

Coach's Report — Football '81

The 1980 version of the Eagles looked jinxed from the start. Not only were nine seniors lost to graduation, but the Eagles were plagued with early season injuries. Both Jimmy Reed and Ernie Ferguson missed the first part of the season due to injuries received at camp. Rod Wolff missed the opener and the Eagles got off to a slow start, losing to archrival Thornwell 18-0. However, the following week the Eagles dumped Catawba 10-6 and by week six had rolled up four consecutive wins. A play-off berth was clinched in week seven and by week ten, the Eagles' record was a dazzling 8-2.

Could this be the team that had to replace seventeen starters on offense and defense, lost two key players early to injuries, did not have a starting back returning, etc., etc., etc. . . .? By week eleven the Eagles were play-off bound with an impressive list of credentials to carry with them — (1) a backfield that had rushed for over 2400 yards, (2) a defense that had allowed only 12 points in an eight week span, (3) All-Conference tackle Bill Stidham, All-Star 1000 yard plus rusher Rod Wolff, and All-Conference Defensive End Joe John Stephenson, (4) a second straight eight-win season.

The Eagles were not able to survive that chilly Friday night at St. Stephens; the final score read St. Stephens 22, Richard Winn 14. For thirty-five young men the dream of capturing the 1980 State Championship had come to an end. In the hearts of all, there were no losers. These young men had overcome all odds and had gone above and beyond expectations.

The team of '80 will be remembered as one of the finest RWA has ever fielded. If this was a "rebuilding year" as many had said, let's hope we have many more.

