

Turnovers Doom App State In Loss to Furman

Written by Mike Flynn

Saturday, 19 October 2013 21:58

Five turnovers — Appalachian State University football's most in nearly four years — led directly to 24 Furman points in the Mountaineers' 27-10 loss to FU on Saturday afternoon at Paladin Stadium.

Appalachian State (1-6, 1-3 SoCon) outgained Furman (3-4, 2-2 SoCon) by a whopping 473-336 margin but lost four fumbles and had an interception returned 98 yards for a touchdown in its fourth-straight loss.

The turning point of the ballgame came midway through the second quarter when, trailing 6-3, the Mountaineers drove to FU's one yard line looking to take their first lead of the afternoon. However, after a false-start penalty by right tackle Will Corbin (Dunn, N.C./Triton) pushed Appalachian back to the six yard line, wide receiver Andrew Peacock (Durham, N.C./Northern Durham) was called on to throw his first pass of the season on a reverse. Peacock threw into traffic and the pass was picked off by Furman linebacker Gary Wilkins at the two yard line. Wilkins leaped over Peacock at the 15 yard line and no other Mountaineer had a chance to catch him as he rumbled 98 yards for a touchdown that likely represented a 14-point swing from what could have been a 10-6 App State lead to a 13-3 deficit.

Appalachian did not get any closer the rest of the way, as the Paladins turned two more Mountaineer miscues into touchdowns in the third quarter to extend their lead to 27-3. Despite posting their second-highest yardage output of the season, the Mountaineers did not find the end zone until a 39-yard pass from Kameron Bryant (Cary, N.C./Panther Creeek) to Simms

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McElfresh (Charlotte, N.C./Charlotte Christian) cut the deficit to 27-10 with 3:01 to go in the game.

The five turnovers marred otherwise stout performances on both sides of the ball for Appalachian State. In addition to racking up 137 more yards than the Paladins, the Mountaineers also had a 30-14 advantage in first downs and allowed FU to convert just 2-of-10 third downs while converting 7-of-14 third- and fourth-down opportunities of their own. On the flipside, the results may have been even worse considering that Appalachian fumbled eight times total but lost only four. Despite losing only half of the eight fumbles, the Mountaineers' five total turnovers were their most since they had five miscues in a 20-13 win over South Carolina State in the opening round of the 2009 NCAA Division I Football Championship on Nov. 28, 2009.

Individually, Bryant completed 32-of-40 passes and set career highs for completions, attempts and passing yards (307) in Saturday's loss. McElfresh led all receivers with a career-best 65 yards on three catches while Peacock had a game-high eight receptions for 57 yards. True freshman running back Marcus Cox (Dacula, Ga./Dacula) recorded the second 100-yard rushing game of his career with a game-high 118 yards on 21 carries (5.6 yards per rush).

Defensively, inside linebackers Karl Anderson (Pilot Point, Texas/Pilot Point) and Brandon McGowan (Suwanee, Ga./North Gwinnett) led the Mountaineers with nine tackles apiece.

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Appalachian State looks to snap its four-game skid (its longest losing streak since Sept. 4-25, 1993) when it returns home to renew its fierce rivalry with future Sun Belt Conference rival Georgia Southern (4-2, 2-2 SoCon) next Saturday at Kidd Brewer Stadium. Black Saturday kickoff is set for 3:30 p.m.

NOTES: Appalachian State lost to Furman for only the fourth time in 15 meetings since 2000 ... however, following their last matchup as Southern Conference rivals, FU holds a 23-19-3 advantage in the all-time series and is the only SoCon member that has a winning all-time record against the Mountaineers ... Cox has rushed for at least 79 yards in all five starts of his career ... with seven catches, senior Tony Washington (High Point, N.C./T.W. Andrews) moved into 10th place in Appalachian State history with 113 career receptions ... McElfresh's touchdown catch was the first of his career.

Photo Courtesy: Scott Satterfield, App State Athletics