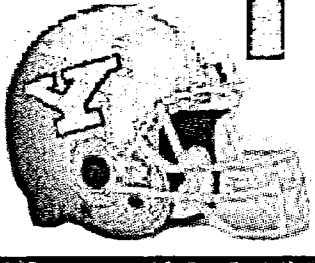


# THE JAMBAR

GAME DAY EDITION



Saturday, November 25, 2006

www.thejambar.com

## YSU FOOTBALL

# Penguins return to playoffs

Jake Glavies  
SPORTS EDITOR

Youngstown State University has finally made it back to the playoffs.

The Penguins will play their first post-season game since the 2000 season as they host the No. 6 James Madison Dukes live on ESPN2 today.

After a five-season-long playoff drought, during which the team posted two 8-3 seasons and tied for the Gateway Conference championship in 2005, Youngstown received the conference's automatic playoff bid after posting a 9-2 record, with a 6-1 Gateway mark.

Once the team's playoff assignment was announced Nov. 19 it was business as usual on the practice field.

"We're not going to handle [this week] any differently than we have in the past. ... Obviously, it's boosted up because it's a playoff game. Like Coach Heacock said, emotion is involved, but we're not going to handle it any differently," senior nose tackle Jim Phelan said.

Defensive tackle Mychal Savage added that a solid week of preparation will be the key to success against the 9-2 Dukes.

The team with the presidential backing earned its playoff spot after dropping just two games this season, an 11-point loss Sept. 9 at No. 1 Appalachian State and a one-point heartbreaker Nov. 11 against the unranked Villanova University Wildcats in Villanova, Pa.

For the defense Offensively, JMU fields a balanced team that can pick up chunks of yards on the ground or through the air.

According to Heacock, the Penguin defense is going to have to play aggressively to counteract the power of the Dukes.

"When you get into this point, upfront ... in the trenches is where this game is going to take place," he said. "Defensively, I think we're going to have to play - as we used to always say in

playoff games - you're going to have to play tenacious defense, play over your heads and out of your minds."

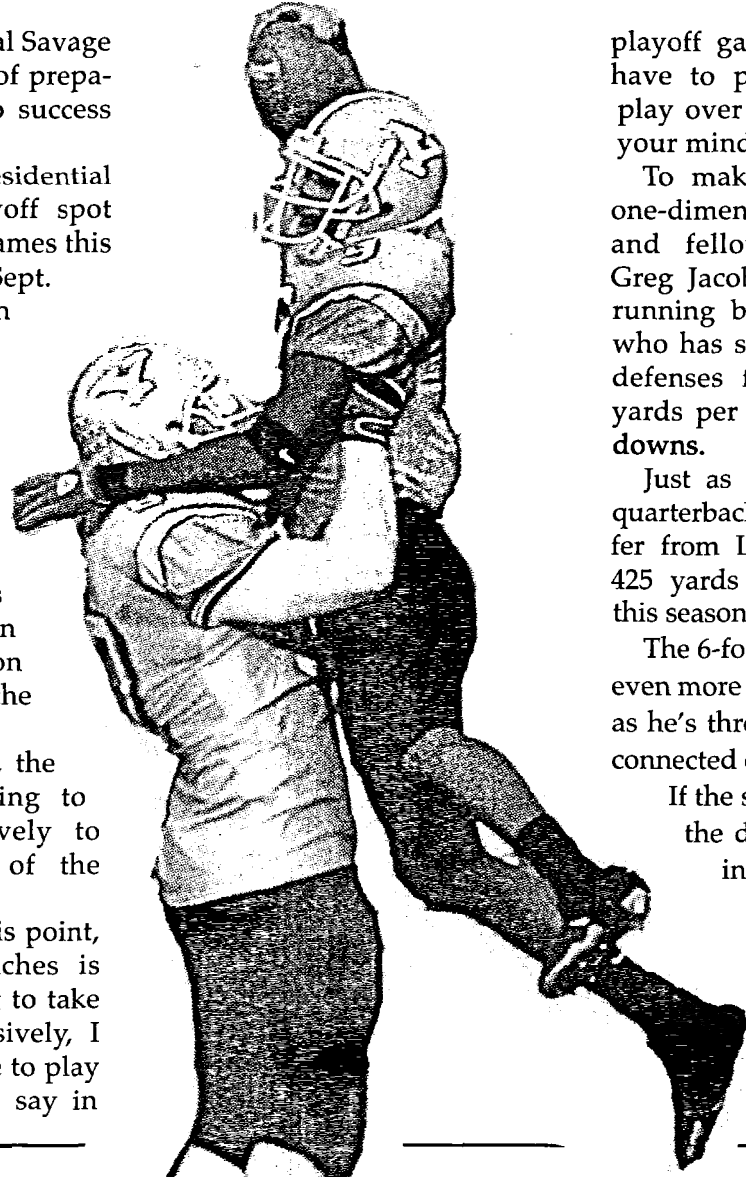
To make the offensive attack one-dimensional, Phelan, Savage and fellow defensive linemen Greg Jacobs must target starting running back Eugene Holloman, who has sliced through opposing defenses for a team high 110.7 yards per game and eight touchdowns.

