Alexander Progressing Smoothly

ROBERT ALEXANDER

By ALAN ROBINSON
AP Sports Writer

MORGANTOWN (AP) — College football has brought few surprises to Robert Alexander.

Of course, the West Virginia University freshman running back's career is only a game old. But that doesn't mean that Alexander doesn't think the transition from high school to college football isn't coming along smoothly.

"It's going just about the way I thought it would," Alexander said Saturday after the highly publicized frosh tailback made his WVU debut in a 36-0 victory over Richmond. The three-time South Charleston all-stater — billed as the premier running back in the country last season by several national magazines — carried 11 times for 71 yards, a 6.5 per carry average.

"I knew I was going to have to gain the respect of my teammates before anything could happen, and I think I've done that. I get along real well with the rest of the guys. Really, I wasn't as nervous Saturday as I was when I began practice," he said.

"I had to prove myself to my teammates at first. When it came time for the game Saturday, I wasn't really nervous — it was just the usual pre-game butterflies. I had trouble sleeping Friday night, but I think it was because I was excited about the game, not nervous."

Alexander, the most highly recruited prep athlete in West Virginia history, said he got "a scare" midway through preseason practice when he developed a throat infection, but that he gradually has started regaining his strength.

"I was worried because I lost a lot of weight," Alexander said. "I played in high school at around 185 pounds, and I'm still only at about 175 pounds. My throat still is infected and I spit some blood when I first got in the game Saturday, but I'm feeling a lot better now."

Now that his first collegiate hurdle has been passed, Alexander naturally is looking to bigger and better things. It's just his style.

"I think we're going to have a real good season," Alexander said. "I'm looking forward to playing in each game. I think I'll do better as I get more experience. I would have to rate my performance last week as poor, though I'm sure other people will say I did good.

"I know I can play better."

WVU Coach Frank Cignetti, whose Mountaineers get their first big test of the season Saturday when they invade College Park, Md., to play 10th rated Maryland, says he's been pleased with the progress Alexander has made, particularly considering his throat ailment.

"The first thing he had to do was prove himself to his teammates, and I think he's done that," Cignetti said. "That can be a mighty big thing for a freshman, getting adjusted to college football and new teammates after playing high school football.

"Robert's in a difficult situation, because of all the publicity he's received, but I think he's adjusting very well, both to college football and to his teammates."

Despite his impressive debut performance, Alexander has not yet nailed down a starting team berth. He and senior David "Duck" Riley, who picked up 52 yards against the Spiders, split playing time, with Riley opening the game and Alexander entering the lineup early in the second quarter.

"We've got four good backs," Cignetti said, referring to his two tailbacks and fullbacks Walter Easley and Paul Lumley, who also split playing time Saturday. "What we've got to do now is let these four battle it out, then pick the two people who play the best and go from there."

JOE JELICH

Jelich Says Knee Feels Fine

MORGANTOWN (AP) — The fate of West Virginia University's football season very well could ride on middle guard Joe Jelich's gimpy right knee.

WVU Coach Frank Cignetti knows — and admits it publicly — that Jelich is the guy who makes or breaks West Virginia's defense. Cignetti himself calls Jelich "the closest thing we have to a dominant player on defense."

But Cignetti also is the first to admit that the 6-foot-1, 220 pounder from Ravenswood who has been a starter almost since the day he walked on the West Virginia campus, is susceptible to injury at almost any moment.

"Joe could get injured at any time," Cignetti said after the Mountaineers breezed past Richmond 36-0 last Saturday as the West Virginia defensive unit — anchored by Jelich — recorded only its third shutout in the past eight seasons.

"Joe is on a game-to-game basis, because his knee could flare up at any time. Everything looks fine right now, and that's good, because Joe always gets the job done."

Jelich certainly did the mob on Richmond's offensive line, recording seven tackles and keeping the Spiders' quarterbacks under fire most of the game. He said his knee — which required off-season surgery and then was reinjured just prior to fall training camp — felt better Saturday than it has "for a long time."

"My knee felt real good, it was no bother," said Jelich, who missed all of the Mountaineers' spring practice after the knee surgery and most of the fall workouts after reinjuring the knee. "Really, I've been surprised at how quickly the knee has come around. I feel as good now as I have in a long time."

