

Telephone booths were flooded as several businessmen on the trip notified their offices that they would not be home for work Monday.

Players called home to explain their absence. But they didn't mind it. An extra night simply meant more sightseeing. This time in nearby San Francisco.

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Photo by Mark Gordon

Louisiana Tech stymies usually potent offense

—Continued from Page 1—

shutout of a Jimmy Feix-coached team, the Topper mentor said. "You don't have many excuses when you get beat by 34 points. I knew they were good, but I didn't think they were that good. If we had played a real good football game, we could have won 28-21."

Outside linebacker Frank Yacovino said, "They were a better team that day. If we had played them a different day, we would have beat the hell out of them. I think we were down here too long. We had too much time on our hands. We should have come down here, played the game, and then hung around for two or three days," he jests.

Coach Lee Murray said that he "was proud of some of the individual efforts in the second half. When you get down in the second half it's easy to say 'The heck with it,' and give up. These guys didn't."

But the battlefield they had to work on was something less than ideal. Some of the incomplete passes and lack of execution for both teams can be blamed on the mud that blanketed the field.

"They had to play on the same field, but it's a disgrace to play a national championship on a field

like that," complained defensive coordinator Lee Murray.

Even Louisiana Tech coach Maxie Lambright agreed. "It's hard enough to come from behind on any good football team... but it's even harder for Western to try and get back in the game because the poor conditions of the field caused them to pass even when they didn't want to."

It's true that Western's running game was not effective, regardless of whether the muddy field was a factor. The Toppers rushed for a total of 12 yards in the game, compared with 186 yards for Tech. Western also had 11 yards on punt returns.

"Yeah, the mud bothered me quite a bit," said Western quarterback Dennis Tomek, although he pointed out that it hadn't rained in three days.

"There are no excuses, though. We just didn't play our game. It's bad that I couldn't do any better for the seniors on the team. But when you get in the hole like that, you just can't take chances."

Part of the reason for Tomek's passing performance (he threw 32 passes and completed 10 of them for a 31 per cent average and had three interceptions that led to touchdowns) can go to Tech's defensive unit, which refused to



Photo by Mark Gordon

John Embree is thrown for a loss in the Toppers' 34-0 loss to Louisiana Tech Saturday.

budge.

"Their defense made the difference. They did what we have been doing to other teams all year," said Feix, saying that Tomek and Doug Davis, who replaced Tomek later in the game, didn't get the protection they needed.

"It wasn't that we weren't giving them blocking; they just didn't let us. Their lateral quickness was just too much for us."

Guard David Nollner claimed

that part of the reason the blocking was off was, once again, the slippery field. "The forest of hitting someone makes your feet slip down," he said, adding, just as every other player had said, that there were no excuses. "It's hard to explain what happened because everything just went wrong."

Total offensive yardage in the game was 76 yards for Western, far below their seasonal average of 407 yards. Tech went 336 yards. They also outpassed the

Hilltoppers 150 yards to 88. And Western had only seven first downs to Tech's 17.

John Embree rushed for a team high of 38 yards in nine carries. He was followed by Clarence Jackson with 11 yards in eight carries. Tomek held the ball six times and lost 60 yards.

On the defensive squad, however, things were a little brighter. They held McDaniel to 118 yards in 21 carries, and Bernie Berteau had only 42 yards in 14 tries.

Perhaps the flashiest defensive performance of the game was by defensive back Mike McCoy, who tailed All-American Roger Carr so closely that Carr only caught one ball all afternoon—that one, however, went 36 yards for a touchdown.

But, except for some commendable defensive efforts, not much went right for the Toppers. Porter Williams summed up the situation best. "They aren't that much better than we are. We just didn't play no ball."