Just as deadly with his legs is quarterback Justin Rascati. A transfer from Louisville, he's amassed 425 yards and three touchdowns this season.

The 6-foot-2, 220-pound senior is even more dangerous in the pocket, as he's thrown for 1,900 yards and connected on 19 touchdown passes.

If the secondary can take away the deep ball, Rascati's passing range will be limited to intermediate routes and his big play opportunities will be turned into minimal pickups.

please see **Playoffs**, Page 6



VS.

**IN TODAY'S Jambar** ▶

### Headlines

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5 Players 2 Watch in today's game
- PAGE 4 ▶  
JMU Football Adviser predicts tough game

### Kickoff

7:30 p.m

### Game Day Weather

today ▶ partly cloudy  
51 | 36

### I-AA Top 25

1. Appalachian State
  2. Montana
  3. Massachusetts
  4. North Dakota
  5. Youngstown
  6. James Madison
  7. Furman
  8. Hampton
  9. New Hampshire
  10. Southern Illinois
  11. Illinois State
  12. Tennessee-Martin
  13. Coastal Carolina
  14. Eastern Illinois
  15. Cal Poly
  16. San Diego
  17. Northern Iowa
  18. Montana State
  19. Princeton
  20. Portland State
  21. South Dakota
  22. McNeese State
  23. Wofford
  24. Maine
  25. Central Arkansas
- Source: The Sports Network

## YSU FOOTBALL

# Campus reactions to playoff birth

Sarah Sole & Laura Mistovich  
JAMBAR CONTRIBUTORS

Foreign exchange student Hasan Ghayur has something to show for his faithful attendance at Youngstown State University football games: three souvenir footballs.

Originally from India, Ghayur said he attends football games because he likes shouting chants that demoralize opposing teams. A fan of tailgating

and cheerleaders, Ghayur said he is excited YSU is going to the playoffs.

Ghayur is not alone. Across campus, students, faculty and staff said they will be watching and cheering the YSU Penguins today.

While sipping on coffee in Peaberry's Cafe, junior business major Nicole Terhanko said today's playoff game against James Madison can help bring back the school spirit that YSU is lacking.

Senior Chris Hritz said school morale hasn't been at its best since former YSU football coach Jim Tressel left, when the team's performance began to slip.

"It's great to finally be on that national stage again after all those years," Hritz said. "I can't wait to see what the future

holds." Carly Yolton, a junior, said she knows the team has been making progress. "Last year they came close," she said.

A member of the track team, Yolton said it is mandatory for track team members to attend home football games.

"I never used to like football," Yolton said, explaining that now she enjoys watching games with friends.

Since she's going home for Thanksgiving, a disappointed Yolton said she would not be able to attend the playoff game. However, Yolton made

sure to add that she will definitely watch the game on television. With the game scheduled to air on ESPN2, junior Justin Waite called this national exposure a reason for the campus and larger community to show Penguin support.

"All of Youngstown needs to come and support the team," Waite said. "We need to show the world that we are in support of our football team."

Kilcawley Center Director Matt Novotny is excited about the national coverage.

"This is going to look great for YSU," Novotny said. "We could have two national championships under our belt and this would look great when we go to play Ohio State next

season." Laura Musilli was plans to be at the tailgating lot by 3:30 p.m. today.

"This hasn't happened in quite a while, so it's definitely going to be something else. I know tons of people who are going," she said.

Junior Diane Smith said she is thrilled about the game and what it could mean for the university.

"I think it's real exciting that YSU is getting recognized for our athletic department. I wish them the best of luck," Smith said.

For senior Jessica Stephenson, the news of YSU's impending play off game was fulfilling.

"It makes me proud to be a part of YSU," she said.

