

Mountaineers Down Phoenix On Homecoming

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 06 October 2012 19:44

Maybe that loss to The Citadel three weeks ago wasn't so bad after all. Since then, the Appalachian State University football team has reeled off three wins in a row, and they've looked pretty good doing it. On Saturday, the Mountaineers (4-2 overall; 2-1 Southern Conference) rallied to beat Elon 35-23 at Kidd Brewer Stadium on Saturday afternoon in front of 29,073 fans on Homecoming day.

"I really wish we wouldn't have lost that game to The Citadel," said ASU coach Jerry Moore. "But when I look back at it, that loss may have made us a better team. It showed us stuff we have to do to win championships, and I'm talking about national championships. Even in those championship years (2005-07), we lost games during those seasons. And it made us a better team when we played in big games. I'm pleased where we are right now. We have people stepping up."

Jamal Jackson turned in another stellar day. The ASU junior was 20-29 passing for 304 yards and four touchdowns, tying his own personal record he set last season, ironically against Elon. He also ran for 94 yards and a TD. Saturday's effort was Jackson's third 300-yard passing game and the 41st in school history. Jackson has also moved into ninth place in career passing in school history.

Steven Miller finished with 75 rushing yards, and he caught five passes for 97 yards and two TD. Andrew Peacock, a game-time decision, finished with a game-high seven receptions for 71 yards and a TD.

"I've got a lot of weapons around me," Jackson said. "I have a lot of confidence in those people. But it's up to me to make the right calls. I feel we're playing pretty well right now, but there's always room for improvement. But this is what we want. We have some tough teams coming up, and we want those teams coming at us back-to-back-to-back. We want a ring, and we have to start playing like it."

But the Mountaineers had to shake off the effects of another slow start on Saturday. And Elon (2-4; 0-3), which has lost 17 straight to ASU, including ten straight in SoCon play, gave ASU its share of challenges throughout the day. Quarterback Thomas Wilson had a record-setting day as he completed 25-41 passes for 419 yards. He also threw three TD passes, but the Mountaineers picked him off three times, and they sacked him three times. Wide receiver Aaron Mellette caught 13 balls for 237 yards and three TD.

The Phoenix also out-gained ASU 515-499 and they held the ball for nearly 32 minutes.

"Our defense played well when it had to," Moore said. "We gave up some big plays today, but that's going to happen against a team like this. Elon has the guys that can make those plays. That's what they do. They're a tough team and they bounced back against us all day."

The Phoenix, which had early leads of 7-0 and 10-7, rallied for a 17-14 lead with 10:18 to play in the third quarter. Wilson hooked up with Mellette on a 59-yard scoring strike on the go-ahead TD. But the Mountaineers jumped on top for good a little less than seven minutes later. Jackson engineered a 93-yard scoring drive, and he hooked up with Peacock on a 25-yard scoring pass for a 21-17 lead. A 23-yard strike to Miller with 12:49 left in the game made it 28-17. But the Phoenix wouldn't go away.

Elon responded on its next possession as Wilson and Mellette hooked up on a 35-yard pass that made it, 28-23. And the Phoenix scored quickly as they marched 75-yards in four plays. The drive took a little more than a minute. The Mountaineers finally put the game out of reach on Jackson's one-yard run with 7:52 to go.

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"I have a lot of confidence in our play calling," Moore said. "Going into a game, you have a certain idea what you can do. We tried running an inside zone against them. Wofford ran it against them last week, and did it successfully. But they made the adjustments against us. So we had to open things up a bit in the second quarter, and we felt more comfortable in the second half on what we were going to do."

"It was physical game, but we knew that coming in," said ASU linebacker Jeremy Kimbrough, who had nine tackles and an interception. "I feel pretty good about our team, but I wish we would start games off better. But I feel good about going into the tough part of our Southern Conference schedule. And our defense is looking forward to it."

The Mountaineers have the roughest part of their schedule coming up beginning next Saturday at Samford. Then Wofford College comes to town October 20, and the Mountaineers travel to Georgia Southern on November 3. Troy Sanders paced ASU on defense with 11 stops; Demetrius McCray had eight tackles, he broke up a pass and he had an interception; Brandon Grier had eight tackles, two tackles-for-loss and two quarterback sacks. Blake Thompson led Elon with 13 tackles; Jonathan Spain had 12 stops.

