

Armanti saves the day

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 05 December 2009 19:26

The Appalachian State football team marched its way to the national semi-finals in dramatic fashion on Saturday night.

And they have Armanit Edwards to thank for it. Edwards, a senior playing in his final year as a Mountaineer, marched his team 70 yards in 12 plays and hooked up with Matt Kline on a four-yard touchdown pass with ten seconds left in regulation time as ASU (11-2) defeated Richmond 35-31 in the national quarter-final round.

It was sweet revenge for the Mountaineers, who were victimized by the Spiders last season in the national quarter-finals at Kidd Brewer Stadium. That win propelled Richmond to a national championship and ended Appalachian's run of three in a row.

"Armanti was pretty banged up at this time last year with a his knee and he also had a bad hip injury," said ASU coach Jerry Moore. "Our guys showed a lot of character, especially in the fourth quarter. We just fought through it and won this game. Our coaches and players did a tremendouse job."

The Apps had 444 yards of total offense, and the Mountaineers burned Richmond's stingy run defense for a season-high 228 yards on the ground.

"Our offensive line did a great job, " said running back Devon Moore, who ran for 175 yards on 22 carries and scored twice. "The holes were there, and I just ran through them."

Edwards was 21-33 for 216 yards and a touchdown. He also ran for two scores.

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"The knee felt great," said Edwards. "The field was very sloppy (from the rain, sleet and snow), and it was hard to plant my foot. But it never bothered my knee."

Kline finished with nine catches for 87 yards, including the game-winning touchdown grab---only his second touchdown reception of the year.

"Armanti put it right where he was suppose to," Kline said. "It was low and away, and the defender never had a chance to get a hand on it. "It was perfectly thrown."

The win propells ASU into the national semi-finals for the second time in three years, and they will face an old foe in Montana. The Grizzlies (13-0), the No.1 seed in the field, advanced earlier in the day as they blasted Stephen F. Austin 51-0 Saturday afternoon. Remember, the Grizzlies defeated ASU in the national semis in overtime back in 2000.

The date and time for that game will be announced Sunday afternoon at 1 pm.