



Vanderbilt's Fourth Quarter Surge Lifts Commodores To 41-34 Victory Over Houston

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. ---- Vanderbilt built a 24-0 halftime lead but had to withstand a furious third quarter rally by Houston as the Commodores captured the Eighth BBVA Compass Bowl at Legion Field, 41-24.

Vanderbilt, with the victory, posted a 9-win season for the first time in program history. The Commodores' appearance in the BBVA Compass Bowl was their third consecutive bowl trip, also a first for the Southeastern Conference school. Vanderbilt (9-4) improved its record to 16-4 in its last 20 games.

The Commodores surged to their 24-point first half lead against the Cougars in large part by limiting Houston to just 22 yards and one first down before intermission.

Senior wide receiver Jordan Matthews, the SEC's all-time leading receiver in receptions and receiving yards, scored on a pair of 50-yard touchdown passes from Patton Robinette in the opening half. Matthews recorded five catches for a bowl record 143 receiving yards, all in the first half. Robinette also added a first quarter score on an 8-yard touchdown run.

Houston (8-5), which had only 16 passing yards and six on the ground in the first 30 minutes of the game, came out of the locker room at halftime and looked like a different team. The Cougars outgained the Commodores, 309-47, in the third period and turned a 24-point deficit at the half into a tie game.

A 67-yard touchdown pass from John O'Korn to Deontay Greenberry with :19 to play in the third quarter capped a huge turnaround for Houston. O'Korn also hit Markeith Ambles on a 6-yard touchdown pass and Kenneth Farrow scored on a 6-yard run to account for the Cougars' three touchdowns in the quarter.

The momentum shifted quickly after halftime when Houston defensive tackle Tomme Mark forced a Robinette fumble to give the Cougars possession at the Vandy 6-yard line. Farrow's 6-rush on the first play after the turnover put Houston the board.

The Commodores used the passing game to seize control early in the game but relied on the run to regain the lead in the fourth quarter. Tied at 24, Vanderbilt ran rushing plays on six of seven snaps and drove 82 yards in 3:28 to take a 31-24 lead. The last three plays of the drive were a 38-yard run by Jerron Seymour, followed by back-to-back rushes of 13 and 21 yards by Brian Kimbrow, the latter a touchdown at the 9:28 mark.

Vanderbilt's Jahmel McIntosh intercepted a pass by Houston's O'Korn on the next possession, setting up a 35-yard field goal by Carey Spear to give the Commodores a 10-point lead with 6:06 to play.

Vandy would add another touchdown with less than two minutes to play after O'Korn was intercepted by Andre Hal who returned the pick 29 yards to the Houston 2-yard line. Seymour scored the game's final touchdown on a 2-yard run. Seymour finished with 89 rushing yards on 20 carries.

O'Korn passed for 228 yards and a pair of touchdowns for Houston which was playing in its eighth bowl game in the past 11 years and its 22nd overall.