

1995 – A SEASON TO REMEMBER

1995 FERRIS STATE BULLDOGS – MEN ON A MISSION

In the Ferris State football locker room, there's a motivational displayed on the wall that defines success.

Success is a journey, not a destination.

The Bulldogs traveled on a path that held not only success but lasting memories as well.

Indeed, the men which comprised the Ferris football team were on a mission to not only defend their Midwest Intercollegiate Football Conference (MIFC) title for an unprecedented fourth time, but claim the national championship.

While Ferris fell just short of its national championship quest, the Bulldogs managed to secure their fourth consecutive conference title. FSU also recorded its third straight undefeated season and advanced to the semifinal round of the NCAA Division II National Championship Playoffs before falling to eventual national champion North Alabama. Nevertheless, the team earned the distinction of advancing farther than any previous Bulldog gridiron team in school history.

Longtime FSU assistant Jeff Pierce was named head coach. Twin brothers Brian and Jeff Browe were featured in the 1995 *Sports Illustrated* college football preview issue. The script of the story-book campaign couldn't have been written more appropriately as Ferris capped off its second 10-0 regular season with the greatest comeback in NCAA Division II history, a 46-42 regular-season ending win over visiting Saginaw Valley State. The Bulldogs, who trailed 28-0 after the first quarter, completed the rally when Chris Pulliams scored on a 97-yard TD run with 2:57 remaining in the game.



Through extraordinary efforts like Pulliams', the Bulldogs were able to extend their regular season unbeaten streak to a remarkable 39 games (37-0-2) while not losing a regular season contest since the third week of the 1992 season.

Ferris began post-season play ranked third nationally and first in the Northeast Region. The Bulldogs hosted the opening two playoff rounds and utilized their home field advantage with victories over Millersville and New Haven.

All season long, FSU rallied behind one phrase – *Every player, every play*. That philosophy laid the foundation for the program's success in recent years. The concept proved instrumental throughout the campaign as the Bulldogs set or tied an impressive 51 school records.

Senior All-America quarterback Bill Love was accorded the team's highest individual honor. Love, the 1995 MIFC Player-of-the-Year, attained runner-up honors in balloting for the prestigious Harlon Hill Trophy, awarded to the nation's most outstanding Division II player. On the sidelines, Pierce made the most of his head coaching debut by being selected as the MIFC's Coach-of-the-Year.

The 13-week fall journey will be remembered forever as the embodiment of Ferris State football program's winning tradition. "I have to give a lot of credit to our seniors," said Pierce. "These guys accomplished some things that a lot of people have never done.

They've gone four years with only two regular-season losses and that's a great tribute to them."

HIGHEST FINISH IN SCHOOL HISTORY

Two teams with perfect records placed their unblemished marks on the line in a 1995 NCAA Division II National Championship Playoff Semifinal-Round contest played Dec. 2 at North Alabama's Braly Stadium in Florence, Ala.

The Ferris State Bulldogs and North Alabama Lions each brought in identical 12-0 records into a game which represented Ferris' highest finish ever in school history. The contest featured two of the most successful Division II teams over the last four years and two of the nation's premier players in Ferris State quarterback Bill Love and North Alabama linebacker Ronald McKinnon, who both were among the top three vote getters for the Harlon Hill Trophy as the nation's top player in Division II football.

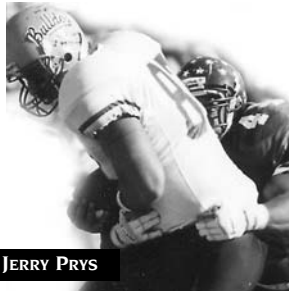
Both schools made their fourth consecutive appearance in the Division II playoffs as Ferris State's seniors had produced a 42-5-2 record while North Alabama's senior group had compiled a 46-5-1 mark.

North Alabama, the two-time (2003 and 2004) national champions, played impressively as the number-one ranked Lions posted a 45-7 victory over the third-ranked Bulldogs before 7,866 fans. UNA never trailed in the

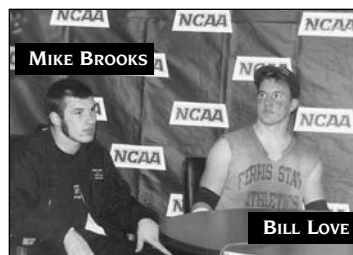
game, jumping out to a 21-7 halftime advantage and then reeling off the contest's final 24 points in the second half. Ferris' lone score occurred in the second quarter on tailback Chris Pulliams' 10-yard run followed by kicker Jason Lipke's extra-point kick.



BILL LOVE



JERRY PRYS



MIKE BROOKS

BILL LOVE

A GAME OF DESTINY

November 11, 1995 – A date which will live forever in the annals of the Ferris State football program.

Not even a blizzard or a 28-0 deficit could stop Ferris State from finishing the 1995 regular season with its 39-game unbeaten streak intact.

The never-say-die Bulldogs completed a perfect 10-0 regular season by never panicking and never blinking in the face of adversity to stun upset-minded Saginaw Valley State, 46-42, in the Midwest Intercollegiate Football Conference (MIFC) regular-season finale at Top Taggart Field in Big Rapids, Mich.

The third nationally-ranked Bulldogs trailed 28-0 after the first quarter in the throes of a blinding storm which dumped six inches of snow and featured north wind gusts of upwards to 40 miles an hour to go with a 29 degree temperature.

Ferris, which was down 35-14 at halftime, warmed up in the second half as the Bulldogs outscored the Cardinals 32-7 and capped off the remarkable comeback with 2:57 remaining in the contest as tailback Chris Pulliams dashed for a conference-record 97-yard touchdown run as the hosts registered their third straight undefeated regular season.

The dramatic run was set up when the Bulldog defense caused a SVSU fumble and free safety Charles Anderson recovered the ball at the Ferris three-yard line with 3:15 left to be played.

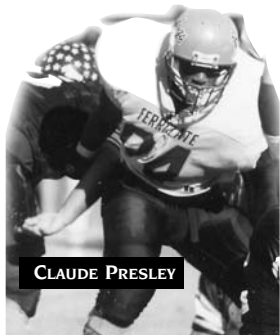
The next play was one for the record book as Pulliams busted outside and turned up field going 97 yards to pay-dirt in 18 seconds. The Cardinals had one final shot at redemption with 2:57 showing on the scoreboard but could only get to their 26-yard line in four plays before having to turn the ball over to Ferris on downs.

Pulliams finished the game with a MIFC-record 329 yards rushing on 30 carries and scored three TD's. Both Ferris and Saginaw Valley State combined for 821 yards rushing to set a conference mark.

"We never stopped believing," said FSU head coach Jeff Pierce. "You can't doubt yourself and if you do when you're down 28-0 then you will never pull it out. When we were down 28-0, we talked about it and we knew we had been there before. We had to get down to business."



Chris Pulliams' historic 97-yard TD run



CLAUDE PRESLEY