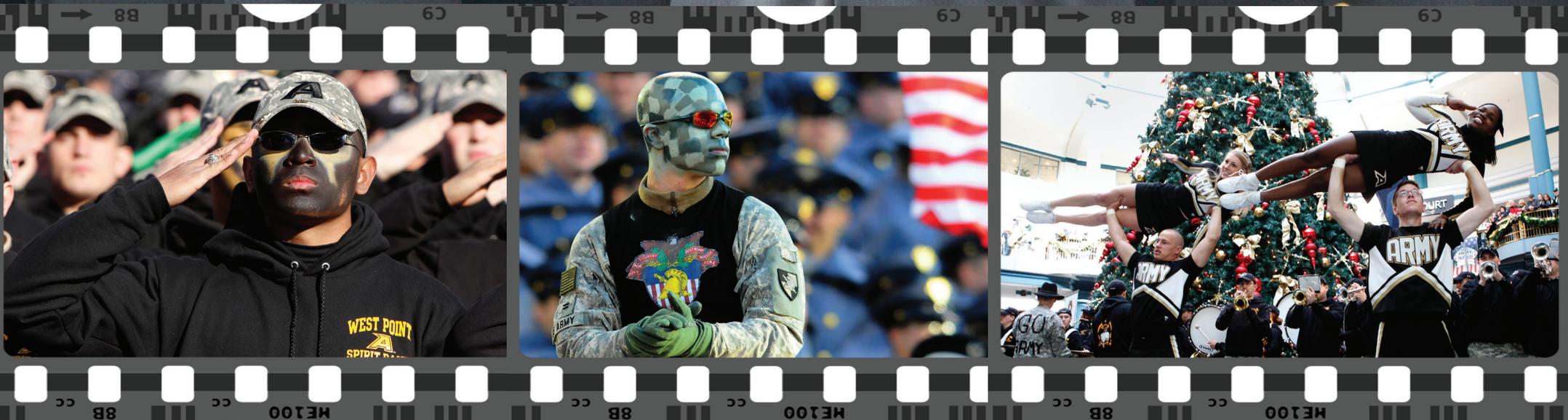




ARMY-NAVY

A Pointer View Special Edition



POINTER VIEW[®] **Army-Navy Exclusive**

SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF WEST POINT, THE U.S. MILITARY ACADEMY

Spirit mission sends 'Go Army' message to Navy



Cadets make their way around the Naval Academy conducting the traditional spirit mission, only months early, in support of the Army-Navy Football game.

By Mike Strasser
Assistant Editor/Copy

It's a longstanding tradition between the two rival academies to exchange spirited pranks in the weeks leading up to the Army-Navy football game. Only this year, a group of motivated cadets used the element of surprise on the Midshipmen, planning and executing a spirit mission months before the typical shenanigans ensue.

In the cover of darkness one mid-September morning, a group of more than 20 cadets sprang into action, saturating the Naval Academy with a large arsenal of "Go Army, Beat Navy" material. The intent, according to one cadet involved, was to stoke the friendly fires of competition between the two academies. The Midshipmen encountered even played along with a mock capture filmed for a spirit video.

"It was all about esprit de corps," he said. "I considered it a very successful mission. We had fun, no harm was done and by 5 a.m., it was getting cleaned up and everyone was moving on with their lives."

Col. Daniel Ragsdale, special advisor to the dean and former Vice Dean for Education, gives the cadets credit for their motivation and resourcefulness in planning and executing the spirit mission.

"It was truly a great mission, from beginning to end," Ragsdale said. "The cadets, ably led by Firstie Mike Kohne, planned it in detail, rehearsed it like professionals, and had a lot of fun doing it. It was all in good spirit."

Like any good psychological operations campaign, the cadets of "Operation Leviathan"



delivered their message loud and clear. They showered the campus with about 2,000 "Go Army" ping pong balls, posted "Beat Navy" flyers throughout the barracks and other buildings, and also draped walls and fences with similar-themed banners. Even classroom

chalkboards had the "Go Army, Beat Navy" battle cry scrawled boldly for the Midshipmen's first lesson of the day.

The cadets covered a lot of ground during their spirit mission, but even more intriguing is what they covered some of that ground with.

