

Walker, Defense Save Mountaineers

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 24 September 2011 19:40

It was an easy decision to make. And for Roger Walker, a red-shirt sophomore from Thomasville, Ga., he's glad he made the right choice. Walker, who spent his two seasons with the Mountaineers at wide receiver before moving to cornerback, sparked an ASU rally on the final play of the third quarter as the Mountaineers, ranked third nationally, defeated No.13 Chattanooga 14-12 at Kidd Brewer Stadium in the Southern Conference opener for both teams.

Trailing 6-0 on a pair of Nick Pollard field goals with 7.5 seconds left in the third quarter, a bad snap on a 27-yard attempt was scooped up by Walker at his 30-yard-line, and he took care of the rest by rambling 73 yards for the game-tying touchdown. Sam Martin's extra point put ASU (3-1 overall; 1-0 SoCon) on top to stay.

"Let me tell you something about Roger Walker," said ASU coach Jerry Moore, "he's a real neat person. And he really wanted to play here. I can still remember calling him right after he received an offer from Middle Tennessee State. I told him we couldn't offer anything at that moment, but could he please wait until that following Monday before he made a final decision. Well, Monday came and we still couldn't offer him anything. But everything eventually worked out, and he's here. He's a great player, and a great addition to our program."

The Mountaineers scored an insurance touchdown with 13:38 top play in the game on Jeremy Kimbrough's 46-yard interception return for a touchdown that gave ASU a 14-6 lead. And the Mountaineers, despite their struggles on offense, harrassed Chattanooga quarterback B.J. Coleman all day.

Coleman was 22-42 for 270 yards and a touchdown. But he was sacked four times, hurried ten times, and he threw a pair of interceptions. But he connected with Sloan Allison on a 20-yard scoring pass with 9:51 left in the game to make it a two-point game. But Marlon Anthony dropped a game-tying two point conversion pass that preserved ASU's 14-12 lead.

Doug Middleton eventually put the Mocs out of their misery as he intercepted a Coleman pass with 30.6 seconds left.

"We really didn't play well defensively against Chattanooga last season (a 42-41 ASU win)," Kimbrough said. "We needed to step up and play well today. (Chattanooga) keeps getting better every year we play them. And this is becoming a big time rivalry in the Southern Conference. Our offense really struggled today, but the defense stepped up and made the big plays. And I really feel this will set the tone for us defensively for the rest of the conference season."

Offensively, the Mountaineers were anemic. They only had 284 yards, and Deandre Presley was kept under wraps by the Mocs (2-2; 0-1). He was 12-22 passing for 143 yards, and he ran for an additional 52 yards. But he threw a pair of interceptions, and his fumble in the third quarter set the stage for Walker's heroics on Pollard's field goal attempt.

"Our guys knew this wasn't going to be an easy game," Moore said. "Their defense really pressed the line of scrimmage against us. We couldn't get anything going with the running game. We never found our rhythm offensively, but our defensive guys were terrific. (Defensive coordinator) Dale (Jones) and his people did a great job preparing our players. And I couldn't be more proud of their effort today."

Kimbrough led the Mountaineers defensively with 11 tackles, two quarterback sacks, 2.5 tackles-for-loss and an interception he returned for a touchdown. Brandon Grier chipped in with

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11 stops; Middleton had six tackles. The Mocs outgained ASU with 302 yards, but they were limited to 32 rushing yards on 30 attempts (1.1 yard-per-carry). Marquis Green was their leading rusher with 39 yards on 15 carries. Travaris Cadet paced the ASU running game with 63 yards on 11 attempts.

"Russ (Huesman) has done a terrific job with that program," Moore said. "It was an unusual football game. In all my years of coaching, I've never been involved in a game where we won without scoring an offensive touchdown. But it was a great football game."

The Mountaineers travel to Wofford next Saturday. Our coverage begins at 1 p.m. on AM 1450, WATA.

