

ASU Falls to Wofford In SoCon Semis

Written by Brandon McGinnis
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In what could not be decided for the full 110 minutes, Appalachian State University fell 4-2 in penalty kicks to Wofford in the Southern Conference semifinal Thursday night at WakeMed Stadium. The

Apps went into overtime with a 1-1 deadloc after the Mountaineers outshot the Terriers 20-7 at the end of regulation. With the loss, App State finishes the year with an even 8-8-3 record. "I'd like to thank all eight seniors for their hard work and dedication," head coach Matt Nelson said. "It has been a pleasure to be able to see them develop into young men and it was an honor to coach them."

After a few chances by seniors Kojo Thompson and Boubacar Toure early in the opening half, the Mountaineers came up empty, going into halftime scoreless. The Apps outshot Wofford in the opening 45 minutes, 9-2.

Wofford got on the scoreboard first in the 56th minute, as Ryan Hurst sprinted down the sidelines and found WC's leading goal-scorer, Alex Hutchins. Hutchins flicked in his 13th goal of the season when Appalachian goalkeeper Danny Free came out of the box to defend the pass. Hutchins tallied his second goal against the Mountaineers this season, scoring the Terriers' only goal in the Apps' 2-1 win in Spartanburg earlier this season.

The Mountaineers responded quickly in the 56th minute when Wofford's clear to App State's backline found the feet of junior Walker White. White sent a lob into the box and found Toure. Toure settled the ball and fired a shot past Wofford goalkeeper Andrew Drennen to even the score at 1-1.

For Toure, it was his second goal in as many matches after scoring the game-winner against College of Charleston in the quarterfinals.

The remaining 34 minutes were back-and-forth but neither team could find the back of the net, sending Appalachian into its third overtime match of the season.

Neither team could find its golden goal, as the Mountaineers and Terriers each fired two shots for the overtime periods.

In penalty kicks, Appalachian started with the momentum as Free stopped the first shot fired by Hutchins. Coming into the match, Hutchins was five-for-five on penalty kicks this season.

The Mountaineers followed with back-to-back goals by sophomores Kristian Lee-Him and Stanley Broaden. Wofford responded with back-to-back goals of its own, tying the score at 2-2. Appalachian could not capitalize on the advantage, as Drennen stopped the next two Mountaineer shots. After WC scored and carried a 3-2 lead, Wofford's Ellis Vienne clinched the victory when his shot beat Free to his right, advancing the Terriers to Saturday's championship. "It is difficult to lose that way," Nelson said. "When you play well and create as many opportunities as we did, it is unfortunate we couldn't put those chances in the back of the net, it ended up costing us, but I was happy overall with the performance tonight."

Appalachian closes the season with a 3-1 record in its final four matches. The Apps finish .500 for the third time in the last four seasons.

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Photo Courtesy: Boubacar Toure, ASU Athletics