"In two prominent areas, the cadets overseeded two distinct Army 'A's with winter rye grass seeds," Ragsdale said. "The thought was that over time the grass would grow out these huge Army A's in these areas, but a flock of seagulls ate the seeds. The next morning there were so many seagulls on the field they had to cancel intramurals that day."

Ragsdale was pleased to report no damages or injuries resulted from the spirit mission. It also provided a good morale boost to the cadets attending the Naval Academy as part of the exchange program. He also said this operation "provided legitimate leader development opportunities for the cadets who took part in this highly successful mission."

"The Mids weren't expecting it at all," said Cow Nicholas Coronato, currently studying this semester in Annapolis. "They woke up to a little Army decoration around the Yard, and I think it



(Above) Night vision captures the cadets at work. (Inset) A package of orange ping pong balls bear the message "Go Army, Beat Navy."

COURTESY PHOTOS

hurt their feelings. They made us clean most of it up, but that is a good sign that they didn't like it. As usual, the Brigade of Midshipmen was caught sleeping as Army struck first."

It was with the help of this advanced party inside the Naval Academy that secured the mission's success, Ragsdale said. If the Midshipmen were to retaliate, Ragsdale believes they would employ the same tactic of inside help with exchange students.

"Similar to what we did, the Naval Midshipmen here could help their buddies, or they may do it alone," Ragsdale said. "The Corps of Cadets is hyper-vigilant during this time for any type of shenanigans during the day or night."

The history of spirit missions between the two academies is as storied as the Army-Navy game itself. Last year during Navy Week, the Navy Midshipmen managed to rearrange the seats on the Plain to read, "Go Navy, Beat Army." Ragsdale said there's been times when West Point was attacked by ping pong balls and sponges shaped like boats. One year, Navy managed to take hostage the Army mules. West Point cadets have "liberated" the Navy goats numerous times in the past.

"Stealing the goats is pretty epic," Cow Justin Weeks said. "Going into where the goats are held without being caught and then pulling two goats out of there must have been pretty tough."

Weeks said the Corps of Cadets is aware that pranks are forthcoming.

"Retaliation only makes this more fun," Weeks said.

"There will always be spirit missions," Ragsdale guaranteed. "It's tradition."

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Exchange cadets in Annapolis share thoughts on Army-Navy game

By Mike Strasser
Assistant Editor/Copy

Less than a week away, Army pride is swelling at West Point in anticipation of the Army-Navy Football game in Philadelphia. It may be a bit cold and damp in the Hudson right now, but the spirit is palpable.

However, down in Annapolis, it's a little quieter, according to one West Point cadet currently studying there with the exchange program.

"It's kind of strange," Cow Nick Coronato said. "The midshipmen here don't seem very excited for the game yet. It's almost as if they think this year will be another victory for Navy, guaranteed. I think they may have grown bored of winning year after year, so it's about time Army caught them by surprise and came home from Philly with a win."

Traditionally, the West Point cadets stationed in Annapolis support their team with a spirit mission or two. Likewise, the Midshipmen here, will do the same. There are nine students currently studying at each academy.

"We've got some top secret plans in the works to show our Army spirit," Coronato said. "The easiest way to show some Army pride is to poke fun at the plebes; they can't really respond to our jokes. We try to keep it professional in terms of supporting West Point, and show the Mids that we are not willing to sink to their level."

Cow Scott Mead said the spirit missions are nothing compared to how Navy is feeling about meeting a resurgent Army squad.

"Army's record right now is more of a blow to Navy pride than anything," Mead said. "There's already a decent bit of worry that Army will take it this year."

Some West Point cadets laid the foundation for Army pride in September during a secret spirit mission at the Naval Academy, and it proved to be a morale boost to the cadets there.

"The midshipmen were actually pretty confused," Mead said. "They were a bit taken aback by the fact that a spirit mission went down outside Army-Navy week. I'm not sure they understand year-round school spirit."

Coronato is looking forward to next Saturday's game, especially since a win would make life a little better this semester for him.

"Living here at the Naval Academy for the past few months has definitely made the Army-Navy game a little more significant. The friends I've made here can tease me for the rest of my life if Army doesn't pull off a win this year," Coronato said. "They were rooting for Army when we played Air Force, hoping that we could upset Air Force and give Navy a chance to keep the Commander-in-Chief's trophy. But now they've lost the trophy, so the only way to redeem their season is to beat us, and we're not ready to let that happen."