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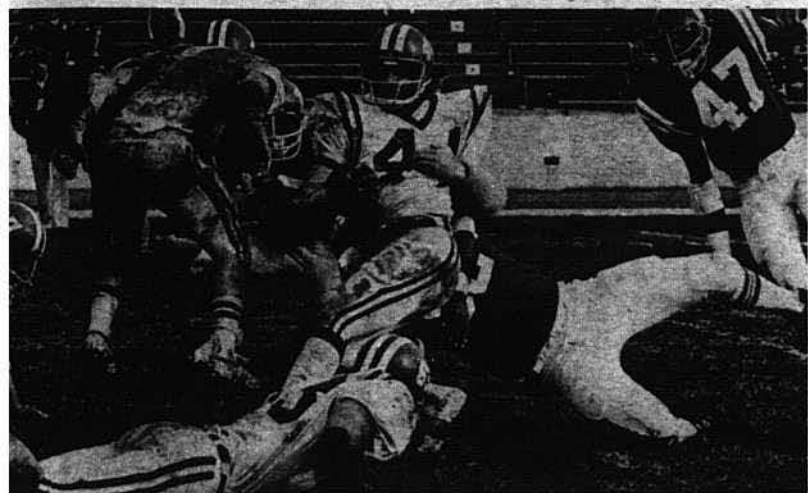


Photo by Mark Gordon

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Photo by Mark Gordon

WESTERN COACH Jim Feix, who absorbed his worst loss ever, relaxes before Saturday's game.

And first shutout as head coach

Feix suffers worst loss ever

By LEO PECKENPAUGH

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—When Western's football team left the field at Hughes Stadium here Saturday after losing the NCAA Division II national championship to Louisiana Tech 34-0, it was the first time a Jimmy Feix-coached Hilltopper team had been shut out.

And it was Feix' worst loss in his six year reign at Western.

But the Henderson native said "this is the first time I really don't hate losing."

"With the kind of season we've had," Feix said, "you just don't hate it. I'm really proud of these guys laying it on the line in the

second half when they were down 24-0. I think even though we didn't perform well, we showed a lot of pride."

"We just lost," said Western quarterback Dennis Tomek, who was sacked behind the line of scrimmage six times. "Hell, I don't know what to say. This is the first time we've been in this situation this year and I don't know what to think. I'm just disappointed it has to end this way."

Tomek completed 10 of his 32 passing attempts for 91 yards and was intercepted three times in the first half.

Western's Porter Williams, was ready for the passes that

didn't come. "It seems that every time Dennis turned around he was on his butt," Williams said.

Offensive coordinator Butch Gilbert said, "I don't know whether it was that we played so bad or they forced us to play below normal. It was probably a combination of both."

Louisiana Tech head coach Maxie Lambright, who admitted he was surprised the victory was "this easy," said, "We couldn't have done anything better. We forced them into things they hadn't done. You just don't beat a team like Western every day."

The gloomy Western dressing room found offensive inemen John McClellan and Dave Nollner weeping and embracing teammates.

"Oh, it's not so bad losing," McClellan said, "but such a poor performance makes you feel bad. I just hated to see us play so bad."

Nollner, the team's captain, asked "I just can't believe it. How did we play so poorly?"

Offensive coach Sam Clark said he was glad it was over. "It's

—Cont. to Page 7, Col. 2—

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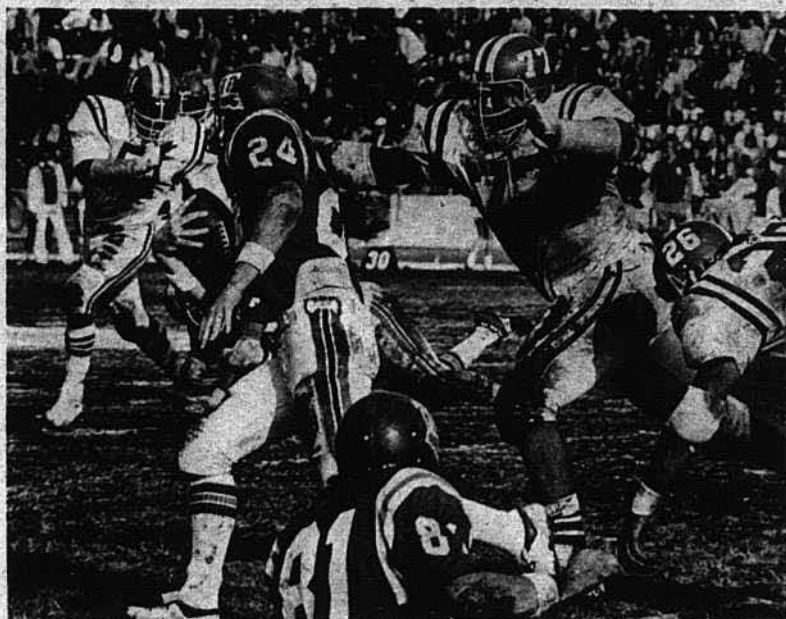


