

VOLS DROP 31-3 DECISION AT #10 MIZZOU

Written by Betsy Devine
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Tennessee continued its gauntlet of a schedule, playing a ranked team for the sixth time in seven weeks as the Vols suffered a 31-3 loss at No. 10 Missouri on Saturday night at Faurot Field.

The Vols (4-5, 1-4 SEC) were unable to knock off the Tigers (8-1, 4-1), who suffered their only defeat of the season last week against South Carolina in overtime, 27-24.

In a battle of freshman quarterbacks, Missouri's Maty Mauk had the best game of his young career, as he threw for three touchdowns and was 12-of-25 for 163 yards through the air. In his debut as a starter, Tennessee's Joshua Dobbs threw for 240 yards on 26-of-42. Dobbs became the eighth true freshman to start in Tennessee history.

Mauk ran for a career-high 114 yards as Mizzou racked up 339 yards on the ground, including 197 yards in the first half.

In the first half, Mauk connected on TD passes to Dorial Green-Beckham (9 yards), L'Damian Washington (26 yards) and Marcus Lucas (40 yards).

Dobbs also led the Vols in rushing with 45 yards, including a 33-yarder where he dashed down the sideline. The run was the longest by a Vols' quarterback since a 38-yard run by Tee Martin back in 1999.

Vols' sophomore Alton Pig Howard had a career-high 11 catches for a team-best and career-high 89 receiving yards. Marquez North had seven catches for 68 yards.

Howard's 11 catches are the most since Kelley Washington had 11 vs. LSU on Sept. 29, 2001. The 11 catches, tied for the fifth-most in a game in Tennessee history.

For the second week in a row the Vols had a rough first half. Last week at Alabama, UT trailed

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35-0 after 30 minutes. Missouri held a three-touchdown advantage on Saturday.

Missouri took a 24-3 lead on a 40-yard bomb from Mauk to Lucas with 1:44 left in the first half. The Vols got on the scoreboard on the previous drive on a 51-yard field goal by Michael Palardy, the second-longest kick of his career. That made it 17-3.

The opportunistic Tigers converted and E.J. Gaines interception into a 17-0 lead one play after the Tigers secured a turnover for the 39th consecutive game. Mauk connected with a wide open Washington on a 26-yard touchdown with 6:35 left in the first half.

Mizzou took a 7-0 lead on a 9-yard TD pass from Mauk to Green-Beckham with 2:20 left in the first quarter.

The three points scored by the Vols were the fewest since tallying three against South Carolina in a 14-3 loss on Oct. 29, 2011.

The Vols return to action next Saturday as No. 8 Auburn comes to Knoxville for homecoming at Neyland Stadium. That game will kickoff at 12 Noon on ESPN and the Vol Network.