Coronato has gotten an insider's look into the Navy team, but has been keeping



As the Black Knights prepare to do battle in Philadelphia against the Navy Football team, West Point cadets are ready to support their team to victory. TOMMY GILLIGAN/PV

tabs of the Black Knights' progress this year and believes the contest will be close in Philly next week.

"I hope the football team and the Corps knows that this is truly our year to take a win from the Mids," Coronato said. "The Navy football team has been extremely inconsistent this year, with huge losses to teams like Maryland and Duke, who Army crushed, of course. They've been sloppy with their fundamentals for much of the season, and the brigade has lost all faith in their team. They think Army will be another routine game. It's going to be a close matchup for sure, but Army's got the heart to pull off a great victory and silence the Mids for the next year."

And for the Black Knights, friends and colleagues back at West Point, Mead predicted: "Fourth quarter is ours."

Editor's Note: A request was sent out to the nine Midshipmen currently studying at West Point and to the nine cadets in Annapolis to share their thoughts about Army-Navy Week for this story.

Spirit Rally Luncheon

Eisenhower Hall will be the setting for the last Army Football Spirit Rally Luncheon of the 2010 season on Thursday, Nov. 4 leading into the annual Army-Navy showdown in Philadelphia.

The luncheon begins at 12:30 p.m. with

the doors for the buffet line opening at 11:30 a.m. Fans wishing to attend should call West Point's Eisenhower Hall at (845) 938-4456.

Rich DeMarco, the play-by-play voice of Army Football, will once again emcee the events which feature a question and answer session with head coach Rich Ellerson. In addition, fans in attendance will have the opportunity to interact with West Point cadets and enjoy performances by the Army rabble rousers and cadet spirit band.



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West Point students predicting Army win in Philly

By Mike Strasser
Assistant Editor/Copy

In a particularly unpleasant moment after Army's loss to Notre Dame, Grant Nawoichyk was accosted by an overzealous Irish fan singing the school's fight song in his face.

If he wasn't a true believer of Army Football this wouldn't have been so bad, but the 10-year-old West Point Middle School student takes every loss hard. He is, after all, Army's No. 1 fan and says this with all sincerity.

"I got a coin for it—not joking—from the athletics director," Grant said. "I've been a fan ever since I was born."

While he can't quantify the games he's seen, Grant is pretty sure he's been to most of them this decade.

"Grant is a die-hard Army sports fan," his father, Lt. Col. John Nawoichyk said. He's been to all the home games, and only missed two away games this season."

His father compares Grant to a younger version of Col. Daniel Ragsdale, a highly energetic presence and fixture among the Corps of Cadets during Army Football games.

"I think he's great. He lives and breathes Army Football," Ragsdale said. "When we've come up just short a few times, he's devastated by it and I can relate in a very direct way to that."

Grant regularly attends practices and loves talking to the players, some of whom his family sponsors and invites over to their home often.

"I love watching practices and seeing the drills they do," Grant said. "It's just fun. And after practices,

they're all tired and I'll be there giving them high fives. They're all friendly."

To see Grant not in Black and Gold is indicative of a rare or special occasion.

"He will only wear Army clothes. In fact, for his school picture he had to wear a collared shirt, so of course, he wore a collared Army shirt," his father said.

Fellow fifth-grader Julia Flowers attests to Grant's preferred wardrobe.

"I've never not seen Grant wearing Army gear," she said.

Julia has also seen a fair share of Army games in her 11 years at West Point, and never gets tired of it.

"It's a great experience; seeing the crowds, cheering the team when they win," Julia said. "Even if they don't get the best score, you're still happy to have seen the game. It can be overwhelming."

Julia is also a supporter of the junior varsity squad, and attends games to watch her cousin, a yearling on the team. Nawoichyk said Army Athletics is embedded in the middle school. Morning announcements often include a "Go Army" message and students have opportunities to meet and talk with cadet-athletes. Every Friday before a game, students are allowed to wear Army gear.

