

## **“Poor Start, Great Finish”**

**Mountaineers Overcome Brutal Start to Dominate Jay Hawks 38-17  
WVU Offense Scores 38 Straight Points after Trailing 10-0 Lead  
Leddie Brown and Mountaineer Defensive Lead the Way**

**Next up: WVU at Texas Tech October 24th at 5:30 PM in Lubbock**

Well Mountaineers WVU survives a brutal start which saw them spot Kansas, the perennial cellar dwellers of the Big 12 a 10-0 lead before figuring things out and putting up 38 unanswered points before a 92-yard Pooka Williams Jr kickoff return with 1:45 to go in the game made the final score a bit closer than it actually was.

This contest could not have started out much worse for West Virginia as the Mountaineer offense turned the ball over on the 3<sup>rd</sup> play of their opening series on a T.J. Simmons fumble at their own 41-yard line and 7 plays later the Jay Hawks true freshman placekicker Jacob Borcila banged home a 41-yard field goal and it was 3-0 Kansas. On the ensuing series the Mountaineer offense went 3 and out and after a relatively poor punt of just 33 yards by WVU freshman punter Kolton McGhee Kansas took over at the WVU 45 yard line and just 3 plays later KU quarterback Miles Kendrick found senior wideout Andrew Parchment for a 43 yard touchdown on a ball that initially looked to be intercepted by WVU sophomore cornerback Nicktroy Fortune but instead was tipped to the Kansas receiver for a touchdown. This really was one of those crazy plays where you wonder how could you possibly have a tipped pass to a receiver in stride that never slowed down and have it fall into their hands? But none the less with 9:21 still to go in the first quarter it was

10-0 Kansas. Since we all believed this was a game that West Virginia should win going away it was stunning to see WVU trailing at home by double digits to a team that had not won a conference road game in 10 years.

With 4:53 to go in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter the mountaineer Offense would take over at midfield after a Alec Sinkfield 15 yard punt return and 3 plays later Jarrett Doege would find Brice Ford-Wheaton for a 33 yard touchdown and WVU was finally on the board 10-7. On the ensuing series WVU would get an interception by senior safety Alonzo Addae which he returned 22yds to the Kansas 30 but actually lost 8 yards when Jarrett Doege was sacked at the Kansas 38 yard line and rather than attempt a 54yd field goal the Mountaineers punted the ball away.

After a Jay Hawk punt the Mountaineer offense would mount a 10 play 52 yard drive to the Kansas 27yd line but the drive stalled there and senior placekicker Evan Staley would miss a 44yd field goal, which is why they didn't even consider the possible 54yd attempt on the previous series. Staley is definitely struggling early in the season.

However the Mountaineer defense continued to shut down the struggling Kansas offense who went 3 and out again and on their next offensive series and the Mountaineers would take the lead for good after mounting a 10 play 91 yard drive capped off by a Jarrett Doege 6yd touchdown pass to Leddie Brown and with 3:25 to go in the 1<sup>st</sup> half the Mountaineers had their first lead in the game at 14-10. Because of some terrible clock management by the Jay Hawks coaching staff when they could have easily run out the clock or at least left little to know time for the Mountaineer offense to do anything they actually stopped the clock twice on their final drive of the half and punted the ball back to the Mountaineers with still 1:04 seconds to go before the break. The Mountaineer offense would take advantage driving 53 yards in 8 plays to the KU 16 yard line before Evan Staley connected this time on a 33 yard filed goal and it was 17-10 WVU at the half.

The Mountaineers came out much more determined offensively and defensively in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half but they still were not without hiccups on offense as on their first series of the 2<sup>nd</sup> half Jarrett Doege threw what I believe to be the worst interception of his brief Mountaineer career. After moving the ball 47 yards on 7 plays to the Kansas 23yd line Doege, I guess didn't see the 6' 5" 290 defensive lineman Malcom Lee standing directly in front of his so he tossed him the football which he returned 11 yards to the Kansas 37 yard line.

