Perhaps the most anticipated regular-season matchup in NCAA Division I FCS history certainly lived up to the hype on Saturday night when No. 11/8 Appalachian State University topped No. 12/9 Montana in an epic battle at Kidd Brewer Stadium. A raucous crowd of 30,856, the third-largest in Kidd Brewer Stadium history, saw the winningest FCS programs of the millennium combine for 900 yards of offense and 19 third- and fourth-down conversions in a contest that, like the two Appalachian State-Montana matchups before it, came down to the wire.

"(Montana) has a good football team, and a very strong reputation around the country," said ASU coach Jerry Moore. "It was a typical game between us. It was no different than the two (national semifinal) games we played in Montana. The only difference is that we won this game. Charlie (Cobb, ASU Athletics Director) did a great job scheduling a game like this, and giving us a chance to play some of the great teams around the country. It was a great game, and a big win for our players and our program."

Appalachian (1-1) forced two of Montana's three turnovers in the first quarter and turned both miscues into touchdowns to jump out to a 21-7 lead after just one period. The Griz roared back with 14 points in the second quarter to send the game to halftime tied at 21-21 and the score remained deadlocked until a heart-stopping fourth quarter.

The Mountaineers regained a 28-21 advantage early in the final period when it marched 67 yards in just 1:44. A 32-yard pass from Jamal Jackson (Atlanta, Ga./North Atlanta) to Sean Price (Reston, Va./South Lakes) on the drive's first play and a 25-yard touchdown strike from Jackson to Andrew Peacock (Durham, N.C./Northern Durham) accounted for 57 of the 67 yards but the biggest play of the possession when Jackson scrambled for a first down on fourth-and-one to keep the series alive and set up the go-ahead touchdown pass to Peacock.

After the teams traded punts, Montana's Dan Moore highlighted one of the best performances in recent history by a visiting player at Kidd Brewer Stadium when he caught a short pass from Tyler McKinney, broke several tackles, eluded several more and outran the Mountaineer defense for an 87-yard touchdown the would seemingly knot the score at 28-28. However, Griz kicker Chris Lider missed the extra point wide right and Appalachian maintained a 28-27 lead with 8:54 to go in the game.

On the ensuing possession, Appalachian put together a vintage 11-play, 78-yard touchdown drive and stretched its lead to 35-27 on two-yard touchdown run by Steven Miller (Piscataway, N.J./Piscataway). Facing third-and-16 from the UM 46 midway through the series, Jackson found true freshman Malachi Jones (Roswell, Ga./Central Gwinnett) for a 17-yard first-down pass to keep the drive alive. Miller picked up the final 29 yards from there, capped by his second touchdown of the game with 5:05 to play.

"I was determined to run the ball inside," Miller said. "My biggest thing, I'm a smaller guy and I try to run the ball as hard as I can just to prove I can run it up the middle. My mentality is to run like a big man. Wherever I see a hole,, or I think I can do to break a play open, that's what I try to do. If I think I can run it to the outside, that's what I'm going to do. And if I think I can run this guy over, that's what I'm going to do."

"I was real proud of Steven today," Moore said. "He really showed me a lot of toughness today, especially on that last scoring drive. You have to remember, he didn't play against very good competition at (Nassau Community College in Piscataway, N.J.) in junior college. He's seeing better talent here every week. We really thought about red-shirting him last year, but when