please see **REACTIONS**, Page 6

## YSU

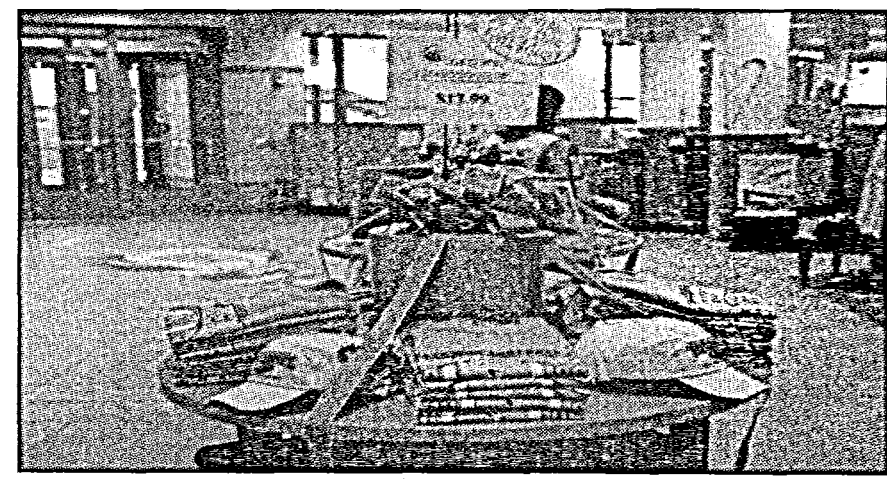
# Bookstore, Catering Services prepare for playoff festivities

Crysal Curry, Elizabeth Boon & Jessica Miller  
JAMBAR CONTRIBUTORS

Youngstown State University's school spirit is strong today. YSU students, faculty and staff have used the week to prepare for today's big playoff game. Signs of Penguin pride can be found all over campus and some of it comes in a pretty package, or at least a red and black bag.

The YSU Bookstore, located in Kilcawley Center, is prepared for fans seeking to show off their hardened school spirit at today's game. The university's colors are hanging boldly on the walls and racks, ready for eager eyes. The YSU Bookstore has extended hours today.

Blasts of red and black fleck the store, and for those who dare to be



Jambar/Doug Dierkes

The YSU Bookstore is the campus' headquarters for Penguin gameday gear like conference T-shirts and hooded sweatshirts. Store officials expect more business than usual today for the playoff game.

a little different, there is pink YSU gear.

YSU gear comes in all shapes, sizes and products, from traditional T-shirts and hooded sweatshirts to flying discs and pom-poms. The Bookstore is now carrying special

merchandise for the playoff game, including conference T-shirts and hooded sweatshirts.

Store employee Cheryl Cucchiara said the store is prepared for the rush of people who may come in on game day. She

said the store "usually tries to prepare for all games in advance."

When asked about the playoff game and how it will affect the Bookstore, Merchandise Coordinator Eva Guwca said store officials anticipate more people than usual. She said there is work to be done far in advance, even before YSU knew it would make the playoffs. Guwca said the store "has to anticipate that the school will be in the playoffs early on."

Sarah Lyden, an employee at the Bookstore and a YSU freshman, said the store may only have three cashiers today because most students are going home for the Thanksgiving holiday.

"We get a big rush a few hours before the game," Lyden said.

Andrews Student Recreation and Wellness Center has also changed its hours for today.

please see **BOOK STORE**, Page 3





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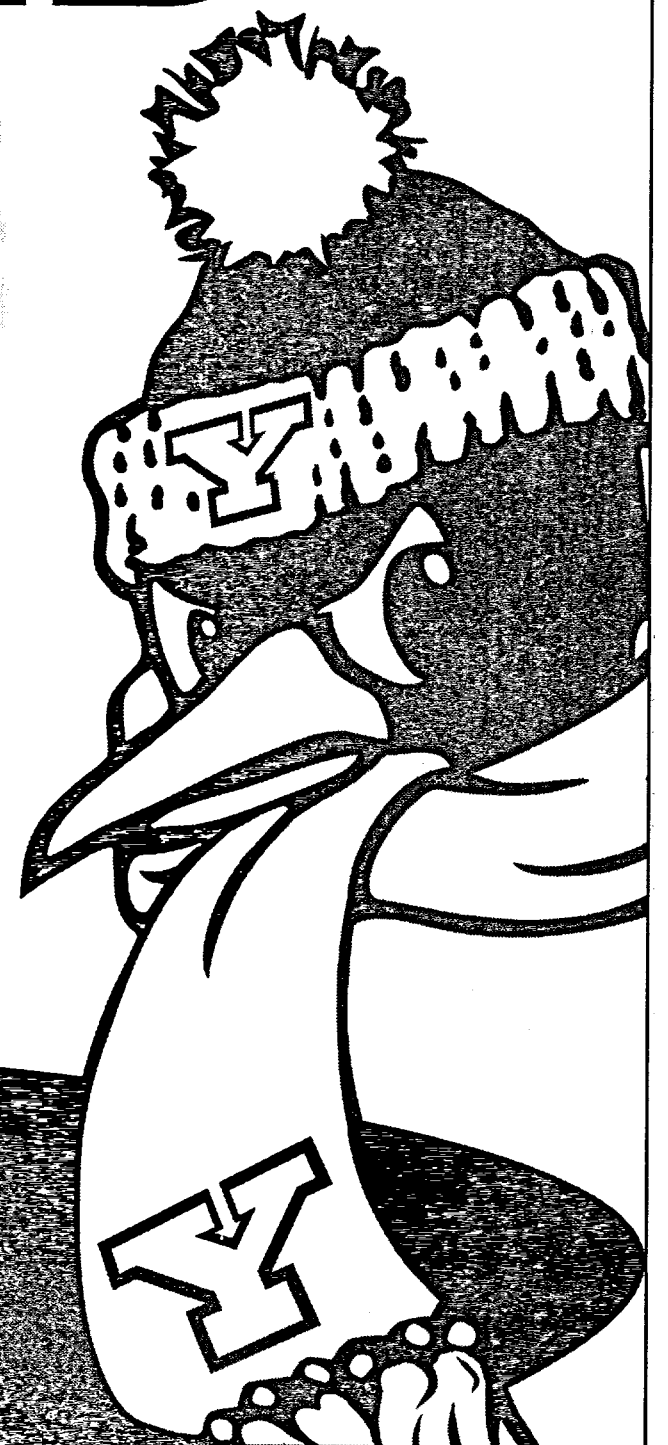
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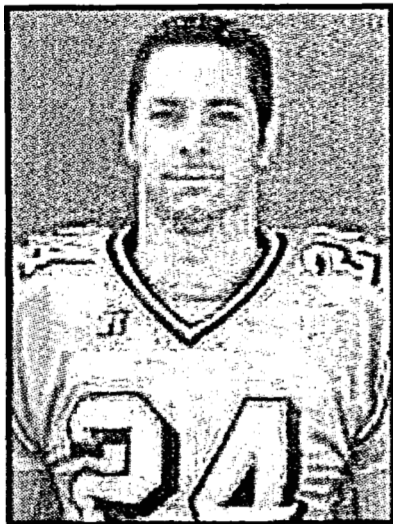
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**Tom Zeits**