"I think that is unique with all the sports programs here," he said. "The role models these athletes become to all these kids, and I don't think they all realize it, is evident in the way they interact with them. I think it's just great. If you go to the school, probably 90 percent of the kids have a favorite Army team and follow the players."

Both Julia and Grant are definitely



Grant Nowoichyk and Julia Flowers are lifelong Army Football fans.

MIKE STRASSER/PV

Army Football fans and are enthusiastic to talk about their team. But when asked to name a favorite player, it was quite evident Grant could immediately rattle off a few names, but chose not to. It's about the team, not individuals. Julia also deflected the question. Both predicted a win over Navy on Saturday. Grant is thinking 30-25 in Army's favor, while Julia called it 27-23 for Army.

"I think this is our year," Grant said. "Before, with Coach Brock, I think he just made a couple of mistakes. With Coach Ellerson, last year we did really well. This year, we're going to our first bowl game since 1996."

"I'm feeling pretty confident about Army this year," Julia said.

In the days before the big game, the Black Knights will receive a lot of pep talks; from coaches, mentors, senior leaders and from each other. If Grant and Julia had the chance to rally the team, this is what they'd say:

Grant: "Go out there, use all your skills and never give up. Use all your effort and take the halftime to get all your energy back. If the first half is bad, think about the second half as a whole new game."

Julia: "Play your hardest, don't give up and keep your chins held high."

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Two die-hard Black Knights fans talk Army Football

By Mike Strasser
Assistant Editor/Copy

Lt. Col. John Nawoichyk's face lights up immediately when asked about the upcoming Army-Navy game. The Corps of Cadets operations officer has been a lifelong fan. Growing up near West Point, he's seen a lot of Black Knights football, and missed only one Army-Navy game in California.

"I've had season tickets since the time I was 2 until I graduated West Point," Nawoichyk said. "So I think Army-Navy is huge."

Nawoichyk, a Class of 1993 graduate, has watched the Army-Navy experience up close and as far away as Bosnia, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

"As much as it is a rivalry and there's lots of ribbing and giving each other a hard time, it's almost like a bonding experience between services," he said. "There's just something electric about Army-Navy in my opinion. You just get the excitement of a long tradition that spans the history of football, really. And I think that's what excites the nation."

What excites West Point, Nawoichyk believes, is that long, arduous climb to get to this particular place in time.

"This year, you've got a good Army team, a good Navy team, and you can just feel the build-up coming into this game," he said. "I think the Corps of Cadets is ready for this, having a team that has won 6-5 is huge, just

accepted a bowl bid and now getting ready to take on Navy, from the cadet experience it's been a long climb upward and now there's a feeling we can do this."

Nowoichyk hesitates to give a final score prediction, but is convinced this Army team will break the eight-year drought.

If that happens, it will be hard to miss one of Army's most energetic of Army fans. Col. Daniel Ragsdale, special advisor to the dean, has long been surfing the waves of cadets during games, mustering intense support and enthusiasm from the Corps of Cadets. Ragsdale, a Class of 1981 graduate, said his favorite Army-Navy experience occurred his Plebe year.

"The last time I saw, in person, Army beat Navy was my Plebe year," Ragsdale said. My favorite memory, without a doubt, was the final play of that 1977 game, when the Army defense stopped Navy on a fourth and goal from the two yard line to preserve a hard-fought 17-14 victory.

The following year, Army took a 28-0 loss which, in its own rights, was also memorable for Ragsdale.

"It's probably my second favorite Army-Navy memory because that fourth period, down 28-0, was the most spirit I've ever witnessed in my 35 years of watching Army Football," Ragsdale said. "We were just not going to lick our wounds, but do everything we could; which didn't really influence the outcome. For me, that was the first time I'm



To say that Col. Daniel Ragsdale is an Army Football fan would be an understatement. The Class of 1981 graduate has long rallied the Corps of Cadets enthusiastically behind the Black Knights.

MIKE STRASSER/PV

aware of where we wore the '12th Man' shirts under our dress grays, and we all took them off in unison. That was a very special, very powerful memory."

This Army-Navy contest will hold special significance for Ragsdale.

"With my impending retirement, it will be my last Army-Navy game before I hang up the uniform for good," Ragsdale said. "The fact that my daughter is a squid (Navy Midshipmen) and my second son is a zoomie (Air Force cadet), adds another dimension to my burning desire for an Army victory."

