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"Stunned and shocked"

Despite big win over Edinboro, Rock denied national playoff berth

By Phil Swartzlander
Rocket Assistant Sports Editor

Going 9-2 is not good enough for the NCAA playoffs, at least not for the Slippery Rock football team, which will now look toward next season instead of preparing for its next opponent.

The Rock was left out of the playoffs after winning against Edinboro University 59-34 last Saturday, but the pollsters placed SRU seventh in the region, while only the top six make the playoffs.

"It was a disappointment that we didn't get in," senior quarterback Nate Crookshank said. "We did what we had to do, and it was out of our hands."

Head Coach George Mihalik echoed the same ideas.

"We were stunned and shocked (when learning of not making playoffs). We deserve to be there," Mihalik said.

The PSAC will have three teams in the playoffs with California (Pa.) (11-0) and Indiana (Pa.) (8-2) making it from the west joining PSAC East Champion West Chester (9-2) from the east.

IUP made the playoffs despite losing to Bloomsburg, 41-35, last Saturday.

"In the past years when we were selected, we learned that you don't lose late," Mihalik said.

Both players and coaches were under the impression that an IUP loss, combined with an SRU win, would be enough for the Rock to qualify for playoffs.

"We were told if IUP lost we were in, so during the second half, coach pulls us aside and said IUP lost, we thought we were in, but we weren't," Crookshank said. "That was the most disappointing part."

Another complaint the Rock has is with the selection of Southern Connecticut State for the playoffs. SCSU, from the Northeast 10 conference, was the only three-loss team in the northeast region to make the playoffs.

"Even though one of their losses was against a (NCAA Division) I-AA school, we should be in the top six instead of them," Mihalik said. "The PSAC conference is a

lot stronger than the Northeast 10."

Mihalik also said that the rankings are compiled by a variety of numbers, but believes that numbers should merely play a role in the selection process and not be the only determinant.

"They really need to consider the quality of teams or how competitive (teams are) in their losses," Mihalik said.

Crookshank said that the team could have gone far in the playoffs.

"Good playoff teams can run the ball and stop the run. We had both," he said.

As for the Edinboro game, the Rock amassed 499 total yards of offense, marking the 10th time in 11 games they did so in 2007. The only game they did not gain 400 yards came in a 22-13 loss to California, during which they gained 347 yards.

Against Edinboro, Crookshank had four touchdown tosses and junior running back Corey Manfull added two scores.

Crookshank's four touchdowns gave him 23 for the year, setting the single-season record for the Rock.

The old record belonged to John Linhart, who threw for 22 scores in 1994.

The senior quarterback hooked up with receiver Paul Favers on scores of 15 and 57 yards, also hitting receiver Terry Grossetti for a 36-yard bomb and senior Frank Cremonese for a 6-yard touchdown.

Manfull rushed for 172 yards on 23 carries.

The Rock's other two running

backs—Ryan Lehmeier and Damarcus Cleckley—added touchdown runs of 26 and 28 yards, respectively.

The Rock defense came up with a number of turnovers despite giving up 34 points.

Junior Tyler

Boudreau paced the SRU effort with seven tackles, two sacks, an interception and a fumble recovery, which was enough to earn the 6-foot-3, 225-pound junior PSAC West defensive player of the week honors.

Boudreau's two turnovers were among the six the defense forced in the contest.

Looking at next year, the Rock will lose several starters, including three members of the offensive line.

The biggest gap to fill will be the one vacated by three-time all-conference tackle Mike Butterworth.

"I loved every minute of my five years at the Rock, and I am going to miss everything about SRU," Butterworth said.

Butterworth and Crookshank both believe that next year's team should be competitive despite the personnel losses.

"Even though they are losing quite a few seniors, they are still going to have a great time and they have game experience. They should be a good team," Butterworth said.

Crookshank believes the remaining players have potential leaders among them.

"Every team needs many leaders, and the right amount of seniors, this team has that," he said.

Butterworth hopes that his future holds a chance to play for a NFL team.

"I am going to go after the next level and see how things work out," he said.

As for the team this year, and especially for the seniors, Mihalik expressed his heartbreak for them.

"I feel bad, I really do, they went into the Edinboro game not knowing that this was their last game," Mihalik said. "It is an injustice to this team."



CHAD LEADER/THE ROCKET

Women's soccer bows out of NCAA playoffs

1-0 loss ends Green & White's record-setting season

By Brandon Fox
Rocket Sports Editor

When you get to a stage that the Rock and Head Coach Noreen Herlihy were on last weekend in the first and second rounds of the NCAA playoffs, a simple philosophy comes to mind.

Win or go home. Heading into its first-round match-up against

Adelphi, a team the Rock (17-5-1) had never faced, everyone knew that a win allowed them to move on and a loss would send them home for good.

A win also meant that the Rock would get a chance at redemption against West Chester, the team that beat the Green and White 2-0 for the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Championship on Nov. 4.

The Rock didn't disappoint, shutting out Adelphi 2-0 and setting the stage for the showdown with the Golden Rams.

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Manfull had something to prove in '07

Rock running back made solid return after missing all of 2006

By Josh Rizzo
Rocket Contributor

Corey Manfull was ready to take over the starting running back position for Slippery Rock.

After working hard for two seasons, 2006 was going to be the year he took over.

Manfull was going to carry the Rock to the postseason for the first time since 1999.

But things didn't quite go as planned.

Manfull cut the tendons on his left pinky finger and could not grip anything for six weeks.

Even though he was cleared to play, Manfull decided to take a medical redshirt, which would provide him with another year of eligibility.

While the redshirt year would allow him to play a full season of football, not playing was one of the hardest things he ever had to do.

"I have played ever since I was little, and this was the first time I ever had



CHAD LEADER/THE ROCKET

Rock running back Corey Manfull, who missed all of 2006 with a severe hand injury, ran for a career-high 1,258 yards in his first year as a starter for SRU. His rushing total placed him second among all PSAC running backs despite missing two games due to injury.

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2007 Rock Scoring Leaders

Name	Goals	Assists	Points
1. McGrath	11	5	27
2. Hindley	9	1	19
3. Cooper	8	3	19
4. Hoover	4	7	15
5. Neubert	5	0	10
6. Wilson	2	6	10