(Rod) Chisholm had those academic problems, we could do it."
The Mountaineers appeared to put the game away three plays later when Patrick Blalock (Asheville, N.C./A.C. Reynolds) intercepted McKinney to give the Apps the ball back on the Montana 43 with 4:24 to go. However, Blalock's first-career interception was followed by Appalachian's only three-and-out in five fourth-quarter possessions and the Griz took back over on their own 11 with 2:53 remaining in the ballgame.
Thanks to a third-down conversion and two fourth-down conversions, Montana (1-1) marched into Appalachian territory on its final possession. With less than 30 seconds left to play, McKinney went for broke, throwing deep down the left sideline but all-American Demetrius McCray (Covington, Ga./Eastside) had perfect coverage on the play and made his second interception of the day on the goal line with 18 seconds remaining. Jackson kneeled on the final play of the day to seal the Apps' first win in three attempts against its cross-country rival.
"When I saw that ball in the air, I thought to myself, 'this ball is mine, I've got to help my team out and seal the game for us,'" McCray said. "So I went up there and grabbed it. This is the happiest moment of my life."
"This was a very big game for us and we needed this victory, especially to kick off our season going into conference play like this," said linebacker Jeremy Kimbrough. "(It's) a huge stepping stone for us as a team."
Thanks to 238 all-purpose yards from Moore (145 receiving, 93 rushing), Montana outgained Appalachian, 483-417. However, the Mountaineers forced four turnovers while not committing any of their own and ran 82 plays to the Grizzlies' 74, despite the fact that the Griz held a 41:50-33:10 advantage in time of possession.
Jackson led the Mountaineers with 260 yards and two touchdowns on 24-of-34 passing and 65 yards on 16 rushes while accounting for three touchdowns (two passing, one rushing). Price became the second Appalachian receiver in as many games to hit the 100-yard mark, catching eight balls for 103 yards and a score. Miller ran 27 times for 91 yards and a pair of scores.
Defensively, senior linebackers Jeremy Kimbrough (Decatur, Ga./Cedar Grove) and Brandon Grier (Charlotte, N.C./West Charlotte) led Appalachian with 14 and 13 tackles, respectively. Grier also had a career high two sacks and three of the Mountaineers' eight tackles for loss.
Montana's McKinney threw for 307 yards and three touchdowns but was picked off three times in the loss. Safety Matt Hermanson led the Griz with 12 tackles.
"Trent held his composure very well," said running back Dan Moore of the Grizzlies. "He's a young guy. It's his second game ever and he's playing Appalachian State. He was very calm and he made the right reads. Once those guys started coming after me and Peter it was up to him to pull it and make plays with his feet. I thought he did that very well. You can t give a team like (ASU) any breathing room. You spot them 14 points and it¹s hard to come back."
Next up for the Mountaineers is their Southern Conference opener versus red-hot The Citadel (2-0, 1-0 SoCon), which knocked off No. 3 Georgia Southern, 23-21, on Saturday. Appalachian hosts the Bulldogs next Saturday at 3:30 p.m. at Kidd Brewer Stadium.
**NOTES:** Appalachian State won its 18th-straight regular-season home game ... the Mountaineers moved to 61-19-2 all-time, 21-3 under head coach Jerry Moore and 11-1 in its last 12 season openers ... Appalachian has opened at home with a nationally ranked opponent eight times in the last 14 seasons and moved to 6-2 in those games ... Jackson extended his own school records with his ninth-consecutive 200-yard passing game and ninth-straight performance with at least 250 yards of total offense — all coming in the first nine starts of his career ... McCray had the second two-interception day of his career — the first came in last

year's 24-17 win over No. 1 Georgia Southern ... Appalachian moved to 22-1 in its last 23 games that immediately followed a same-season loss ... since the third week of the 2003 season, the Apps have only lost consecutive games in the same season once (2009 vs. East Carolina and McNeese State) ... a week after allowing a kickoff return for a touchdown and a long punt return that set up another score, as well as missing a field goal, Appalachian was nearly flawless on special teams on Saturday ... the special-teams highlight came when redshirt freshman Henry Barnes (Newton Grove, N.C./Hobbton) leveled Montana's Chase Naccarato on a first-quarter kickoff return, causing a fumble that was recovered by Matt Watson (Bailey, N.C./Southern Nash) and set up the Mountaineers' third first-quarter touchdown.

**NOTEBOOK:**

**NO. 11/8 APPALACHIAN STATE 35, NO. 12/9 MONTANA 27**
**SEPTEMBER 8, 2012 • BOONE, N.C. (KIDD BREWER STADIUM)**
**POSTGAME NOTES**

**Team**

• Perhaps the most anticipated regular-season non-conference matchup in NCAA Division I history lived up to the hype, with No. 11/8 Appalachian State claiming its first-ever win over No. 12/9 Montana.

• Appalachian moved to 1-2 all-time against Montana. UM defeated Appalachian in the national semifinals in 2000 (19-16 in OT) and 2009 (24-17).

