

VOLS DROP HEARTBREAKER TO #6 UGA

Written by Brian Matthew Bruce
Saturday, 05 October 2013 23:28

The Tennessee football team fell 34-31 in overtime to No. 6 Georgia in front of a sold-out crowd of 102,455 at Neyland Stadium on Saturday.

The Vols came up just short of upsetting their visiting opponent when Georgia sophomore Marshall Morgan connected a 42-yard field goal in overtime to give the Bulldogs the victory.

A strong Vol defense, who held Georgia to 4-of-13 on third down, helped to keep Tennessee in the game and slow down a Georgia offense headed by quarterback Aaron Murray who became the SEC career passing leader during the game after a 19-for-35, 196-yard, 3-touchdown passing effort.

"Well first of all, I want to thank our great fan base," said Tennessee head coach Butch Jones. "Electric atmosphere, they definitely created a home field advantage. That's why they're the best in the country. I want to thank our student body. Over 12,000 students came out. I think what we learned is we need that environment. We're going to need that. I need to challenge everyone. I need you to come to the South Carolina game. We're on winter break and our team needs it.

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"I'm very proud of every individual in our football program. You saw a football team, undermanned, that laid it on the line. They made the plays to get it to that point. Learn how to finish. Proud to be their head football coach and they've had their best week of preparation. They bring it everyday and you guys don't see what I see. I see a coming together of a football team, a football program. This team has become closer than any team I've been a part of and they hurt, but we're going to keep grinding. That's the only way I know how to do it and that's the only way they're going to know how to do it. I'm just proud of them. I'll answer any questions you may have."

For the Vols Justin Worley put together 17-of-31 passing for 215 yards and one touchdown.

Rajion Neal led the Vols on the ground rushing for 148 yards while scoring two touchdowns, his fourth career multi-touchdown effort as a Vol.

After going into the half down 17-3, Tennessee outscored the Bulldogs 28-17 in the second half, tying up the game at 17-all at the end of the third quarter.

On the Volunteers second possession out of halftime, Worley connected with freshman Marquez North as he was diving out of the end zone for the Vols first touchdown of the day and giving Georgia only a one possession lead.

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The touchdown was the first of North's career and he became the fifth true freshman to record a touchdown for the Vols this season.

The Vols were able to hold Georgia on the ensuing possession as true freshmen Corey Vereen had a timely sack on third down to give Tennessee the ball back. After the Tennessee offense failed to get a first down, Michael Palardy pinned the Georgia offense and Murray deep in their own territory.

As a result, momentum began to shift within Neyland in the Volunteer's favor. With UGA punter Colin Barber backed up near his own end zone, Jalen Reeves-Maybin snuck through the Georgia defenses and blocked the punt. Devaun Swafford scooped up the loose ball and sprinted into the checkerboards for a game tying score.

The 15-yard punt return for a touchdown was the second of Swafford's young career, this one coming on his 19th birthday.

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The two teams would swap scores for the rest of the half.

After a quick Georgia touchdown run by Brendan Douglas, UT drove 75 yards on nine plays, capped off by a Neal 1-yard run to tie things at 24-all.

Tennessee would march down the field again on their next possession, eating up more than six minutes of the game clock and moving the ball 80 yards, including two fourth-and-one conversions to set up a 7-yard Neal score that gave the Volunteers their first lead of the game, 31-24.

With just less than two minutes to go in the game, Murray took the ball on the Georgia 25 yard line and orchestrated a drive that resulted in a two-yard touchdown pass to Rantavious Wooten with five seconds left in the game and forcing overtime play.

A personal foul penalty and pass interference call on the Vols helped to extend Murray's drive.

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Still the Volunteer team didn't give up.

The Vols looked as though they had the go-ahead touchdown in overtime when Pig Howard dove for the pylons in the first overtime period, but the ball slipped from Howard's fingers resulting in a touchback.

The Tennessee defense allowed the Georgia offense no yards in their ensuing overtime possession, but Marshall Morgan connected on a game-winning 42-yard field goal to give No. 6 Georgia the 34-31 victory.

With the loss, the Vols fall to 10-5 all-time in overtime while Georgia improved to 5-4.

Pig Howard led the Vols in receiving with four catches for 70 yards and had several critical plays to extend Tennessee drives.

Tennessee wore its "Smokey gray" alternate uniforms Saturday in hopes of ending its history of

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frustration against ranked teams. The Vols hadn't used alternate uniforms since wearing black jerseys to a 31-13 victory over No. 21 South Carolina on Halloween 2009, their last win over a Top 25 team.