Baldwin Stakes Charlies To Lead

PAWTUCKET, R.I. — Reserve catcher Reggie Baldwin didn't do much to help the Charleston Charlies reach the International League playoffs.

But if the Charlies wind up winning the championship series, Baldwin will be remembered as the man who had a great deal to do with it.

The Charlies' latest acquisition — recently called up from Class AA — gave the team an inspirational 1-0 advantage in the playoffs Monday night, slamming the deciding home run in the 12th inning. The blast, his first Class AAA homer, gave the Charlies a 9-8 victory.

Baldwin's homer was one of three hit last night by Charleston — the others were by Jim Obradovich and J.J. Cannon — and one of 17 hits off six Pawsox pitchers. Bruce Poole gave up the Baldwin hit, and was the loser.

Larry Hardy allowed only one hit in going the finals four and one-third innings for the Charlies win. He followed Rick Williams, Larry Elenes and Russ Rothermel.

Pawtucket built an 8-5 lead going into the ninth inning. But Charleston rallied as Cannon and Leon Roberts singled in runs and Craig Cacek brought in Denny Walling with a sacrifice fly. Cannon had four hits in seven at bats and four RBIs, and Roberts collected three hits.

Game 2 is set for 7:30 tonight at Pawtucket, with Gary Wilson (3-2) of the Charlies facing left-hander Jim Burton (10-10).

Meanwhile, preparations are being made on the home front for Games 3, 4 and 5 (if necessary) in Charleston on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Charleston general manager Carl Steinfeldt announced regular admission prices will be in effect ($3 for box seats, $2.50 for reserved seats, $2 for general admission, $1.50 for bleachers, $1 for kids) and there will be a special $1 ticket for senior citizens. The Charleston High School band and the Straw Hatters musical group will perform. Games will start at 7:30 p.m.

A meeting of league directors will be held in Charleston sometime during the playoffs. One topic, Steinfeldt said, may be the problem of having one president for both the International and Pacific Coast leagues.

Charleston (9)	AB	R	H	BI
Perez 2b	6	2	1	0
Walling cf	5	1	2	0
Cannon rf	7	2	4	4
Cacek 1b	6	0	1	1
Obradovich dh	4	1	1	1
Ostergaph	1	0	0	0
Wolfe 3b	5	0	1	0
Roberts lf	5	1	3	1
Rhea ss	6	1	1	0
Monzon ss	0	0	0	0
Pujols c	4	0	2	1
Godby pr	0	0	0	0
Baldwin c	1	1	1	1
TOTALS	50	9	17	9

Pawtucket (8)	AB	R	H	BI
Berg lf	4	1	1	2
Baker 1b	1	0	0	0
Stephn dh	5	1	2	2
Waler p-lb	0	0	0	0
Hoffman ph	1	0	0	0
Harer lb	6	0	1	2
Cox 3b	6	1	2	1
Hunter 2b	6	0	0	0
Merchant c	4	2	1	0
Koza rf	4	0	3	0
Coleman cf	4	1	0	0
Aviles ss	3	2	1	1
TOTALS	44	8	11	8

Charleston	000	131	003 — 9
Pawtucket	001	400	120 — 8

E—Perez, Aviles, Elenes, Harer. DP—Pawtucket 1, Charleston 1. LOB—Charleston 13, Pawtucket 7. 2B—Perez. HR—Obradovich, Cannon, Baldwin, Cox. SB—Aviles, Roberts. SF—Cacek. S—Koza, Berg.

PITCHING SUMMARY

	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO
Wright	4 2/3	7	4	4	2	2
Rommerswell	3 1/3	3	2	2	2	1
LaRose	0	2	2	0	0	0
Waller	3	2	0	0	2	2
Tudor	0	0	0	0	1	0
Poole (L, 0-1)	1	3	1	1	0	0
Williams	3 2 3	6	5	5	2	1
Elenes	3 2 3	2	1	0	2	4
Rothermel	1 3	0	0	0	0	0
Hardy (W, 1-0)	4 1 3	1	0	0	1	3

PB—Merchant. T—3:53. U—Fields, Pallone, Parks. A—2,159.

