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### **Vanderbilt Defeats Georgia Tech 35-27 in 18th Birmingham Bowl**

**BIRMINGHAM, Ala.** – Vanderbilt quarterback Diego Pavia accounted for five touchdowns in leading the Commodores to a 35-27 victory over Georgia Tech in the 18th Birmingham Bowl on Friday afternoon at Protective Stadium.

Pavia threw three touchdown passes and rushed for two. His five total touchdowns were tied for the second most in Birmingham Bowl history and it led Vanderbilt to its first postseason victory since 2013 when the Commodores defeated Houston 41-24 in the BBVA Compass Bowl in Birmingham. Vanderbilt is now 5-4-1 all-time in bowl games.

Both teams finished the season at 7-6 overall.

Pavia was 13-of-21 for 160 yards and three touchdowns, while adding 84 rushing yards and two additional scores on 17 carries.

On the defensive side of the ball, Vanderbilt's Nick Rinaldi set career highs in tackles (10) and sacks (2), while Bryan Longwell added nine stops. Georgia Tech outgained Vanderbilt 394-306, but the Commodores forced two second half turnovers which helped them seize control of the contest.

For Georgia Tech, Jamal Haynes had his third 100-yard game of the season with 17 carries for 136 yards, while quarterback Haynes King was 25-of-33 for 204 yards, three touchdowns and one interception. However, two second half turnovers (one interception, one fumble) hampered the Yellow Jackets, along with converting just 5-of-12 on third down.

Vanderbilt struck first with 2:26 left in the first quarter as Pavia found tight end Cole Spence for a 7-yard pass to open the scoring.

The Yellow Jackets tied it up on the next possession as King engineered a 15-play, 75-yard drive that took 7:20 off the clock and capped it with a 2-yard pass to Ryland Goede for his first touchdown reception of the season.

Pavia then gave Vanderbilt a 14-7 lead with 1:55 left on a 2-yard touchdown run, but Georgia Tech ended the half with a 43-yard field goal from Adian Birr to make the score 14-10 at the half.

Georgia Tech forced Vanderbilt to punt on each of its first two second half possession, but the Jackets could only turn those stops into three points, and a 33-yarder from Birr with 8:34 left in the third got Georgia Tech to within one at 14-13.

Vanderbilt took its next possession 56 yards in five plays and was assisted by three Georgia Tech penalties as Pavia found Eli Stowers for a 3-yard score with :56 left in the third and gave the Commodores a 21-13 lead.

On the first play of Georgia Tech's next possession, CJ Taylor intercepted Haynes King and returned it to the Georgia Tech 11-yard line. It took Vanderbilt three plays to find the end zone with Pavia tossing his third touchdown of the game on a 7-yard pass to Quincy Skinner Jr.

Pavia then made the score 35-13 with 9:59 left in the contest with a 6-yard rush.

A 45-minute lightning delay then ensued and after play resumed, Georgia Tech scored twice on touchdown passes from King to make the score 35-27, however, Georgia Tech wasn't able to convert either of its two on-side kicks and Vanderbilt was able to take a knee and win the game.