

ASU Drops Season Opener at Montana

Written by Mike Flynn

Sunday, 01 September 2013 08:18

Plagued by two turnovers and a blocked punt, No. 12-ranked Appalachian State University football dropped its 2013 season opener to No. 20 Montana, 30-6, on

Saturday evening at jam-packed Washington-Grizzly Stadium.

In addition to the three miscues, Appalachian State was never able to get into a rhythm offensively, was haunted by Montana's 9-of-15 third-down conversion rate and was without the services of senior quarterback Jamal Londry-Jackson (Atlanta, Ga./North Atlanta) for more than a quarter in the loss.

With Londry-Jackson out of the game due to a minor upper-body injury, backup quarterback Kameron Bryant (Cary, N.C./Panther Creek) nearly led the Mountaineers back from a 16-0 deficit. In the first significant action of his career, Bryant engineered field-goal drives to end the first half and open the second and had the Apps inside the red zone on his third series threatening to pull within one score. However, Bryant fumbled at the end of a 12-yard run and Montana recovered on its own three yard line to thwart the scoring opportunity.

"Give Mointana a lot of credit," said ASU coach Scott Satterfield. "They beat us up and down the field. We made two turnovers, we had a punt blocked, and we put our defense in some bad situations. Offensively, we couldn't get anything going."

UM punted after the turnover but on the very next play, Bryant threw the first interception of his career to give the Griz the ball back on the Appalachian 42. Six plays later, Montana punched it in to stretch the lead to 23-6 and effectively end the Mountaineers' hopes for a comeback victory.

Appalachian was outgained, 497-328, which included Montana's 246-123 advantage on the ground. The Grizzlies had two 100-yard rushers (Travon Van – 118 and Jordan Canada – 112) and benefitted from the return of quarterback Jordan Johnson (19-of-23, 251 yards, two TD) to the lineup. Johnson, who completed his first 12 passes of the evening, sat out the entire 2012 season due to personal reasons.

"Kam gave us some momentum in the third quater," Satterfield said. "He got us into the red zone, but we turned the ball over. Montana is also pretty big up front. Our tackling, i thought, was pretty good at the start of the game, but we tackled poorly as the game went on. And a lot of credit goes to their running backs. Those guys are elusive. It was a tough night all the way around, but we'll learn from our mistakes."

Bryant completed 8-of-12 passes for 116 yards to lead the Mountaineers offensively.

Londry-Jackson managed just 89 yards – his second-lowest total in 20 career starts – in less than three quarters of action. Tony Washington (High Point, N.C./T.W. Andrews) led all receivers with 81 yards on six catches and Ricky Ferguson (Fuquay-Varina, N.C./Fuquay-Varina) had a team-high 53 yards on the ground.

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For the first time in 102 games, Appalachian State did not score a touchdown and failed to score at least 10 points – neither had happened since a 24-0 loss at LSU in 2005. The loss also dropped the Mountaineers to 0-10 all-time in games played west of the Mississippi River. Defensively, freshman linebacker John Law (Atlanta, Ga./Grady) and sophomore safety Kevin Walton (Greensboro, N.C./Grimsley) shared game-high honors with 12 tackles apiece. Appalachian State opens the home portion of its 2013 campaign next Saturday when it hosts North Carolina A&T at Kidd Brewer Stadium. Kickoff is set for 6 p.m. on Hall of Fame Day at The Rock.

NOTES: The crowd of 26,293 was the largest ever for a football game played in the state of Montana ... Appalachian State fell to 3-9 in its last 12 season openers ... Appalachian dropped to 1-3 all-time against Montana, including an 0-3 mark at Washington-Grizzly Stadium ... Londry-Jackson's previous low passing total when taking the majority of Appalachian's snaps was 164 versus The Citadel on Sept. 15 of last season ... Drew Stewart's (Gastonia, N.C./North Gaston) 48-yard field goal as the first half expired was the longest of his career (previous long: 44 vs. Western Carolina, 2011) ... Montana blocked freshman Bentley Critcher's (South Daytona, Fla./Warner Christian Academy) third-career punt in the second quarter, marking the first time Appalachian has had a punt blocked since last season's loss to The Citadel ... UM recovered the blocked punt at Appalachian's 13 yard line and kicked a field goal to stretch its lead to 16-0.