But more so, he said, the game is of much greater value to West Point than an old grad set to retire.

"I am truly inspired by the level of effort the Army Football team puts forth on each and every snap. And I am equally inspired by the actions of the Corps of Cadets who, through all their actions, demonstrate a truly indomitable spirit."

Whatever energy he brings to this, his 13th Army-Navy Game from the stands is not just about Army Football.

"The passion I have for Army football is based on the love I have for both this institution and, more importantly, for the amazing young men and women of the Corps of Cadets," Ragsdale said. "These cadets, we can never forget, are the very reason for West Point's existence."



The 111th Army-Navy game will be played on Dec. 11, at the sold-out Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia, Pa. Faithful fans have supported this resurgent Army program all season. Under second year head coach Rich Ellerson, the team has entered Army-Navy Week not only with a winning record (6-5) but also ranked 10th nationally in rushing (260.3 yards per game), while the defense is ranked 26th, posting 332.6 yards per game senior defensive end Josh McNary and senior linebacker Stephen Anderson. McNary is Army's all-time leader in both sacks and tackles.

FILE PHOTO

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Army Black Knights 2010 Record: 6-5; Overall Football Bowl Subdivision Rankings

PASSING YARDS	RUSHING YARDS	POINTS FOR	POINTS AGAINST
120th 77.9	9th 260.3	52nd 28.5	55th 24.6
Overall	Overall	Overall	Overall

Navy Midshipmen 2010 Record: 8-3 overall, Overall FBS Rankings

PASSING YARDS	RUSHING YARDS	POINTS FOR	POINTS AGAINST
118th 111.5	5th 302.5	40th 31.0	45th 22.8
Overall	Overall	Overall	Overall



Black Knights add next chapter to Army-Navy rivalry

By Mike Strasser
Assistant Editor/Copy

In its 111th iteration since commencing in 1890, the history of the Army-Navy game looms large at both academies.

At West Point, it's hard to turn a corner without catching sight of a "Go Army, Beat Navy" sign somewhere. So it's pretty easy to get caught up in the excitement this rivalry incites.

Army head coach Rich Ellerson said it's OK for the team to embrace this excitement and enjoy the moment.

"We need not be overwhelmed by it, not be intimidated by it, and I don't think we will be," Ellerson said. "We're not just talking about that. That's the focus in our preparation."

It's focus, precision and discipline that defines Army football, Ellerson said during last week's press conference at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia. On a bad day, the lack of those elements have more to do with the loss than a bad play or miscue.

"It's been how well we've been able to execute and how precise and disciplined we've been," Ellerson said. "Those are things that—when we've been frustrated—have frustrated us. When we've been excited—and we've been excited a lot this year—we've seen a team that's playing with precision and discipline and effort and ball-consciousness, and that looks like Army football."

It's been nearly three weeks since the Army players have taken the field competitively. Having shaken off the setback at Yankee Stadium against Notre Dame, the Black Knights return to the big stage in Philly to add another chapter to the Army-Navy rivalry.

Will this be the team to end the eight-year losing streak against the Midshipmen?

"That's always a conversation, but going into this game we're just going to play our game and everything is going to work out for itself," Firstie slotback Patrick Mealy said. "We will be successful based on how we play our game. If we do what we're supposed to do, be where we're supposed to be, it's going to work out."

For a handful of senior players, it'll be the last chance for redemption against a team they've never beaten. Firstie linebacker Stephen Anderson was sidelined with an knee injury during last year's contest.

"After that game, I knew I was going to come back stronger, and I knew I was not going to miss the game this year because of anything," the Black Knights' captain said. "I have been blessed with a speedy recovery and being injury-free this year. I've been blessed with the opportunity to take advantage of it Saturday."