Photo by Mark Gordon

WESTERN DEFENSIVE TACKLE Dale Young grabs for Louisiana Tech running back Doug Moody in Tech's Camellia Bowl win Saturday. Young was in the Bulldog backfield several times in his team's loss.



Photo by Mark Gordon

WESTERN returned from the Camellia Bowl with the second-place trophy in the NCAA Division II championships.

Feix suffers

—Continued from Page 6—

been such a long and tiring season," he said.

The Hilltoppers had averaged 37.7 points a game before being shutout Saturday.

Tech quarterback Denny Duron, a minister in Ruston, La., engineered the victory, passing for one touchdown and sending his runners through and around the Western defense.

"You just don't beat a team like Western every day," he said. "But we came down here believing we could win. We didn't come here to lose."

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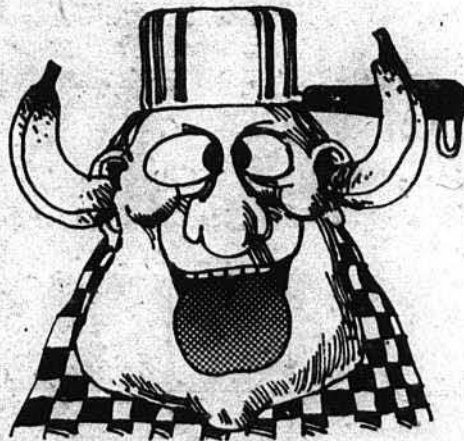
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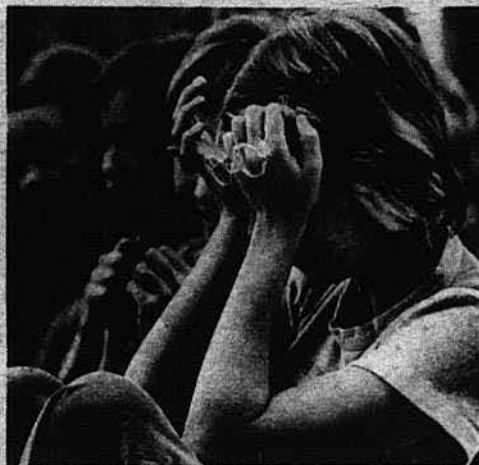
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Off to its best start since 1970, the Western basketballers travel to Florida for a pair of holiday tournaments during the Christmas semester break.

With a 6-0 record, Western will play in St. Petersburg's Big Sun Invitational Friday and Saturday. The Toppers have been paired opposite independent power Florida State Friday with the tourney's other two entries, Wake Forest and LaSalle, also meeting.

The losers will meet for third place honors in the first game Saturday with the championship slated to follow.

The Toppers will then have a four-day break, where they'll stay in Orlando for a visit to Disneyworld, and will compete in Jacksonville's Gator Bowl Classic.

The tourney, which is played on Dec. 26-27, will find Western meeting Duke with Jacksonville entertaining Florida.

The Toppers have never met Florida State in the two teams illustrious basketball histories. When Western takes to the floor against Duke in Jacksonville, it'll be the second meeting between the two schools. Duke whipped Western 73-72 in 1969.

LaSalle will come to Diddle Arena Jan. 9 and Western will open its Ohio Valley Conference campaign on Jan. 12 and 14 with clashes against East Tennessee and Tennessee Tech.

Bowl-ed over

The frustration of the Camellia Bowl found its way to the homefront as students gathered before available television sets to watch the proceedings. A surge late in the second quarter brought the Toppers within scoring position and the fans at Rodes-Harlin Hall to the edge of their seats. Failing to convert, the Tops turned the ball over to Louisiana Tech on the Bulldogs' 10-yard line and Denise Greenwell, top right, turned herself over to frustration.

Photos by Scott Applewhite

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