The junior quarterback has solidified his role as the field general for the Penguins this season. Zeits finished the regular season with a passer rating of 122.06 with 1,476 yards and 10 touchdowns. He also scrambled for 286 yards on

the ground and found the endzone three times. What makes Zeits such a threat is his ability to escape the pocket and gain crucial yards with his feet in pressure situations. With a talented receiving core at his disposal, Zeits may not have to do much scrambling, as James Madison does not have a pass defense worthy of complimenting its ability to stop the run.

# Penguins

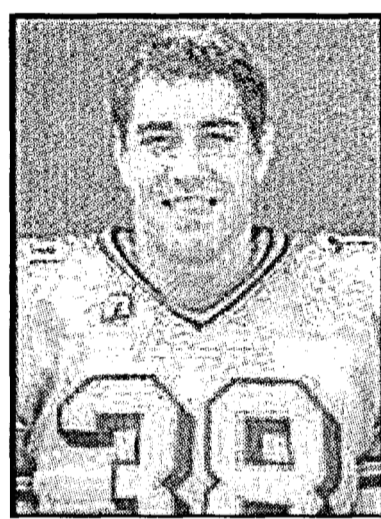
## Watch



**Jason Perry**

One of the leaders of the Penguin defensive secondary, Perry has been a thorn in the side of many opposing quarterbacks. The senior cornerback leads the team with four interceptions, two of which he returned for touchdowns. He also contributed

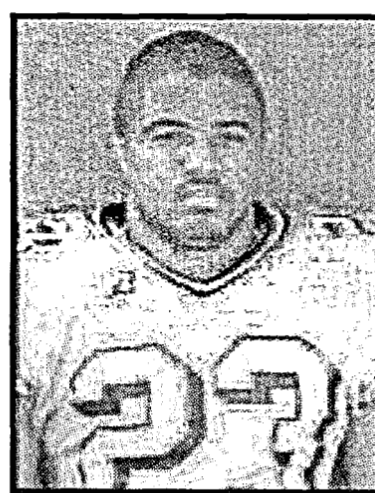
on special teams, returning 18 punts for 171 yards and a touchdown. While his role as a punt returner is noted, it will be more important for Perry to focus his energy on being a shutdown corner for the first-round playoff game. James Madison quarterback Justin Rascati is the No. 5 ranked passer in the nation with a 62.12 completion percentage, 1,978 yards and 19 touchdowns this season.



**Marty Hutchinson**

The Dukes will bring a running style similar to the Penguin ground attack, meaning Hutchinson and the defense will have to step it up a notch and find ways to force James Madison to throw. Hutchinson recorded a team-best 83

tackles this season with nine tackles for loss. Since James Madison likes to run with the pigskin (215.5 yards rushing per game), the senior linebacker will need to play like the fierce machine he's been all season. He had double figures in tackles on five occasions, including 11 tackles three times and a season total of 46 solo tackles.