• Appalachian won its 18th-consecutive regular-season home game.

• Appalachian moved to 61-19-2 all-time, 21-3 under head coach Jerry Moore and 11-1 in its last 12 home openers.

• Appalachian has opened at home with a nationally ranked opponent eight times in the last 14 seasons and moved to 6-2 in those games.
• Attendance at 24,090-seat Kidd Brewer Stadium was 30,856, the third-largest in stadium history and the largest ever for an Appalachian State home opener.

**Individual**

• Junior quarterback Jamal Jackson extended his own school records for consecutive 200-yard passing games, consecutive 200-yard passing games to begin a career as a starter, consecutive games with 250 yards of total offense and consecutive games with 250 yards of total offense to start a career to nine.
• Jackson finished with 260 passing yards (24-of-34) with two touchdowns and a career-high 65 rushing yards and a touchdown on 16 carries. His previous career-high for rushing yards was 54, set on Oct. 29, 2011 in a 24-17 win over No. 1 Georgia Southern.
• Redshirt freshman WR Sean Price was Appalachian State's leading receiver with eight receptions for 103 yards, including his first-career touchdown reception, a 32-yarder in the first quarter.
• Junior safety Patrick Blalock came up with his first career interception late in the fourth quarter to help the Apps preserve their lead.
• Demetrius McCray then finished off the Grizzlies with his second interception of the night at the goal line with 18 seconds left in the contest. It was his second multi-interception game, matching a similar performance against Georgia Southern last season.

**Scoring Summary (Final)**

Score by Quarters 1 2 3 4 Score

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Montana | 7 | 14 | 0 | 6 - | 27 |
| Appalachian State | 21 | 0 | 0 | 14 - | 35 |

**SCORING SUMMARY**

**1st**

12:15 UM Gavin Hagfors 2 yd pass from Trent McKinney (Chris Lider kick)
7 plays, 75 yards, TOP 2:45
09:18 APP Sean Price 32 yd pass from Jamal Jackson (Drew Stewart kick)
9 plays, 75 yards, TOP 2:57
03:23 APP Steven Miller 13 yd run (Drew Stewart kick)
9 plays, 60 yards, TOP 4:13
02:02 APP Jamal Jackson 5 yd run (Drew Stewart kick)
4 plays, 21 yards, TOP 1:14

**2nd**

13:12 UM Trent McKinney 10 yd run (Chris Lider kick)
9 plays, 75 yards, TOP 3:50
00:35 UM Sam Gratton 7 yd pass from Trent McKinney (Chris Lider kick)
6 plays, 70 yards, TOP 1:07

**4th**

13:03 APP Andrew Peacock 25 yd pass from Jamal Jackson (Drew Stewart kick)
6 plays, 67 yards, TOP 1:44
08:54 UM Dan Moore 87 yd pass from Trent McKinney (Chris Lider kick failed)
1 play, 87 yards, TOP 0:19
05:05 APP Steven Miller 2 yd run (Drew Stewart kick)
11 plays, 78 yards, TOP 3:41

FIRST DOWNS: MU 19, ASU 27
RUSHING YARDS: MU 176, ASU 157
PASSING YARDS: MU 307, ASU 260
TOTAL YARDS: MU 483, ASU 417
TURNOVERS: MU 4, ASU 0
PENALTY YARDS: MU 7-70, ASU 5-42

TIME OF POSSESSION: MU 26:50, ASU 33:10
3RD DOWN CONVERSIONS: MU 8-18, ASU 7-18
4TH DOWN CONVERSIONS: MU 2-2, ASU 2-3

**RUSHING:**
MU: MOORE 15-93, McKINNEY 13-68-TD
ASU: MILLER 27-91-2TD, JACKSON 16-65-TD

**PASSING:**
MU: McKINNEY 15-29-3INT-3TD-307
ASU: JACKSON 24-34-260-2TD

**RECEIVING:**
MU: MOORE 3-145-TD, GRATTON 3-104
ASU: PRICE 8-103-TD, PEACOCK 5-57-TD, JONES 4-34

**Photo Courtesy: Demetrius McCray, ASU Athletics**