

Terriers, Eagles Advance To National Quarters

Written by Staff Reports

Saturday, 01 December 2012 22:03

The Wofford football team was led by Eric Breitenstein with 247 rushing yards and three touchdowns in a 23-7 win over New Hampshire in the second round of the NCAA FCS Playoffs

on Saturday afternoon at Gibbs Stadium. Wofford will advance to face North Dakota State in the quarterfinals. The Terriers are 9-3 on the season and New Hampshire is 8-4 overall. For Wofford, Eric Breitenstein had 247 yards on 22 carries with three touchdowns. The Terrier defense held New Hampshire to 238 total yards and had ten tackles for loss, including five sacks, along with two interceptions. The Wildcats were led by Nico Steriti with 51 rushing yards and Sean Goldrich was 17-of-29 passing for 113 yards.

"The team we played was a real good football team," said head coach Mike Ayers. "We played hard and they played hard. They have a great scheme and are used to putting up 35 points every day. Our defense did an unbelievable job as far as stopping them. The difference in the ball game came down to the number of times that we were able to stop them. From an offensive standpoint we had a lot of plays but we not as productive as we needed to be. We got sloppy with the ball and gave them a chance to get back in it, but the defense answered the bell every time."

The Wildcats had the ballot open the game and were forced three-an-out and punted. Wofford had a fourth-and-one, but Eric Breitenstein converted with a 54-yard touchdown run to take a 7-0 lead with 11:51 on the clock.

New Hampshire gained a first down on their next possession, but after a sack by Alvin Scioneaux was forced to punt. Wofford moved the ball across midfield with three first downs, but a fumble gave the ball back to the Wildcats. After gaining a first down, New Hampshire punted back with 3:38 left in the first quarter. The Terriers reached the 50-yard line, but a bad snap forced a punt. New Hampshire gained four first downs before E.J. Speller forced and recovered a fumble by Sean Goldrich.

Wofford picked up a first down on a reverse by Will Irwin, but were stopped on a fourth-and-two attempt and New Hampshire took over that the 39-yard line with 11:41 left in the second quarter. After a sack by Mike McCrimon, the Wildcats punted back to the Terriers. Eric Breitenstein gained a first down, but another Wofford fumble turned the ball back over to the Wildcats. New Hampshire was moving the ball with two first downs, but Alvin Scioneaux picked off a pass that was tipped at the line of scrimmage by Tarek Odom. After gaining four first downs, Eric Breitenstein capped the drive with a six-yard touchdown run. The point after hit the left upright and Wofford had a 13-0 lead with 1:13 left in the first half.

On the next drive by the Wildcats, after a first down Mike Niam intercepted Sean Goldrich with 36 seconds on the clock. The Terriers tried a 34-yard field goal as time expired, but it was wide right. Wofford had a 13-0 lead at the break and were outgaining the Wildcats 297 yards to 128. To open the second half, Wofford had the ball but Donovan Johnson was hit and fumbled. The fumble was picked up by Cody Muller, who returned it 14-yards for the touchdown. The score was 13-7 with 12:15 left in the third quarter. Wofford answered with a 45-yard run by Eric Breitenstein, and then Breitenstein went 26-yards for his third touchdown of the day. Wofford had a 20-7 lead with 9:58 on the clock.

The Wildcats gained two first downs before a tackle for loss by Mike McCrimon forced a punt.

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Wofford used a 33-yard run by Brian Kass to set-up a 33-yard field goal by Kasey Redfern. The Terriers led 23-7 with 2:57 left in the third quarter. On the next drive by the Wildcats, they gained one first down before punting. Wofford tried a fourth-and-15, but were sacked and turned the ball over on downs. The Wildcats gained a first down, but on fourth-and-ten were called for holding and the ball went back to Wofford.

With 10:23 remaining in the fourth quarter, Wofford took over but went three-and-out and punted, with the ball downed at the two-yard line. The Wildcats gained four first downs, but a fourth-and-six pass was broken up by James Zotto. Wofford then got the ball back with 4:20 left in the game. On fourth down, the Terriers lined up to punt. Kasey Redfern dropped the ball on the snap, but picked it up and ran for the first down. Brad Nocek added a first down run that enabled the Terriers to take a knee twice to seal the victory.

Wofford had 479 total yards, with 454 on the ground. New Hampshire had 238 total yards, 165 of which were passing. Wofford had a 25 to 17 advantage in first downs. Wofford was 6-of-15 on third downs and 3-of-5 on fourth down. New Hampshire was 8-of-17 on third down and 1-of-3 on fourth down. Each team had four penalties. Wofford had a 35:27 to 24:33 time of possession advantage.

Georgia Southern 24, Central Arkansas 16

Jerick McKinnon rushed 34 times for 316 yards, the second-highest total in school history, and the Eagle defense gave up just one touchdown on the day as No. 6 Georgia Southern moved on in the NCAA Division I Football Championship with a 24-16 victory over No. 8 Central Arkansas Saturday afternoon at Paulson Stadium.

The Eagles advance to the quarterfinal round and will travel to Old Dominion for a contest either Friday or Saturday.

McKinnon's rushing total was just 17 yards shy of Adrian Peterson's 333 against UMass in the 1999 FCS Playoffs, and the junior quarterback tallied two rushing touchdowns. He also completed two passes for 79 yards and a score. Dominique Swope finished with 17 carries for 64 yards for the Eagles (9-3).