NOTES: The Mountaineers have beaten Chattanooga 14 consecutive times at home, and 23 times in their last 26 meetings. ASU leads the all-time series, 26-10. ASU is also 32-8 in SoCon opener..... ASU (3-1, 1-0 SoCon) won its fourth-straight Southern Conference opener and moved to 32-8 all-time in SoCon openers.....ASU won its 18th-straight SoCon opener played at home. The Mountaineers haven't lost a SoCon opener in Boone since 1982 (27-21 vs. Furman).....ASU defeated UTC (2-2, 0-1 SoCon) for the seventh-straight time and 24th time in the teams last 27 meetings.....ASU extended its home winning streak versus UTC to 14 games. ASU has not lost to UTC in Boone since a 30-9 defeat on Oct. 8, 1983 at then-Conrad Stadium.....ASU moved to 58-4 in its last 62 home games since the beginning of the 2003 season.....Appalachian was held scoreless in the first half by an FCS team for the first time since Oct. 16, 2004 at Georgia Southern.....ASU defensive back Rodger Walker scooped up an errant snap on a UTC field-goal attempt on the final play of the third quarter and returned it 73 yards for ASU's go-ahead touchdown. The fumble return for a touchdown was ASU's first since Jabari Fletcher's 40-yard fumble return for a TD on Oct. 30 of last season vs. Furman.....1:22 after Walker's TD, ASU linebacker Jeremy Kimbrough intercepted UTC's B.J. Coleman and returned it 46 yards for the Mountaineers' second touchdown. The interception was the first of Kimbrough's career. The INT return for a touchdown was ASU's second of the season (Doug Middleton, 97 yds vs. N.C. A&T, Sept. 10).....With five receptions, ASU wide receiver Brian Quick moved ahead of former teammate Matt Cline into third all-time at ASU with 155 career receptions. Cline caught 151 passes from 2006-10. Quick is just 45 receptions shy of the ASU record of 200 (DaVon Fowlkes – 2001-04).

SCORING:

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Chattanooga 0 3 3 6 - 12
Appalachian State 0 0 7 7 - 14

Scoring Summary

2ND QTR: 1:08 - TNCHAT Nick Pollard 22 yd FG, 8-56 (2:53), 3-0

3RD QTR: 1:55 - TNCHAT Nick Pollard 22 yd FG, 11-75, (4:19), 6-0

3RD QTR: 0:00 - APLST Rodger Walker 73 yd fumble return (Sam Martin kick), 7-6

4TH QTR: 13:38 - APLST Jeremy Kimbrough 46 yd interception return (Sam Martin kick), 14-6

4TH QTR: 9:51 - TNCHAT Sloan Allison 20 yd pass from B.J. Coleman (Pass Failed), 9-53
(3:45), 14-12

Team Stats

	TNCHAT	APLST
First Downs	21	15
Third Down Efficiency	7-18	5-14
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	0-0
Plays-Net Yards	72-302	62-284
Rushes-Yds	30-32	40-141
Passing Yds	270	143
Kick Return Yds	43	73
Punt Return Yds	0	3
Passes	22-42-2	12-22-2

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Punts	6-283	7-297
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	1-1
Penalties-Yds	1-15	7-83
Time of Poss.	30:32	29:28

Individual Stats

RUSHING

TNCHAT: Marquis Green 15-36, Chris Awuah 3-26, Taharin Tyson 5-13, Team 2--20, B.J. Coleman 5--23

APLST: Travaris Cadet 11-63, DeAndre Presley 18-52, Cedric Baker Boney 10-28, Team 1--2

PASSING

TNCHAT: B.J. Coleman 22-42-270-2

APLST: DeAndre Presley 12-22-143-2

RECEIVING

TNCHAT: Marlon Anthony 6-48, Joel Bradford 5-89, Jeff Veres 5-57, Marquis Green 3-29, Sloan Allison 1-20, Faysal Shafaat 1-16, Taharin Tyson 1-11

APLST: Brian Quick 5-65, Andrew Peacock 2-44, Tony Washington 2-20, Travaris Cadet 2-9, Ben Jordan 1-5

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