GOTCHA . . . Houston was a monkey on UCLA's back throughout their game Monday night. The Cougars defeated the Bruins, 17-13, by continually coming up with plays like this. Here, UCLA running back Theotis Brown (27) tries to break-away, but Houston's Fred Snell (24) hangs on for the tackle. Later, Brown was sidelined with a dislocated elbow.

Houston Rallies To Beat UCLA

By MICHAEL A. LUTZ
AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Houston quarterback Danny Davis, whose Midas touch propelled the Cougars into national prominence a year ago, spent the first half of Monday night's nationally televised game against UCLA looking for his magic.

Davis found the groove just as the 11th ranked Bruins lost theirs in the second half, and the swashbuckling junior quarterback whipped Houston to a pair of touchdown drives to nip the Bruins 17-13.

By game's end, Davis had gone from goat to hero and upstaged Rick Bashore, UCLT's sophomore quarterback, who had engineered the Bruins to a 13-3 halftime lead.

Kenny Hatfield booted a 34-yard field goal for Houston's first half scoring. Davis climaxed a 93-yard drive in the third quarter with a one-yard plunge and Dyral Thomas scored the winning TD with a nine-yard run with 11:03 left in the game.

Bashore and the Bruins unraveled in the second half when they drove to Houston's seven, six and nine-yard lines but came away empty each time. After hitting nine of 11 passes in the first half, Bashore missed his first six attempts of the second half.

"I haven't matured the way I thought I would," said Davis, who completed 11 of 18 passes for 147 yards and rushed for 68 yards on 18 carries. "The team played well, but I didn't play the way I should have."

Bashore, who learned only a few hours before kickoff that he would start ahead of junior Steve Bukich, looked more like the veteran.

After directing the Bruins to field goals of 36 and 31 yards by Frank Corral, he flipped a 20-yard touchdown shot to flanker Homer Butler with 15 seconds to go in the half.

The Bruins, coming off a 9-2-1 season, took a 13-3 lead and plenty of confidence into the dressing room at halftime. But it was Davis and the big-play Cougars who swut it together in the second half.

"A lot people will say we were lucky," Davis said. "We have to improve our defense. The pressure was on our defense but it showed a lot of pride. The entire team showed pride."

The loss was costly injury wise for the Bruins, who lost Corral with a possible jaw fracture and 1,000-yard rusher Theotis Brown with a dislocated elbow. Donahue said both would miss at least six weeks.

	UCLA	Houston
First downs	15	16
Rushes-yards	45-172	50-232
Passing yards	245	147
Return yards	75	81
Passes	16-27-0	11-18-0
Punts	6-35	5-33
Fumbles-lost	2-2	7-6
Penalties-yards	10-68	6-30

INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

RUSHING—UCLA, Owens 22-87, Bayshore 11-48, Houston, Blackwell 20-94, Davis 19-68.

PASSING—UCLA, Bayshore 16-27-0, 245. Houston, Davis 11-18-0, 147.

RECEIVING—UCLA, Butler 5-145, Owens 4-31, Brown 3-17. Houston, Bass 5-79, Maddox 3-38.

UCLA	6	7	0	0	—13
Houston	0	3	7	7	—17

UCL-FG Corral 36
UCL-FG Corral 31
HOU-FG Hatfield 31
UCL-Butler 20 pass from Bayshore (Coulter kick)
HOU-Davis 1 run (Hatfield kick)
HOU-Thomas 9 run (Hatfield kick)
A—33,121

Defenses, Not Quarterbacks, Provide KVC Thrills

Chuck Landon
Daily Mail Sports Writer

WOULD SOMEONE PLEASE have a word with Nitro, George Washington, East Bank and Herbert Hoover's defenses?

Obviously, they need straightened out.

And, it's all because someone apparently forgot to inform them that this is the 'Year of the Quarterback' in the KVC.

Translated, that means there is supposed to be lots of passing, lots of yardage and lots of points. Conversely, there is not supposed to be lots of interceptions, lots of losses and lots of shutouts.

But, thanks to the aforementioned defenses not following the script, that's been the case.