**Marcus Mason**

The senior tailback from Potomac, Md. has been a huge focal point of the Penguins' offense this season, racking up 1,496 yards and 19 touchdowns in nine games. His average of 166.2 yards per game ranks second among tailbacks in Division I football. Mason ran past

the century mark in eight contests this season, twice eclipsing 200 yards rushing. The Penguins have won 16 of their last 17 games when a running back collects at least 100 yards on the ground. Mason and the Penguin backfield will be tested when James Madison University brings its No. 4 ranked run defense to Youngstown. The Dukes have allowed an average of only 84 yards rushing per game this season.



**T.J. Peterson**

The team's top pass-catcher led the Penguins in several receiving categories this season. Averaging 15.2 yards per catch, the senior wide-out hauled in 33 passes for 501 yards and four touchdowns.

Accumulating those stats over the course of this season was no accident for Peterson, a consistent player who has caught at least one pass in 22 straight games. While the Duke secondary is not one of the best, it has only surrendered six scores through the air this season. The elusive Peterson should stretch the defense and be a primary target for quarterback Tom Zeits throughout the contest.

**Penguin Pit Stop**

"I think just the opportunity to be here. I think we're blessed, I know I'm blessed ... To be the head football coach here. I'm appreciative of the people who hung in there with us."

Head coach Jon Heacock, on what he is most thankful for this Thanksgiving.



**Spirit, continued from page 1**

Originally, the center was closed for the Thanksgiving holiday, but will be open today.

Linda Frank, secretary at the Rec Center, said that from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., the Center will be open to the general public for tours of the facility.

Mingled among the fighting spirit of the YSU Penguins is the spirit of sheer determination to make the campus as ready as possible for close to 20,000 fans.

The preparations began early and by Tuesday morning, signs directing pedestrians to shuttle services were already posted near the Wick Parking Deck.

Joyce Zaza, a staff member at YSU's Dining and Catering Services, said the culinary staff expected to work all day Friday preparing for tail-

gating food orders and for the loge ticket holders.

Zaza said dining services had many responsibilities for the game, including setting up food on the patio on the side of the stadium for an alumni dinner today before the game.

She said catering service workers will not finish cleaning up until 1 or 2 a.m. Sunday.

Penguins fullback Tim Dewberry appeared more relaxed this week than Zaza and others charged with getting the campus ready for the game.

Dewberry said he is just "trying to stay focused right now." He said he is not nervous about the game because his grandfather is former YSU Football Coach Bob Dove and Dewberry has spent a lot of time at YSU football games.

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The Jambar is published twice weekly during the fall and spring semesters and weekly during the summer sessions. The first copy of The Jambar is free; each additional copy is five cents. Mail subscriptions are \$25 per academic year. Since being founded by Burke Lyden in 1931, The Jambar has won nine Associated Collegiate Press Honors.

### OUR SIDE

## Dukes ain't no hazard

Today is a very important day for Youngstown State University sports fans. The whole Valley knows how important this game is. We'd just like to let all inquiring parties - Penguin and Duke fans alike, Valley residents and YSU students - know that after six years, we're all pumped up for a playoff win.

James Madison University's football strategy can easily be compared to its namesake's appearance: old and worn. American author Washington Irving called our fourth president "but a withered little apple-John." After today's football game, the same will be true for JMU's football team.

By the way, it is not the intention of The Jambar to diss our former president, the honorable James Madison; we'd just like to point out the fact that James Madison Duke fans shouldn't even bother driving to Youngstown State University, unless of course, they're in the mood for some serious disappointment.

Let's hope they at least brought handkerchiefs, but if not, maybe a benevolent Penguin fan or two will buy them a box of tissues so that they may wipe away their tears of extreme sorrow when they realize their Dukes can't even put up a good fight.

