

Moore tames Terriers

Written by Mike Kelly

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Appalachian State running back Devon Moore finally got a chance to show off his talents.

The red-shirt senior, who has endured a disappointing season for the most part, put all of his frustrations to rest on Saturday afternoon as he backboned the Mountaineers to a 43-13 win against Wofford College and their sixth Southern Conference title in a row. The effort also tied a league record originally set by Georgia Southern from 1997-2002.

The win also assures ASU of a first-round bye in the FCS Division I playoffs, and more than likely a No.2 seed and home-field advantage through the national quarterfinals. The playoffs begin Saturday, November 27, with a 20-team field. The top 12 teams received a first-round bye.

And Moore turned in his best performance of the season on Senior Day. He rambled for 115 yards on 17 carries and scored three times. His 11-yard run on Appalachian's opening possession put the Mountaineers on top to stay.

"It felt great to be back to where I was," Moore said following the game. "It's been a tough year and all, but it feels great to just get out there and contribute again. The offensive line did a great job opening things up for me all day."

And Moore put on one of his usual clinics. He ran with confidence and authority. Those efforts brought back memories of last season when Moore ran for a career-high 1,374 yards and scored 19 touchdowns, helping ASU to a national semi-final appearance.

That strong showing last fall also placed Moore on the Walter Payton Award watch list this past summer. But a promising senior year turned into one filled with discouragement and dispair. The struggles began with a nagging quad injury in training camp last August. That forced Moore to miss some valuable practice time, and it also made Moore practically a forgotten man. But Moore re-established himself against the Terriers.

"I am proud of Devon Moore," said ASU coach Jerry Moore. "He was a Walter Payton candidate in the beginning of the season, and then he got hurt during camp and missed a couple weeks. Devon knew his role tonight, and he played like a great running back on the field."

And Moore made the most of his chances when he was called upon this season. And while the overall numbers aren't all that impressive (337 rushing yards), he has still scored nine touchdowns, and he's averaging nearly four-yards-per-carry.

And his three touchdown explosion on Saturday also gives him 38 for his career, tying him with Damon Scott (1993-96) for fourth place on ASU's all-time list for rushing touchdowns. The 100-yard effort on Saturday was also the eighth 100-yard rushing game of his career.

"We are blessed with five talented running backs," coach Moore said. "And when Devon got hurt, and with the depth we have at that position, it limited his playing time. But he is still a big

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part of this team, and he knows what to expect in big games."

And Moore knew his role against the Terriers on Saturday. And winning a conference championship was the most important thing to Moore. After all, he now owns seven championship rings in his ASU career----five SoCon title rings and two national championship rings.

"It feels good to go out on top again," Moore said. "I've have five of them (SoCon rings) now. We changed up a little bit on our offensive line blocking scheme, and we went back to what we did last year with the zone. The change opened up more holes, and my legs felt the best they have the whole year. We also added a few new plays that seemed to work well for us." And with Moore's rejuvenating performance on Saturday, he just might be aiming his sights on adding another ring to his collection in early January.