Team

- Appalachian State fell to 1-3 all-time versus fellow longtime NCAA Division I FCS power Montana, including losses in all three attempts at Washington-Grizzly Stadium (prev.: 2000 national semifinals, 2009 national semifinals).
- Appalachian State fell to 0-10 all-time in games played west of the Mississippi River.
- Appalachian State fell to 3-9 in its last 12 season openers. However, it was the Mountaineers' first loss to an FCS program in an opener since 1993 (22-10 at North Carolina A&T).
- For the first time in 102 games, Appalachian State didn't score a touchdown and failed to reach double-digit points. Neither had happened since a 24-0 loss at LSU on Nov. 5, 2005. The last time that Appalachian failed to score at least 10 points against an FCS opponent was in a 54-7 loss at Georgia Southern on Oct. 16, 2004. The last time the Mountaineers did not score a touchdown against an FCS opponent was in an 8-6 win over The Citadel on Sept. 22, 2001 (safety and two field goals).
- The crowd of 26,293 was the largest ever for a football game in the state of Montana.

Individual

- In the first extensive action of his career, backup quarterback Kameron Bryant completed 8-of-12 passes for 116 yards and threw one interception. Bryant played the final series of the

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second quarter and all of the third quarter in place of starter Jamal Londry-Jackson, who left the game with an upper-body injury.

- Bryant, a sophomore, was playing in only the second game of his career. He played only 13 snaps in last year's win over Coastal Carolina before sustaining a season-ending knee injury.
- Londry-Jackson finished with 89 passing yards, which was his second-lowest passing total in 20 career starts. He threw for just 64 yards on Oct. 27 of last season at Western Carolina before leaving the game late in the first quarter due to a knee injury. His lowest previous passing total when playing the majority of the game was 164 versus The Citadel on Sept. 15 of last season.
- Drew Stewart's 48-yard field goal in the second quarter was a career long (prev.: 44 vs. Western Carolina – Nov. 12, 2011).

MONTANA 30, ASU 6

Score by Quarters 1 2 3 4 Total

Appalachian State 0 3 3 0 6

Montana 0 16 0 14 30

2nd 10:30 UM - Ellis Henderson 6 yd pass from Jordan Johnson (Chris Lider kick blockd), 4-60
1:40 0 - 6

04:30 UM - Travon Van 2 yd run (Chris Lider kick), 9-82 4:37 0 - 13

01:10 UM - Chris Lider 25 yd field goal, 4-6 0:59 0 - 16

00:00 APP - Drew Stewart 48 yd field goal, 5-54 1:05 3 - 16

3rd 09:54 APP - Drew Stewart 21 yd field goal, 9-73 3:36 6 - 16

4th 13:13 UM - Jordan Canada 1 yd run (Chris Lider kick), 6-42 2:09 6 - 23

09:23 UM - Jordan Harper 11 yd pass from Jordan Johnson (Chris Lider kick), 7-60 2:20 6 - 30

STATISTICS

FIRST DOWNS: ASU 16, MONTANA 22

RUSHING YARDS: ASU 123, MONTANA 246

PASSING YARDS: ASU 205, MONTANA 251

TOTAL YARDS: ASU 328, MONTANA 497

FUMBLES/LOST: ASU 3/1, MONTANA 2/1

TURNOVERS: ASU 2, MONTANA 1

PENALTY YARDS: ASU 8-68, MONTANA 8-76

TIME OF POSSESSION: ASU 23:55, MONTANA 30:39

THIRD DOWN CONVERSIONS: ASU 3-13, MONTANA 9-15

FOURTH DOWN CONVERSIONS: ASU 1-2, MONTANA 0-1

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INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING:

ASU: FERGERSON 12-53

MU: VAN 10-118-TD, CANADA 25-112-TD

PASSING:

ASU: LONDRY-JACKSON 13-21-89, BRYANT 8-12-116

MU: JOHNSON 19=23-251-2TD

RECEIVING:

ASU: WASHINGTON 6-81, McELFRESH 4-47

MU: JONES 6-60, HENDERSON 3-72-TD

Photo Courtesy: John Law, ASU Athletics