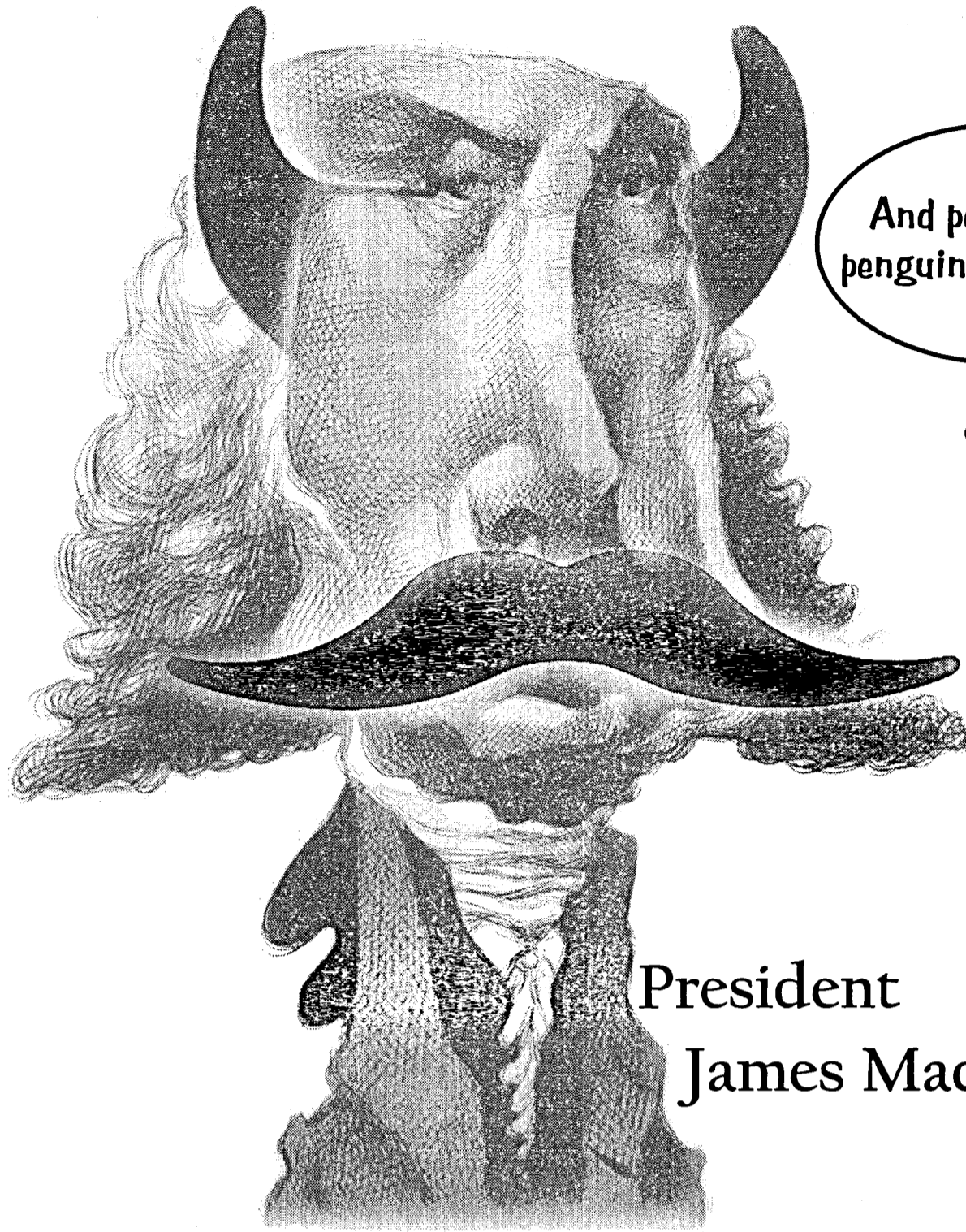
But after that long, five-and-a-half-hour drive from Harrisonburg, Va., the team may as well put up a bit of a struggle, if only for the Penguins' entertainment. So, put up your dukes, Dukes, and get ready, because the Penguins are going to lay the smack down, so don't get swept away by our mascot's fearsome nature.

Fear us, that's right, fear the Penguins; the battle on our home turf will bring out the best Penguin play. Ticket sales have skyrocketed, the game will be aired on ESPN2 and our field will have record-breaking home team support. Everyone who is anybody in this community will be cheering on the YSU Penguins.

For six long years we've been working toward our shot at the playoffs. Today's the day, and we're gonna get our game on. Our players have been practicing and playing relentlessly and even though we haven't been in the playoffs since 2000, that doesn't mean we don't have an edge.

They think they've got style and they think they got class, but we all know, the Penguins will kick their a\*\*, we'll send their coach, Mickey Matthews back to Disney World so he can spend his time recovering from such a devastating loss with his sweetheart, Minnie Mouse.

The Jambar editorials reflect the opinions of The Jambar and its Editorial Board members. Those wishing to schedule meetings with the Editorial Board should call the editor in chief.



And people think penguins look funny



President  
James Madison

### Q&A

## JMU football adviser predicts tough game

Britta Snowberger  
FEATURES REPORTER



Robert Carson

The seventh-ranked James Madison University football team will travel to fifth-ranked Youngstown State University this Saturday for the first round of Div. I-AA playoff games. Most YSU fans are confident their team will come out on top, but evenly matched against JMU, most JMU fans would say the same.

Recently, Robert Carson, JMU football academic adviser, took the time to discuss his thoughts on Saturday's playoff game with The Jambar.

**J: What are your thoughts on the JMU football team's chances against YSU this weekend?**

RC: I think it should be a tough, physical game. YSU has

"I think it should be a tough, physical game. YSU has a very good team with a lot of tradition."

a very good team with a lot of tradition. I understand that it will be a hostile environment since YSU has home field advantage. I just hope both teams play well, and whatever happens, happens.

**J: Although both teams have 9-2 records, YSU is ranked higher than JMU. Do you think the JMU team is prepared to play the role of the underdog?**

RC: At this point, all of the

teams are starting a new season. Records go out the window in the postseason, and it's time for teams to get a fresh start. The real rankings won't begin until this weekend's games are over.

