

Mountaineers Fall to Charleston Southern

Written by Mike Flynn

Sunday, 29 September 2013 07:13

Thanks in large part to a whopping 42:04-17:56 advantage in time of possession, Charleston Southern remained unbeaten by handing Appalachian State University football a 27-24 defeat on Saturday afternoon at Kidd Brewer Stadium. Charleston Southern (5-0) converted 10-of-18 third downs, including seven-straight in the first half, and all four of its fourth-down attempts to score perhaps the biggest win in its program's 15-year history.

Despite running 30 fewer plays than CSU (81-51), Appalachian State totaled just four fewer yards than the Bucs (428-424) and scored on four of its nine possessions. However, the Mountaineers turned the ball over on downs in CSU territory on each of their final two offensive series to fall to 1-3 for the first time since 2003.

Appalachian State jumped out to a 7-0 lead just 1:28 into the game when Marcus Cox (Dacula, Ga./Dacula) scored the first of his three touchdowns on a 14-yard run to cap a five-play, 58-yard drive. The Mountaineers would go on to lead 14-7 and 17-14 in the first half but Charleston Southern answered each Appalachian score with one of its own to send the game into halftime knotted at 17-17.

CSU took its first advantage of the game with 5:38 to go in the third quarter on a 21-yard field goal by Mark Deboy but only 45 seconds later, App State retook a 24-20 lead when Cox took a short pass from Kameron Bryant (Cary, N.C./Panther Creek) and galloped 65 yards for his third touchdown of the afternoon.

Appalachian maintained the four-point edge until late in the fourth quarter. With less than seven minutes to go, Charleston Southern seemingly took the lead on a five-yard touchdown run by Malcolm Dixon. However, not only was the score nullified by an illegal-block penalty by CSU but Dixon was injured on the play.

Backup signal-caller Daniel Crogan III entered the game in Dixon's place and on third and goal from the 15 yard line, eluded several Appalachian State defenders in the backfield and threw on the run into the end zone. It appeared that Appalachian cornerback Rodger Walker (Thomasville, Ga./Brookwood) might be in position for his second interception of the game but instead, CSU wide receiver Kevin Glears went high over Walker's back and pulled in the pass for the go-ahead touchdown with 5:27 left on the clock.

On the second play of the ensuing possession, Bryant found Tony Washington (High Point, N.C./T.W. Andrews) for a 30-yard pass that moved the Mountaineers into Charleston Southern territory but four plays later, the promising series stalled when CSU cornerback Eli Lee swatted away a pass intended for Washington on fourth and one from the 35 yard line.

From there, the Buccaneers picked up two first downs (converting two more third downs in the process) to run out the final 2:59 of the ballgame.

Despite Charleston Southern's 28-minute advantage in time of possession, the statistic that might have doomed the Mountaineers the most was the fact that three of CSU's 10 third-down

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conversions came courtesy of Appalachian State penalties (two on its opening touchdown drive and one as the Bucs milked out the clock on their final drive).

Appalachian's frustrating overall performance overshadowed terrific individual efforts by Cox and sophomore wide receiver Sean Price (Reston, Va./South Lakes).

One week after he became the first player in school history with 100 rushing yards and 100 receiving yards in a single game during last Saturday's win at Elon, Cox nearly matched the showing with 89 yards on 17 rushes and 91 yards on four receptions. He scored three touchdowns for the second-straight week, adding a two-yard scoring run between the 14-yard rush on the opening possession and the 65-yard catch in the third quarter, giving him eight touchdowns in his four-game collegiate career.

For the second time in as many games, Price fell just shy of the 100-yard plateau with a game-high 98 yards on five receptions. He also made a key downfield block to help spring Cox for the final few yards of his go-ahead 65-yard touchdown reception in the third period.

At quarterback, Bryant completed 10-of-15 passes for 180 yards and a touchdown while starter Jamal Londry-Jackson (Atlanta, Ga./North Atlanta) connected on 8-of-11 passes for 122 yards.

Defensively, inside linebacker Karl Anderson (Pilot Point, Texas/Pilot Point) led Appalachian State's four double-digit tacklers with a career-high 16 stops. Freshman defensive end Olawale Dada (Columbus, Ga./Shaw) added 12 tackles, shattering his previous career high of two, set last week at Elon.

Running back Christian Reyes ran for 167 yards and a touchdown to lead Charleston Southern. Dixon added 95 yards on the ground and 115 in the air before sustaining the injury on CSU's next-to-last drive.

Appalachian State (1-0 SoCon) looks to remain unbeaten in Southern Conference play when it travels to The Citadel next Saturday. Kickoff is set for 2 p.m. at Johnson Hagood Stadium in Charleston, S.C.

NOTES: Appalachian State fell to 1-3 for the first time since 2003 ... that season, the Mountaineers won six of their final seven games to finish 7-4 ... Appalachian has lost consecutive home games in the same season for the first time since 1996, when it dropped back-to-back home games to Furman (20-14 on Oct. 12) and Marshall (24-10 on Oct. 26) ... the loss snapped the Mountaineers' 16-game winning streak versus current members of the Big South Conference, which dated back to a 25-19 defeat to Liberty on Nov. 22, 1997 ... Appalachian averaged 8.3 yards per play, compared to 5.3 yards per play for Charleston Southern ... Londry-Jackson needs just 41 passing yards to become only the fourth 6,000-yard passer in Appalachian State history (joining App State Hall-of-Famers Armanti Edwards – 10,392, Richie Williams – 7,759 and Steve Brown – 6,533).

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Photo Courtesy: Kam Bryant, ASU Athletics