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McMurry Holds Off OPSU

By Justine Gaskamp on 09/29/2013

Abilene, Texas-The Aggies (1-4) traveled to Abilene, Texas this week to play the McMurry War Hawks (1-3) in a game full of offensive action. This was the War Hawks first home game of the season and they wore camouflage jerseys in support of Military Appreciation Day. The guns were firing early as the scoreboard saw much work all night.

McMurry opened the game with possession as it took only 1:43 for them to cover 75 yards and score on a 20 yard pass and catch from quarterback Gabe Rodriguez to Greg Livingston. The extra point attempt was no good as the Aggies held strong on the conversion. The Aggies' first two possessions resulted in punts and McMurry capitalized by scoring on another field length possession as Rodriguez again found a receiver in the end zone.

The Aggies offense finally sparked life with just under four minutes left in the opening quarter as Caleb Holbrook found the speedy receiver Jamal White on a 50 yard pass and completion to put the Aggies in striking distance. After two carries by Chris McClendon, Kameron Young scored his third touchdown on the season from one yard out to make the score 12-6.

The second quarter opened with another drive and score of over 80 yards for McMurry. The Aggies would respond on their next possession as Holbrook ran in to score from seven yards out to make the score 18-13 McMurry. McMurry, however, would come back to score three consecutive touchdowns before the half to make the score 32-13.

The War Hawks' scoring would continue in the second half as they drove the ball 55 yards in four plays with just under 13 minutes remaining in the 3rd quarter. On the next possession for McMurry, the Aggies' defense forced them to a punting situation and made a big time special teams play as Dustin Clark and a host of Aggie defenders burst into the back line of the War Hawks punting unit and tackled the punter at the McMurry 11 yard line. Young then scored his second touchdown of the game to make the score 39-20. McMurry would again score on their next possession as Rodriquez found Jeret Smith for another touchdown pass and reception.

The 4th quarter opened with the Aggies gaining possession. On what looked like a broken play on 4th and long, Holbrook heaved a pass 47 yards into a crowd of players; however, receiver Timothy Hollingshed made an acrobatic catch over three McMurry defenders to snag the ball on the McMurry one yard line. Young would again find his way into the endzone for his 3rd score of the game. After two more scores from the War Hawks, the final score favored McMurry 53-27.

The Aggie offense played exceptionally well gaining 356 total yards. Holbrook went 14-31 passing with 231 yards. White led receivers with his 119 on five receptions. For the running game, Rodrick Moore and McClendon led the way with 51 and 50 yards, respectively. Leading the defense were Glen Bonner, Tanner Hallford, and Junior Vimoto who had 9,9, and 8 tackles, respectively. Safety Xazier Murry also contributed with an interception.

The Aggies' head coach Russell Gaskamp had this to say after the game: "McMurry is a good football team. Their record did not indicate what type of team they have. They had two Division 1 losses like us, and we knew they were going to be good. I was surprised that their team speed and physicality was better than ours. We did not play well on defense; we missed way too many tackles and did not keep the ball in front of us. On offense, we continued to shoot ourselves in the foot on 1st and 2nd down situations which led to too many 3rd and long conversion attempts. We will need to regroup and refocus for an improved Wayland Baptist team in Plainview, TX this upcoming weekend. We have resilient kids though that will bounce back."

The Aggies are on the road for the third consecutive week this weekend as they take on Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas; game time is set for 2 p.m.

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