**J: Have any activities been held on campus to motivate the students or encourage the football team?**

RC: Since this is a holiday weekend, most kids are going home, and there isn't much

scheduled. I'm sure it would be a little different if it wasn't a holiday.

**J: Do you think students will support the JMU team on Saturday?**

RC: I hope so. We have great fans and great fan support on the road, so we should have a lot of fans at YSU. If not, it's good that the game will be broadcast on ESPN, so fans who can't make the five or six-hour drive can still catch the game on TV.

**J: Would you care to predict the final score of the football game?**

RC: Predicting things is not really my forte. I don't want to jinx either side. I just know that YSU has a strong team and a strong running back, and neither team is going to back down.



Brian Hamilton

"I don't know, I think it is good. It brings recognition to YSU. It shows we're not some little community college."



How do you feel about YSU making the playoffs?



Shawn Williams

"I think it's going to be good for the University. The guys work hard."



Nick Johnson

"It's well-deserved and should have happened last year."



Michael Perri

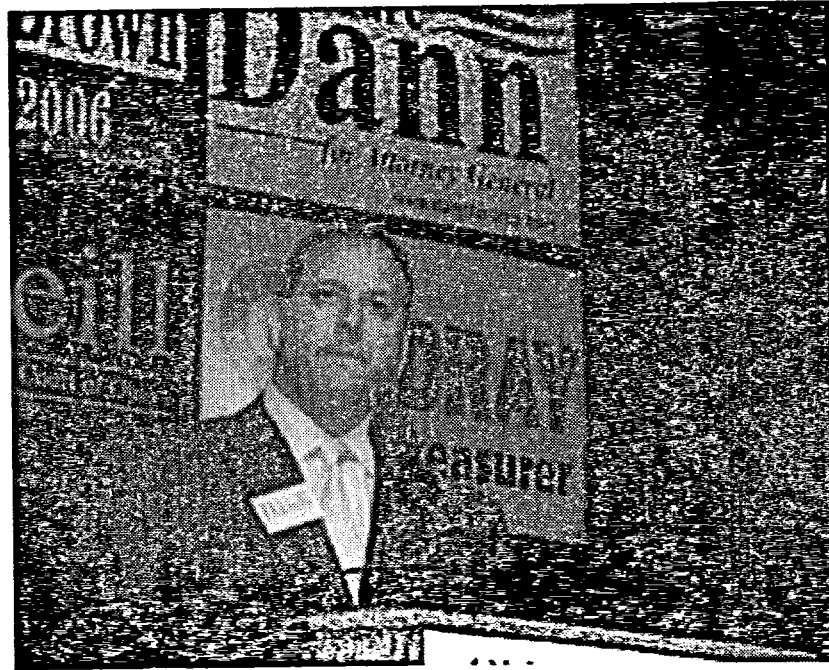
"Everyone's excited about it. It's a good feeling."



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**Congratulations**

**&**

**Good Luck**

*From*

**The Larricia  
Family**



Playoffs, continued from page 1

For the offense

The team's bread and butter this season has been its running game. Whether it's been moving the offense down the field or keeping a tired defense on the sideline, the YSU running attack has been there to pick up the slack.

Led by Payton Award finalist Marcus Mason - the nation's fourth leading rusher with 1,496 yards and 19 touchdowns - the YSU backfield has combined for 240.6 yards per game and 33 touchdowns.

Mason and company will look to crack the foundation of the nation's fourth-best run defense, which allows only 84 yards a game.

For the ground attack to be successful, quarterback Tom Zetts must be proficient through the air. By completing more passes, Zetts will force the JMU defense to defend the pass and the run, taking pressure off his tailbacks.

Zetts' task may be easier said than done against All-American safety Tony LeZotte. Although his numbers aren't anything to bat an eye at - 73 tackles and two interceptions - according to Heacock, he is the leader of the defense.

"He's been a two time All-American, [he] gets everyone lined up back there, makes a lot of plays. He knows what's happening," he said.

Also posing a threat is All-American linebacker Akeem Jordan, who leads the team with 126 tackles, and speedy defensive end Kevin Winston, who's recorded a team-high 10 sacks this year.

The bottom line

The Penguins have drawn a tough first task in the highly ranked Dukes, but with solid play from the defense and a bit of variety on offense, the Penguins will give the boys from Harrisonburg, Va. a look they haven't seen on any game film.

Reactions, continued from page 1

Linda Frank, secretary at Andrews Wellness and Recreation Center, said, "It will bring more people to the games next year, and it will bring a renewed enthusiasm."

There are some students, however, who are less than enthusiastic.

"I'm not going to jump on the bandwagon," senior Jack White said.

An avid Brown's fan, White said that since he did not attend YSU football games in the regular season, he will not be going to today's playoff game.

