

West Virginia 29 – Colorado 22

Well Mountaineers it all worked out this past Saturday as the West Virginia Mountaineers were able to hold off the Colorado Buffaloes 29-22 and a sloppy but still effective effort doing what they needed to do too win this Military Appreciation Week contest in front of many members of the great 2006 that were in attendance at the game. There was a nice interview with soon to be College Football Hall of Fame tailback Steve Slaton about his time at West Virginia.

Being coach Dion Sanders first time in Morgantown it was exciting for that reason alone. Coach Primes team had been struggling coming to Saturdays game but were debuting a new highly regarded freshman quarterback Julian Lewis making his first college start. Like Mountaineer quarterback Scottie Fox Jr Lewis is a true freshman but he is just 2 months past his 18th birthday where Scottie Fox is 22 years old. Lewis accommodated himself well in this game given the circumstances completing 22 of 35 passes for 299 yards and 2 touchdowns. He was also sacked 7 times by relentless Mountaineer defenders and harassed all game long with at least 10 quarterback hurries.

WVU opened the scoring late in the 1st quarter at the 4:35 mark when they blocked a punt by the Buffaloes junior punter Damone Greaves through the back oof the endzone for a safety and a 2-0 lead. On the free ensuing kick after the safety the Mountaineer offense drove 75 yards in 12 plays which ended with a 2 yard touchdown run by converted Bandit defender Curis Jones Jr.

Jones is usually the Bandit which is a sort of a hybrid half safety/half linebacker position. At 6 ft 4 in 226 lbs Jones was 46 pounds heavier than any other running back the Mountaineers had available due to the injuries in the running back room this season and since he played both ways in high schoola dn was a successful running back the Mountaineer coaches have been running him on offense during practice. Coach Rodriquez made the statement after the game that Joes could be a real weapon on offense. I tend to agree, especially in short yardage situations.

On this 2-yard TD run Jones was clearly stopped by Colorado defenders but he busted through for the touchdown anyway and with just 15 seconds to go in the 1st quarter it was 9-0 EERs. The Buffaloes would get on the board on a 70-yard 13 play drive that stalled on the Mountaineer 5-yard line. Coach Prime elected to at least get on the scoreboard so he settled for a 23-yard field goal by senior kicker Alejandro Mata and with 6:02 to go in the half it was 9-3 EERs. WVU would answer on the next drive marching 75 yards on just 6 plays with the highlight of the drive being a beautiful 69-yard sideling bomb from Scottie Fox Jr to freshman tailback Diore Hubbard down to the Buffaloes 4-yard line. 3 plays later Fox found freshman Tight End Ryan Moore for a 4-yard TD and with just over 3 minutes to go before the break it was 16-3 EERs.

The Buffaloes would immediately answer on the ensuing possession traveling 77 yards on just 6 plays ending with a 9-yard TD pass from Lewis to sophomore wideout Joe Williams and with just 45 seconds to go in the half it was 16-9 WVU as the Buffaloes shanked the extra point. WVU would use those 45 seconds very efficiently driving 44 yards on 6 plays setting up a 44-yard field goal by the Mountaineers fine senior kicker Kade Hensley as time expired so we went into the break with the Mountaineers holding a 19-9 advantage.

WVU took the kick to open the 2nd half but could do nothing, in fact this was the low point of the game as we saw 5 consecutive possessions where the teams did nothing except give the ball to the other team. This stretch featured a lost fumble by Colorado and two interceptions by Scottie Fox Jr, the second of which was a brutal ill-advised pass. Unfortunately, the 2nd of these interceptions at the WVU 20 resulted in a 23-yard touchdown pass from Lewis to junior wideout Omarion Miller and just like that it was 19-16 Mountaineers.

On the ensuing possession WVU would fortunately answer this touchdown with a score of their own driving 56 yards on 15 plays before the drive stalled at the Buffalo 19 but Kade Hensley salvaged the drive with a very crucial 37-yard field goal and with 1:47 to go in the 3rd quarter it was 22-16 EERs. Of course the Buffaloes at this point really believed they could win this game and mounted another scoring drive going 53 yards on 6 plays but thankfully the drive stalled at the WVU 12 and the Buffaloes had to settle for a 37 yard field goal by Mata to cut the WVU lead to just a field goal at 22-19.

After both teams punted West Virginia put the game away driving 57 yards on 10 plays and taking 5:33 off the 4th quarter clock before our converted Bandit turned tailback Curtis Jones Jr entered the game again and busted in from 4 yards out to extend the Mountaineer lead too 29-19 with 4:15 to goo in the game. The Buffaloes would manage another fooled goal to make it a 29-22 final score but the Mountaineers recovered the onside kick and ran out the clock for their 4th victory in this very tough season.

Now it gets very tough and as happy as I am that the Mountaineers have won 2 in a row and have looked like a real football team the las 3 games counting the tough 23-17 loss to TCU on Homecoming I believe it ends here, I believe that WVU can stay in the game for at least a half maybe more but ultimately will lose to a very good Arizona State team on the road in Tempe Arizona next Saturday afternoon. I do believe they have a punchers chance against the Sun Devils but not much more than that. Then two weeks later on November 29th in Morgantown on senior day they face the #8 Ranked Texas Tech Red Raiders. This team is a good as any in the nation on offense and defense. Unfortunately, I do not Forsee any pay that leads too a possible Mountaineer victory in this game. In fact, I would considerate a major accomplishment if the lost by less than 4 touchdowns.