



SMU Wins Sixth BBVA Compass Bowl Over Pitt, 28-6

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. ---- SMU jumped out to a 21-0 first quarter lead and held the Pittsburgh offense in check for most of the game as the Mustangs went on to claim a 28-6 victory over the Panthers in the Sixth Annual BBVA Compass Bowl at Legion Field.

Rishaad Wimbley ran for two scores for SMU (8-5), which tied a school record by playing in its third straight bowl under coach June Jones.

Quarterback J.J. McDermott completed 16 of 26 passes for 239 yards and connected with Darius Johnson on a 50-yard touchdown early in the first period. Johnson, who was named the game's Most Valuable Player, had seven receptions in the game for 120 yards.

Pittsburgh (6-7) was playing in the bowl game for the second year in a row, having defeated Kentucky (27-10) a year earlier. The Big East Conference fell to 5-1 all-time in the bowl game.

Pittsburgh (6-7) was held without a first down in the opening period and finished with only 12 in the game. The Panthers netted just 10 rushing yards in the contest, the fewest in bowl history, and totaled just 205 yards of offense.

The only points in the game for Pitt came on a pair of field goals by Kevin Harper. Harper booted a 32-yarder in the second quarter and added a 34-yard kick in the third period.

Pittsburgh was coached by defensive coordinator Keith Patterson, who took over after Todd Graham left to coach at Arizona State.

McDermott beat Pitt's blitz when he lofted a 50-yard touchdown pass to Johnson for the Mustangs' first touchdown at the 10:15 mark of the opening period. The 50-yard pass play was the longest in the six-year history of the bowl.

After McDermott's 1-yard run capped an eight-play drive to push the lead to 14-0, SMU's Ja'Gared Davis hit Pitt quarterback Tino Sunseri, forcing a fumble that was recovered by Taylor Reed at the Panthers' 27.

McDermott's 19-yard pass to Cole Beasley set up Wimbley's 2-yard touchdown run. Wimbley added a 1-yard touchdown run in the third quarter.

A series of key plays went against Pitt in the second quarter. First, there was an inadvertent whistle on an onsidess kick attempt that the Panthers recovered.

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Then, with SMU still leading 21-3 later in the quarter, Pitt drove from its 16 to a first and goal at the Mustangs' 10. On third down from the 5, Sunseri's pass bounced off tailback Isaac Bennett. The deflection was caught by SMU linebacker Stephon Sanders for an interception.

The half ended with Pitt again coming away with no points at the end of a long drive. Harper's 47-yard field goal attempt hit the left upright to end a 14-play drive.

The Mustangs' defense caused havoc for the Panthers for most of the game. SMU had seven sacks and nine tackles for loss. Davis was the tackles leader with nine stops.