Coverage from Birmingham, Al., next Saturday begins at 12 noon on AM 1450, WATA. Game time is 2 p.m.

NOTES: Team

- With its third-straight win, Appalachian State moved to 4-2 overall and 2-1 in Southern Conference play.
- Elon dropped to 2-4 overall, 0-3 in SoCon play with its third-straight loss, all of which have come at the hands of teams ranked in the NCAA Division I FCS top 15.
- The win was Appalachian State's 17th-straight over Elon, dating back to 1965.
- Appalachian won its 10th-straight homecoming game.
- Appalachian won for the 65th time in its last 71 home games.
- Appalachian won for the 50th time in its last 57 Southern Conference games.

Individual

- Junior quarterback Jamal Jackson recorded the third 300-yard passing game of his career and the 41st in Appalachian State history with 304 yards on 20-of-29 passing.
- With his 304 passing yards, Jackson moved into ninth all-time at Appalachian State with 3,726 career passing yards. He started the day in 11th on the school's all-time passing yardage list and surpassed current Appalachian assistant head coach/offensive coordinator Scott Satterfield (3,504 yds. – 1992-95) and Bake Baker (3,538 yds. – 1994-97).
- Jackson's 94 rushing yards were a career high (prev. 65 vs. Montana, Sept. 8).
- Jackson passed for at least 200 yards and had 250 yards of total offense for the 12th time in 13 career starts.
- Senior running back Steven Miller's five receptions, 97 receiving yards and two touchdown receptions were all career highs.
- Junior Tony Washington's 54-yard touchdown catch with 1:01 to go in the first half was the longest of his career (prev.: 41 yds. vs. Samford, 2011).
- Senior Demetrius McCray's third-quarter interception was the ninth of his career, which is tied for eight among all active NCAA Division I FCS players.

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Scoring Summary

Score by Quarters 1 2 3 4 Total

Elon 7 3 7 6 - 23

Appalachian State 0 14 7 14 - 35

1st

11:41 ELON - Aaron Mellette 11 yd pass from Thomas Wilson (Adam Shreiner kick), 8-75 3:19

2nd

14:19 APP - Steven Miller 5 yd pass from Jamal Jackson (Drew Stewart kick), 15-81 6:13

10:59 ELON - Adam Shreiner 29 yd field goal, 7-63 3:20 10 - 7

1:01 APP - Tony Washington 54 yd pass from Jamal Jackson (Drew Stewart kick), 2-64 0:25

3rd

10:18 ELON - Aaron Mellette 59 yd pass from Thomas Wilson (Adam Shreiner kick), 7-82 3:00

3:49 APP - Andrew Peacock 25 yd pass from Jamal Jackson (Drew Stewart kick), 6-93 2:24

4th

12:47 APP - Steven Miller 23 yd pass from Jamal Jackson (Drew Stewart kick), 2-39 0:21

11:26 ELON - Aaron Mellette 35 yd pass from Thomas Wilson (Thomas Wilson pass failed), 4-75 1:21

7:52 APP - Jamal Jackson 1 yd run (Drew Stewart kick), 7-62 3:28

STATISTICS

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FIRST DOWNS: ASU 24, ELON 22
RUSHING YARDS: ASU 195, ELON 96
PASSING YARDS: ASU 304, ELON 419
TOTAL YARDS: ASU 499, ELON 515
FUMBLES/NUMBER-LOST: ASU 1-0, ELON 1-0
TOTAL TURNOVERS: ASU 1, ELON 3
PENALTY YARDS: ASU 5-45, ELON 6-75
POSSESSION TIME: ASU 28:28, ELON 31:32
3RD DOWN CONVERSIONS: ASU 5-15, ELON 6-15
4TH DOWN CONVERSIONS: ASU 2-2, ELON 0-1

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING

ASU: JACKSON 17-94-TD, MILLER 17-75

ELON: COPPEDGE 9-48, BOSTICK 16-41

PASSING

ASU: JACKSON 20-29-INT-4TD-304

ELON: WILSON 25-41-3INT-3TD-419

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RECEIVING

ASU: PEACOCK 7-71-TD, MILLER 5-97-2TD

ELON: MELLETTE 13-237-3TD, BROWN 4-74

Photo Courtesy: Jamal Jackson, ASU Athletics