

Gladiator News

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Gladiators open playoffs with a win

Bradenton's Bean catches six passes for 82 yards, 2 TDs

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BRADENTON - Bradenton Gladiators wide receiver Bon Bean gestured to the crowd after his second touchdown reception in his team's 27-12 opening-round playoff victory against the East Coast Reapers at Southeast High.

"I got to get me one!" Bean shouted, pointing to his right hand. "I got to get me one!"

In the excitement of the moment, Bean could be forgiven looking ahead to the Southern States Football League Rice Bowl on April 29 in Orlando. The Gladiators (10-1) must win the next two weeks to reach the league's title game.

But Bean's message was clear: In their second year of existence, the Gladiators will settle for nothing less than championship rings.

"I'm taking it one game at a time," said Bean, who caught six passes for 82 yards, including scoring strikes of 14 and 28 yards from Tony Hale. "But our team goal is getting a ring, so in a way, I am (looking ahead)."

The Gladiators travel to Miami on Saturday to face the Magic City Bulls in an American Conference semifinal game. The Bulls trounced the Venice Vikings 54-0 on Saturday.

Hale, who came on in relief of starting quarterback Edrick Sweeting, was 8-of-13 passing for 127 yards and three touchdowns, including a 10-yard scoring toss to Matt Dunbar that put the Gladiators ahead 20-0 early in the third quarter.

Gladiators coach Eddie Starling said he wants both quarterbacks to be ready to contribute in crucial situations. Hale showed Saturday he can produce off the bench, and a strong running game did the rest.

"We knew (the Reapers) had to key on our running game because we have four powerful backs," Bean said. "That leaves our passing game open."

Gladiators backs Torrye Shatteen, Calvin Williams and Joseph Patoray combined for 143 yards on 21 carries.

The Reapers (3-8) avoided a shutout on a 13-yard run by quarterback Jamael Stewart early in the fourth quarter.

"We were kind of sluggish in the first quarter, but I think that comes from being off a couple of weeks," said Gladiators linebacker Chris Peterson. "We made a couple of adjustments and were able to shut them down."

Thomas Jefferson and Derrick Hugine had Gladiators interceptions. Dominic Fragomeni kicked field goals of 28 and 41 yards.