FOR INSTANCE, Nitro's defense hasn't allowed a touchdown in two games and is yielding a KVC low of 94.5 yards per game. The Wildcats are also tops in pass defense, giving up a miniscule average of 12.5 yards.

Meanwhile, East Bank and George Washington have been deadly against the run. Pioneer opponents are averaging just 37.5 yards on the ground and 121.5 yards total offense. Even more sensational is The Bank's yards-per-carry yield . . . a paltry 1.3!

And, GW is just slightly more generous. The Patriots are allowing 39 yards rushing per game and 1.4 yards per carry. But, GW is only giving up an average of 66 yards passing, too, for a total offense average of 105 yards. That's second best in the KVC, which blends nicely with their league-leading scoring defensive average of 0.0 points.

The Patriots aren't the sole possessors of first place in the 'least points allowed' department, however, as Herbert Hoover is tied with them. The Huskies are giving up an average of 96.5 yards rushing, 33 yards passing and 129.5 yards total offense, but have yet to yield a point. And, a big reason is turnovers. Hoover has intercepted three passes and recovered 10 fumbles in two games.

"OUR DEFENSE has bent a little at times, but so far it hasn't broken," said Joe Cowley, Hoover coach. "We've been tickled to death with our defensive play. We've gotten real good performances from Kelly Cole at defensive end, Steve Blizzard at nose guard and Joey Douglas at defensive tackle. But, really everyone has done a good job. One of the best things we've done is put good pressure on the quarterback. And, I'm hoping we'll continue to do that."

Nitro, meanwhile, is making the most of its 'new defense.'

"For a long time we always played a 6-2," said Pat Vance, Nitro head coach. "But this year we decided to go to a 5-2 with a monster. It's a lot more aggressive defense which is geared to smaller, quicker players and our kids love it. They have a lot of confidence in it already.

"And, they're getting better and better each week. We're getting great pursuit and it's a real treat to grade films, because we have so many kids around the ball that we can't tell who is making the tackles."

NITRO ISN'T the only team with a surprising defense, however, as GW has turned out to be much tougher than expected.

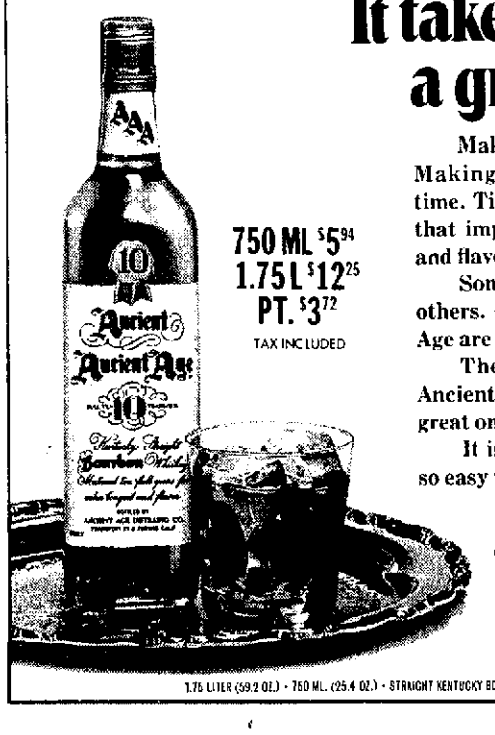
"Our defense has been a very pleasant surprise," said Steve Edwards, GW head coach. "And, it's because of two basic ingredients . . . a good overall team effort and a great bunch of hitters. For instance, I couldn't single out anybody as having done an especially good job. All 11 of them have been outstanding. And, I think it's because they enjoy playing defenses. They like to play defense and that means a lot."

Much the same is true at East Bank, where hard-hitting defenses are a tradition.

"We seem to always have kids who love to hit up here and as a result our defense has carried us so far," said Joe Craffey, East Bank head coach. "We've been extra tough against the run, but we've been better against the pass than our statistics would indicate (EB is allowing an average of 84 yards passing). A lot of the passing yardage came against our second team. But, actually I figured on our defense being better than our offense and that's been the case."

AND, IF THAT continues to be the case . . . well, this season's nickname will have to be changed to the 'Year of the Defense.'

See KVC STATISTICS, Page 12A, Col. 1



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