The buzz about Army's first bowl berth since 1996 has

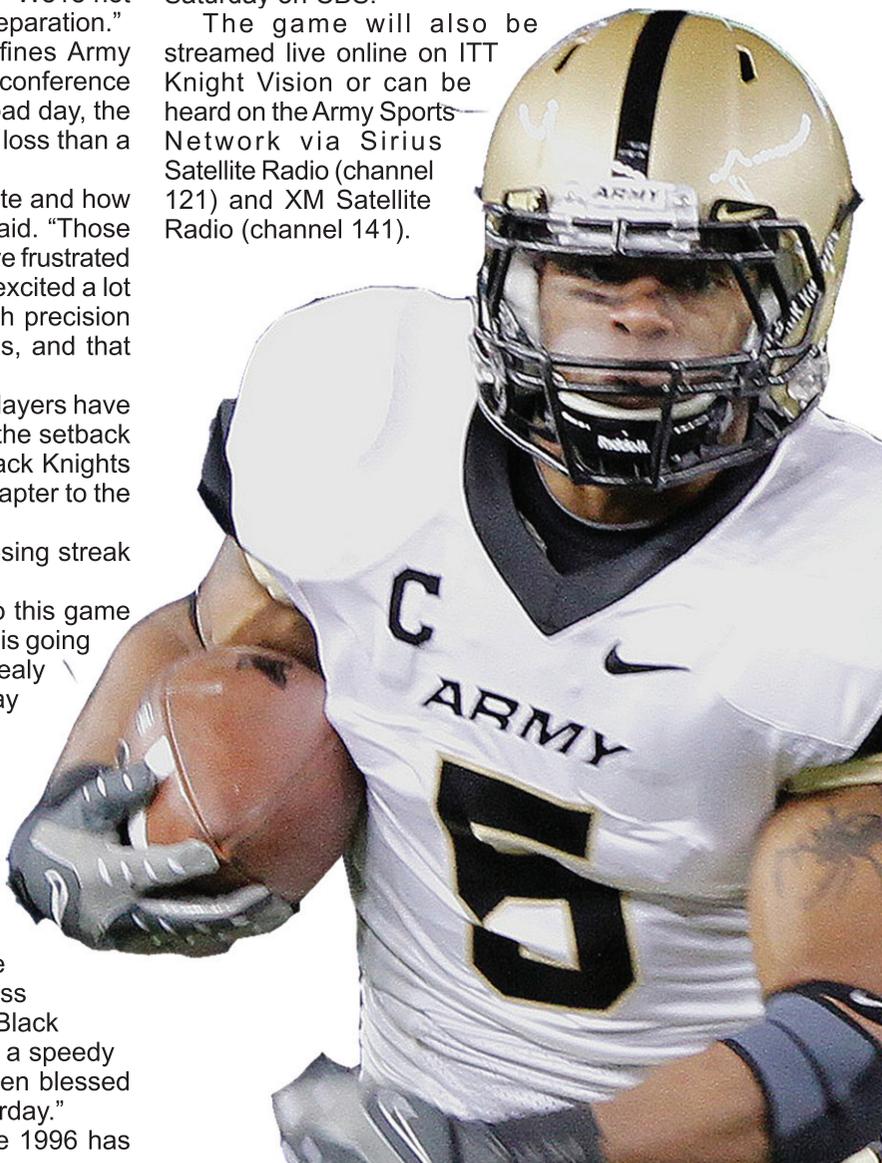
diverted a lot of the attention to Texas already, when there's still a game in Philadelphia left in the regular season.

As they've done all season long, the Black Knights are keeping their sights on one game, one win.

"The bowl game took a huge weight off our backs. We achieved that goal, but we have to play this game first," Mealy said. "To me, the bowl game was just something extra. We have to take care of this first, and then we can worry about the bowl game. That's how teams get beat; you never want to look forward."

The 111th Army-Navy game will be televised at 2:30 p.m. Saturday on CBS.

The game will also be streamed live online on ITT Knight Vision or can be heard on the Army Sports Network via Sirius Satellite Radio (channel 121) and XM Satellite Radio (channel 141).



ARMY by the numbers

- 82** Tackles this season by Firstie linebacker Stephen Anderson
- 881** Yards rushed by Yearling fullback Jared Hassin (team leading rusher)
- 8** Army's current losing streak to Navy

111 Games played between Army and Navy since commencing in 1890

NAVY by the numbers

- 806** Yards rushed by Senior quarterback Ricky Dobbs (13 rushing scores)
- 5** Navy is 5th in the nation on rushing offense, averaging 302.55 yards per game
- 111** Tackles this season by Tyler Simmons to lead Navy