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A boost of Bocage

Tuesday, June 16, 2009

By Reggie Benson

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Week off for Vipers receiver pays off with big night in latest win

The emergence of Jeremy Grier plus the return of Michael Johnson left Tennessee Valley wide receiver Chris Bocage in the background in recent weeks.

Grier has been the Vipers' leading receiver since he arrived six games ago and Johnson, a returner from last season, has also been productive. But Bocage, who sat out last week's game against Kentucky and whose play had tailed off a bit after a hot start, re-emerged Saturday against South Georgia.

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A 5-foot-10, 195-pounder out of Southern Cal, Bocage hauled in 11 catches for 71 yards and two touchdowns as the Vipers whipped the Wildcats 44-27 to take over sole possession of first place in the American Conference South Division. It was the second time Bocage had 11 catches this season - he had 11 for 100 yards and three touchdowns against Quad City on April 4 - and leads the team with 78 catches for 676 yards and 17 total touchdowns.

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"He's been steady all year," Vipers coach Dean Cokinos. "He has a good role for us. The week off helped his body a little bit ... to get some of that explosiveness back. He had a big game for us this week. It was good to see him get back to the high level he was at."

Bocage and Tennessee Valley (8-3) will try to run their winning streak to three straight when they host Florida (5-6) this Saturday at 7:30 p.m. The Vipers downed the Firecats 69-43 in April at the VBC.

"I'm not really concerned about stats," Bocage said. "I'm just here to help the team win. If it's two catches, six catches or 11 ... I really don't care. I just happened to catch 11 passes the other night. It's all about winning. As long as the scoreboard says the Vipers have more points than the other guys, that's all that matters."

Bocage, who played for a 6-10 Albany team last season, is having the time of his life.

"I'm having a lot of fun," he said. "It's good to be around this kind of atmosphere. I had this kind of atmosphere in college."

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