"The stats might go under my name, but all 10 guys out there with me get the credit," said McKinnon. "There were some great blocks out there on the perimeter. Central Arkansas was skating to the pitch, and I just tried to turn it up field."

Wynrick Smothers threw for 251 yards and ran for 79 to lead Central Arkansas (9-2), and Jackie Hinton rushed eight times for 53 yards. Dezmin Lewis caught four passes for 90 yards, and

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Dominique Croom had two receptions for 70 yards. Eddie Camara made three field goals. The Eagle defense held Central Arkansas to 3-of-12 on third down for the game including 1-of-4 in the second half. The Bears also went 0-for-2 on fourth-down chances.

"I'm proud of our defense because when we got some big plays against us, we didn't let it affect us," said Georgia Southern coach Jeff Monken. "We lined up and kept fighting and went right back after them."

Georgia Southern built a 24-9 halftime lead by scoring touchdowns on its first three possessions and adding a field goal on its fourth. Meanwhile the Bears made two trips in the red zone on its first four series but came away with just six total points.

The Bears trimmed the lead to 24-16 early in the third quarter on a Hinton 19-yard run, but could get no closer. They drove down to the GSU 41-yard line late in the game and were set to go for it on 4th-and-1, but a false start penalty pushed them back and the Bears elected to punt. GSU ran eight straight times, and Luke Cherry placed a pretty 47-yard punt at the Central Arkansas 6-yard line with 2:58 remaining. After a pass interference penalty move the ball out to the 21, Smothers completed a pass for 10 yards to Lewis, but Nic Wright forced a fumble and the Eagles recovered to seal the game.

"This is the most fun time of year because you have to win to get to play again," said Monken. "I'm just impressed with our whole team and how much they care about each other and play together as a team. We win games like this because we guys who care about each other and are willing to lay it on the line."

The game started like a heavyweight fight with each team jabbing and probing the other to see what would work. The Eagles landed the first punch on their second offensive possession when McKinnon went around left end on the quarterback keeper, saw daylight and scampered 57 yards for a touchdown 5:28 into the contest. It was tied for the seventh longest TD run in school playoff history.

After a 35-yard pickup on a pass from Smothers to Lewis down to the GSU 20-yard line, the Eagle defense held, and Central Arkansas settled for a Camara 34-yard field goal that made the score 7-3 midway through the first period.

J.J. Wilcox gave the Eagles great field position on the ensuing drive with a 39-yard kickoff return after the Bears were flagged for a kick out of bounds and had to kick again from the 30-yard line. McKinnon started the drive with an 11-yard run on a keeper and later on 2nd-and-10 from the Bear 32, he threw a perfect ball over the middle, hitting Darreion Robinson in stride for the touchdown and a 14-3 lead.

The Eagles pinned the Bears deep in their own end, tackling Jesse Grandy on his own 7-yard line on the kickoff. Central Arkansas picked up a first down on 3rd-and-12 with a 13 yard pass from Smothers to Grandy, and Smothers found Croom for a 42-yard pass down the sideline on the next play. But the Eagle defense held again, forcing the Bears to settle for another Camara field goal, this time from 42 yards, to make the score 14-6.

Georgia Southern scored on a 6-yard McKinnon run on its next series to open a 21-6 advantage 1:08 into the second quarter. McKinnon set up the score with a 51-yard run down the right sideline after Swope ran for 12 yards up the middle.

The Bears came right back down the field and this time, elected to go for it on 4th-and-goal from the 4-yard line. Wilcox came off the edge and got good pressure on Smothers, who threw to Terrence Bobo at the 2-yard line, but Eagle linebacker Kyle Ohelbeck was there to knock him out of bounds, turning the ball over to the Eagles.

The Eagles took 7:51 off the clock on their ensuing drive, and Alex Hanks knocked in a 40-yard

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field goal to give GSU a 24-6 cushion with 2:31 left in the half. McKinnon keyed the drive with a 47-yard pass to Zach Walker on 3rd-and-7 from the Eagle 5-yard line.

A 20-yard pass from Smothers to Hinton set up a 30-yard Camara field goal, trimming the margin to 24-9 at the break.

The Eagles were driving down the field looking to add to their lead on the first series of the second half, but McKinnon underthrew his receiver, and Karl Brady intercepted at the 5-yard line, returning it to the Bear 41.

The Bears went into a hurry-up offense, and Hinton rushed for 11 yards and caught a 13-yard pass from Smothers as Central Arkansas moved down to the GSU 19-yard line. Hinton then went 19 yards for a touchdown on a run over the left side, cutting the margin to 24-16 early in the third quarter.

SATURDAY'S GAMES

ILLINOIS STATE 38, APPALACHIAN STATE 37 (OT)
GEORGIA SOUTHERN 24, CENTRAL ARKANSAS 16
WOFFORD COLLEGE 24, NEW HAMPSHIRE 7
MONTANA STATE 16, STONY BROOK 10
OLD DOMINION 63, COASTAL CAROLINA 35
SAM HOUSTON STATE 18, CAL-POLY 16
EASTERN WASHINGTON 29, WAGNER 19
NORTH DAKOTA STATE 28, SOUTH DAKOTA STATE 3

NATIONAL QUARTERFINALS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7 & SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8

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ILLINOIS STATE @ EASTERN WASHINGTON
WOFFORD COLLEGE @ NORTH DAKOTA STATE
GEORGIA SOUTHERN @ OLD DOMINION
SAM HOUSTON STATE @ MONTANA STATE

Photo Courtesy: Eric Breitenstein, SoCon Athletics