I was particularly upset with this as the drive itself was fluid and it looked like they had figured out what they wanted to do only to make a brutal decision on that pass but as they did throughout the game the Mountaineer defense continued to allow the Jay Hawks virtually nothing in the way of positive yards and after a 62 yard punt by Kansas senior punter Kyle Thompson the Mountaineer offense took over at their 4 yard line and two plays later it was Leddie time as the junior tailback busted up the middle for an 87 yard touchdown run and with 3:37 to go in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter it was suddenly a 24-10 lead and the Mountaineers finally had a little breathing room. It didn't take long for the WVU offense to strike again as after yet another 3 and out by the Jay Hawk offense the Mountaineers took over at the Kansas 48 yard line and 4 plays later Jarrett Doege found sophomore wideout Sam James with an 8 yard touchdown pass and just 5 seconds into the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter it was 31-10 WVU. It was great to see Sam James actually catch and secure that TD pass and he had dropped 3 passes in the 1<sup>st</sup> half and has been dropping or simply not getting to catchable footballs far too often this season.

The Mountaineer offense would put the bow on this game with a 9 play 65 yard drive capped off by an Alec Sinkfield 3 yard run and with just under 2 minutes to go in the game it was 38-10 West Virginia. On the ensuing kickoff however I felt a bit back for Coach Neal Brown as he basically put in a completely different kick return team to get them some game action which didn't result in what the coach was looking for as Pooka Williams Jr, who had been held in check all game gaining just 21 yards on 11 carries got a bit of revenge bringing the kick back 92 yards

to the house for a meaningless touchdown that made the final score look just a little bit more presentable at 38-17 Mountaineers.

You know this really was a game of two halves and even though the Mountaineers didn't really seem prepared to play in the beginning of this game we saw a great deal of positives before it was over. Leddie Brown finished with 195 yards on 18 carries as the WVU offense rushed for 226 yards on the day. Jarrett Doege rallied from a poor start to complete 26 of 44 passes for 318 yards and 3 touchdowns, of course he did have that brutal interception to start the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter but in all he kept the pocket alive, extended plays and the Mountaineer coaches did a great job of avoiding the constant blitzing by the Kansas defenders with a barrage of shout out and screen passes that kept several drives alive. In all the West Virginia offense finish with 544 yards of total offense and even though this was Kansas the way the game started it didn't look like they would be able to get 200 yards of total offense.

Defensively the Mountaineers continued to play strong and fundamentally sound defense throughout the entire game. The only touchdown allowed by the defense was the before mentioned crazy tipped pass to the defender in stride for a long touchdown which was a play that could just as easily been intercepted. On the day the West Virginia defense allowed just 95 yards passing on 23 pass attempt, 43 of those yards on the crazy touchdown pass so for the rest of the game the Jay Hawks has 51 yards passing on 22 attempts. Kansas didn't has nearly that much success running the football as the net rushing was 62 yards on 31 attempts for 2.0 yards per carry. In all just 157 yards of total offense. This is significant as the Mountaineer defense came into this game #1 in the nation on defensive yards allowed averaging just 240 yards of total offense per game. They were #8 in the Nation in rushing yards allowed at 91.8 yards a game. The Mountaineer defense was #3 in the country in passing yards allowed at 148.5 yards per game and #10 Nationally in point per game at 18.8. The Mountaineer defense is also ranked #5 in sacks. In 4 games this season WVU has produced 20 sacks

and the strong defensive line led by the Stills brothers is of course a big reason for that success.

The Mountaineer offense has some notice in the National statistical rankings as well. WVU is currently 24<sup>th</sup> in rushing the football at 189 yards a game. The Mountaineers have rushed for 757 yards so far through 4 games. Last season when the Mountaineers were 2<sup>nd</sup> from the bottom Nationally rushing the football, they only had 800+ yards through 12 games. Most of this rushing success can be attributed to junior Tailback Leddie Brown who currently ranks #5 Nationally averaging over 128 yards a game with 5 rushing touchdowns.

One constant negative through all 4 games this season are penalties. WVU has been flagged for 40 penalties in 4 games for an average of 10 per game. The total penalty yardage for these 40 flags is 369 yards or roughly 92 yards a game in penalties. This is nowhere near the top statistically as Central Florida for example is averaging 14 penalties per game and 110 yards a game. Even still it is a statistic that will hurt WVU in these tougher games later in the season and it is something that is correctable, we hope anyway.

So now WVU hits the road for a 5:30 pm kickoff next Saturday in Lubbock Texas against the Texas Tech Red Raiders. Even though the Mountaineers will be a small road underdog in that game it is a game that they can and need to win to move to 4-1 on the season with a big matchup the following week against the Kansas State Wildcats in Morgantown.

