

VOLS UPSET SOUTH CAROLINA, 23-21

Written by Brian Matthew Bruce
Saturday, 19 October 2013 22:00

Tennessee added another Brick to Butch Jones' Brick-By-Brick mantra by rallying to upset No. 11/9 South Carolina on Saturday afternoon, 23-21, at Neyland Stadium in front of 95,736.

The Vols' victory ended a 19-game losing streak against ranked teams that dated to a 31-13 victory, also over South Carolina (No. 21) on Oct. 31, 2009. It was also UT's first win over a Top 15 team since an Oct. 27, 2007 win also against the Gamecocks, who were 15th prior to that game.

On the game-winning drive, Justin Worley hit Marquez North for a clutch 39-yard pass on third and 10 to the South Carolina 36 who reeled in the grab with just one hand. Marlin Lane took over scampering for 25 yards on four plays to the one-yard line where Jones smartly let the clock run down to three seconds setting up senior Michael Palardy for the game-winning 19-yard field goal.

Palardy drilled the ball through the uprights giving the Vols the upset victory and the Vols' first game-winning field goal since James Wilhoit kicked a 50-yard field goal with six seconds to go to lift No. 13 Tennessee to a 30-28 victory over 11th-ranked Florida on Sept. 18, 2004.

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Worley, who two years ago made his first career start against his home state Gamecocks, managed the UT game plan and threw for 179 yards on 19-of-34 passing with one touchdown and no interceptions.

The Vols' running back tandem of Rajion Neal (24-77, TD) and Lane (12-55) combined for 132 yards. South Carolina's Mike Davis, the SEC's leading rusher, rumbled for 137 yards.

Freshman Marquez North finished with three catches for 102 yards, the first Vol freshman to go over 100 receiving yards since Justin Hunter had 114 vs. Ole Miss on Nov. 13, 2010. Hunter's two 100-yard games as a freshmen were the first by a Vol since Robert Meachem in 2004 vs. Kentucky. .

Pig Howard had a career-high eight catches for 33 yards including a 6-yard TD reception. Tight end Brendan Downs also posted a career-high in catches with three.

Tennessee's defense played strong against a team that piled up 52 points and 537 yards of offense at Arkansas a week ago. The Vols forced Connor Shaw (7-of-21 for 161 yards) into his first interception of the season, ending his streak of 177 consecutive attempts without an INT. Freshman Cameron Sutton picked off Shaw at the UT 27 to thwart the Gamecocks' first drive of the second half.

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The Tennessee victory was Shaw's first loss to an unranked team in his career as a starter.

The Vols front line also sacked Shaw four times on the day, the most for the quarterback this season, including a career best 2.5 sacks by senior Marlon Walls.

South Carolina cut the deficit to 17-14 on a 21-yard run by Davis with 9:46 left in the third quarter.

South Carolina took a 21-17 lead on a Shaw 1-yard plunge to regain the lead for the Gamecocks with 2:50 left in the third quarter.

After leading for 32 of the game's first 42 minutes, before falling behind, 21-17, Tennessee put together a drive to get within one at 21-20 on a Michael Palardy 33-yard field goal with 10:11 left in the fourth. A 48-yard connection from Worley to freshman Marquez North set the Vols up on the Gamecocks' 16-yard line.

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Down 7-3 early in the second quarter, the Vols tallied back-to-back touchdowns in less than five minutes to take a 17-7 lead with 6:11 left in the first half. The Vols put together a steady 10-play, 75-yard drive that finished with a 6-yard TD strike from Worley to Howard with 8:36 left in the second quarter to make it 10-7. Then after a 3-and-out, including a 4-yard sack by Danny O'Brien, the Vols went back to work on offense.

Tennessee engineered a 7-play, 61-yard drive on the strength of the ground game as backs Neal and Lane combined for 45 yards as Neal finished the drive with a 5-yard run, which gave UT a double-figure lead against the Gamecocks, 17-7.

Tennessee maintained that 17-7 lead at halftime for the team's largest lead at the half vs. a ranked team since leading South Carolina, 21-3 at half in that 2009 win -- the Vols' last win over a ranked squad.

Butch Jones maintained his nearly perfect record when his teams lead at halftime, as his squads are now 43-2 when leading after 30 minutes.

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South Carolina took a 7-3 lead on a 76-yard bomb from Connor Shaw to Damiere Byrd early in the second quarter.

Palardy gave the Vols a 3-0 lead on a 37-yard field goal with 9:14 left in the first quarter.

Tennessee is now 23-7-2 all-time vs. South Carolina and 15-2 in Knoxville. Butch Jones moved to 9-1 in his games following open dates.

The Vols head to the road for their next two games taking on No. 1 Alabama next Saturday in Tuscaloosa in a game that will air nationally on CBS with a 3:30 p.m. kickoff.

Tennessee will make its first trip to Missouri the following week before returning home for the Auburn game on Nov. 9, which serves as the 2013 Homecoming Game.