

Wofford Snaps ASU's Unbeaten Streak

Written by Staff Reports

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The Terriers' bite proved effective on Tuesday, as Appalachian State men's soccer (8-3-4, 3-1-2 SoCon) had its 11-game unbeaten streak broken by Wofford (5-10-1, 1-5 SoCon) in Southern Conference action at ASU Soccer Stadium.

An ASU win would have cemented a home first-round SoCon Tournament game for the Apps and earned them a chance to play for the SoCon regular-season title on Saturday. Instead, the Mountaineers no longer control their own fate in earning their first conference crown since 1989. "We needed to win this game to earn a first-round [SoCon] Tournament game," observed head coach Matt Nelson. "We had tons of chances but weren't able to put any in the back of the net. Their keeper made some great saves, and I think this experience is going to help us in the long run."

Appalachian out-shot Wofford by a sum of 26 to eight, but the Mountaineers were stonewalled by the Terriers defense.

Appalachian came out fast and recorded six shots in the first ten minutes; however, the Terriers were able to capitalize on the Mountaineers' pressure and turn them on their heels.

In the 12th minute, Wofford's Alex Hutchins broke through the Appalachian back line and was able to pull the trigger from 10 yards and earn the Terriers a 1-0 lead. Matt Frongello assisted the goal, Hutchins' team-high sixth of the year.

Hutchins would get two additional looks in the half, missing just right on his subsequent attempts.

The Mountaineers recorded 13 in shots in the first half, but despite the Apps' efforts, Wofford maintained its 1-0 advantage on the scoreboard.

In the 61st minute, a long clear by Lee Rutter (Nottingham, England / South Nottingham) gave Sekani Sinclair (Parkland, Fla. / Marjory Stoneman Douglas) an open chance on the front lines. Wofford keeper Andrew Drennan came off the goal line and made a diving stop to steal the ball from Sinclair's feet and preserve the lead.

With six and a half to play, Drennan again was forced to come out and play the Mountaineer offense. The Black and Gold eluded Wofford's keeper, and Boubacar Toure (Atlanta, Ga. / Georgia Perimeter College) saw a would-be open-net goal stymied by a Terrier defender, and Appalachian's streak of bad luck continued.

With under three minutes remaining, ASU keeper Danny Free (Doncaster, England / Hall Cross School) had to enter the game to face a Wofford penalty kick. Free made a diving save to prevent a second Hutchins' goal and kept the Mountaineers in the game.

Alas, after the final efforts of Appalachian State, Wofford walked away victorious, 1-0.

The loss snaps ASU's longest unbeaten streak (7-0-4) since 1978.

"We were fortunate to go on the streak we had," continued Nelson. "But this is how the game goes. Tomorrow we'll have our eyes on Davidson."

The Mountaineers conclude their SoCon slate with a trip to Davidson on Saturday, Oct. 29 at 7 p.m.

A win at Davidson would give Appalachian a home game in the first round of the SoCon tournament. The door is still open for ASU to win a SoCon regular-season title, but UNCG can clinch the outright title with a win over Elon this weekend.

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