

## Bulldogs fail in regaining championship status; end campaign on positive note

Written by Levi Johnson, Sports Editor  
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ORANGEBURG - This was supposed to be a season wherein some unfinished business was to be taken care of.

Seeking to regain championship status in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference, after posting a 7-4, 6-2 MEAC finish in 2011, Buddy Pough and his 11th South Carolina State team headed into the 2012 campaign poised to return to the conference "mountaintop".

And after blitzing Georgia State in the season opener, in Atlanta, in late August and playing "lights out" in the first 15 minutes of play opposite MEAC nemesis Bethune-Cookman (BCC) in the home opener, in the Garden City of the Palmetto State, in early September, another special season seemed very possible.

Nevertheless, after blowing an early 14-0 lead versus BCC, the Bulldogs went on to drop a 27-14 decision to the visiting Wildcats.

Key mid-season losses were experienced against MEAC foes North Carolina Central and Delaware State, which for all intents and purposes took away Buddy Pough's charges hope of, once again, ultimately reigning at the top of the MEAC.

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Victory would be had in three of the four remaining games, including a 27-13 spanking of Savannah State (SSU) Sat. (Nov. 17), on Willie E. Jeffries Field in the "curtain closer" for the season.

Yet, although winning at the close of another campaign, the Bulldogs, who bowed out with a 5-6, 4-4 worksheet, were highly disappointed at the conclusion of the first losing season for S.C. State since the 2000 campaign.

"We managed to end another season winning a football game," Bulldodgs coach Buddy Pough said, minutes after the double-digit win over SSU. "But this has been a rough, tough year for this football team.

During the season a lot of things affected us. But we still had our chances to be a much better team than how we finished. Now we'll look forward to fixing the things we need to fix, to get ready for next season."

Looking back on a year that climaxed his collegiate career on what he admitted was a down note, Cortney Ingram, nevertheless, expressed thanks for the opportunity he had.

"It hadn't quite hit me yet; ending my college playing days. But I'm so thankful for getting the chance to play college football; especially here," said linebacker Ingram, who calls Milledgeville, Ga. home. "Although this season didn't end the way I hoped it would, I had some good times here, when I think about the 2010 championship season.

"I'm leaving a lot of good players here; so when I think about next year, I believe we have what it takes to get back to the level of the championship years we recently had."

Declaring he'll return for his final campaign of eligibility, although scheduled to graduate in the Spring of 2013, Richard Cue is apparently going into the offseason with an attitude of improving his game.

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"Although I feel I'm a pretty good leader, I know I can play a lot better than I did this season," said the Bulldogs No.1 quarterback. (Today), against Savannah State, I didn't have the kind of day I wanted to have; but winning made all the difference for me and the team.

"We can look back on this season and make all kinds of excuses why we didn't get it done like wanted to; but that won't make a difference now. The thing we have to do (now) and in the offseason is to work to get better as players. If we do this, we have a good chance to improve a lot next season."