

ASU Football Returns To Big House In 2014

Written by Mike Flynn

Thursday, 25 August 2011 15:57

Appalachian State University football will return to the site of one of the most memorable moments in sports history when it opens the 2014 season at the University of Michigan.

The schools agreed on Thursday to square off on Aug. 30, 2014 at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor, Mich. in a rematch of Appalachian's historic 34-32 victory over the Wolverines in 2007.

"To have the University of Michigan invite us back is the ultimate compliment for us as a program and a University," ASU head coach Jerry Moore said. "We're grateful for the opportunity to have a new generation of players experience a gameday at the Big House and to test themselves against college football's all-time winningest program."

In 2007, the Mountaineers stunned the sports world when it upset No. 5 (AP) Michigan in front of 109,218 at Michigan Stadium. Appalachian trailed the Wolverines, 32-31, in the waning minutes of the ballgame but a 24-yard field goal by Julian Rauch put ASU in front 34-32 with 26 seconds remaining. Michigan's Chad Henne completed a 46-yard pass to Mario Manningham to set up a 37-yard field goal attempt by Jason Gingell with five seconds to go but Appalachian's Corey Lynch blocked the kick to seal the epic triumph. Lynch's "Block Heard 'Round The World" was the second field goal that Appalachian blocked in the final 97 seconds of the heart-stopping ballgame.

With the win, ASU became the first NCAA Division I FCS (Football Championship Subdivision — formerly Division I-AA) to ever beat a nationally ranked FBS (Football Bowl Subdivision — formerly I-A) opponent. The Associated Press also changed its 71-year-old policy to allow all Division I teams, regardless of subdivision, to receive votes in its Top 25 poll.

Appalachian went on to post a 13-2 overall record and win an unprecedented third-consecutive NCAA Division I Football national championship in 2007. Michigan rebounded from the opening-day loss to finish 9-4 and ranked No. 18 in the final AP Poll. The Wolverines finished second in the Big Ten standings and defeated defending BCS national champion Florida and Heisman Trophy winner Tim Tebow, 41-35, in the Capital One Bowl on New Year's Day.

A total of 39 players that suited up for the 2007 ASU-Michigan battle went on to be drafted or play in the National Football League, including Appalachian's Lynch, Armanti Edwards, Dexter Jackson, Daniel Kilgore, Mark LeGree and D.J. Smith.

The landmark victory is one of seven that Appalachian has recorded over FBS foes since the inception of Division I subdivisions in 1978.

ASU is working with McNeese State, who it was originally scheduled to open the 2014 season against, to find an alternative date for their game in Lake Charles, La. All NCAA Division I teams (FBS or FCS) are permitted to play 12 games in 2014, meaning that two non-conference road contests would not preclude Appalachian from playing its traditional six home games that

ASU Football Returns To Big House In 2014

Written by Mike Flynn

Thursday, 25 August 2011 15:57

season.

“For many people, their introduction Appalachian State University came from the exposure that we were fortunate to receive after our football team played at the Big House in 2007,” ASU director of athletics Charlie Cobb said. “Among those people are a large number of student-athletes that are or will wind up being a part of our football program. It will be an honor and a privilege to give those student-athletes the opportunity to compete on one of college football’s biggest stages.”