Freshman Justin Paige said he had no idea that the Penguins had a spot in the post-season.

"Honestly I didn't know," he said, "but maybe other people will know, I am just a freshman."

Sophomore Sarah Dutton, a business major, also pledged exclusive loyalty to the Buckeyes and said that she doesn't follow YSU football. "I'm a huge Ohio State fan; that game was great!" Dutton said.

The sports apathy toward YSU irks other students, including senior Josh Wilson, who said he is dis-

appointed with the lack of student involvement at YSU football games.

Wilson said since YSU is largely a commuter school, many students lack the ability to get more involved.

"I wish more students would support it," Wilson said.

Of the school's approximate student body of 13,000 students, Wilson said he believes only "a mere 150 go to the games."

Jambar reporters Sarah Hahn, Renee Hardman and Krystle Hively contributed to this article.

**YSU**

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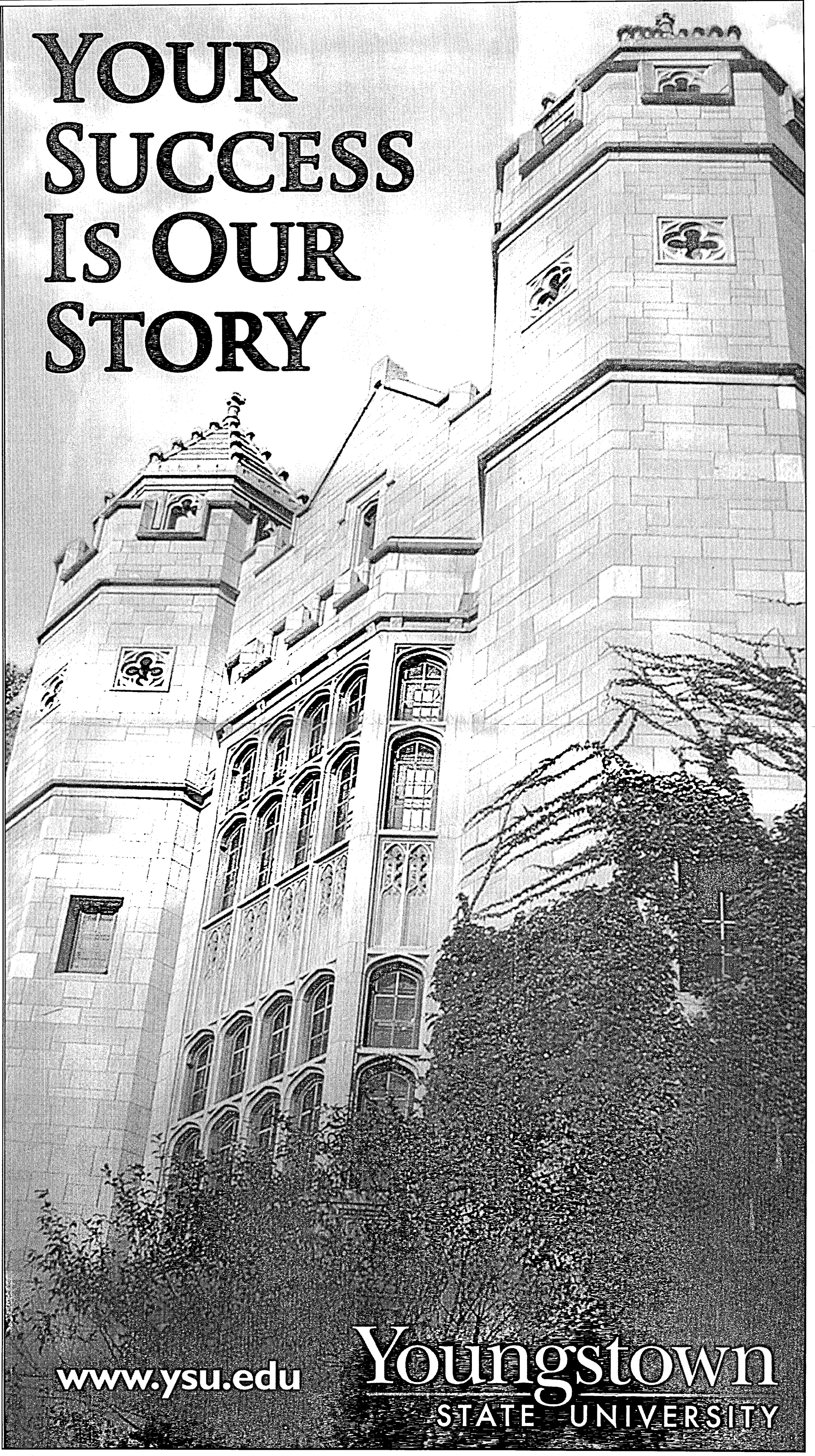
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