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Undefeated Ouachita Tigers win Battle of the Ravine, earn GAC title & gain No. 1 regional ranking in playoffs



By Kyle Parris, sports information director, and Trennis Henderson, vice president for communications

November 17, 2014

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ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- The Ouachita Baptist University Tigers rewrote OBU football history on Saturday with their 41-20 victory over rival Henderson State University. In addition to winning the 88th Battle of the Ravine, the Tigers finished the regular season with an undefeated, untied 10-0 record for the first time in program history.

Along with claiming the Great American Conference championship outright with the win, the Tigers finished the season with a No. 1 ranking in Super Region Three of the NCAA Division II Football Championship. That means Ouachita will host a second round matchup on Saturday, Nov. 29, also a first since the Tigers have been competing in D-II.

The playoff game will pit Ouachita against the winner of a first-round game between the University of Minnesota Duluth, also undefeated at 11-0, and Northwest Missouri State University, the defending national champions with a 10-1 season record. Ouachita will host the Nov. 29 postseason game in Cliff Harris Stadium where the Tigers remain undefeated in the stadium's inaugural season.

Tickets will go on sale Wednesday, Nov. 19, in the OBU Business Services office, 140 Cone-Bottoms Hall. Reserved tickets are \$15 and general admission tickets are \$8. OBU student tickets are \$5. Reserved tickets not claimed by season ticket holders will be available to the general public beginning Tuesday, Nov. 25.

Watch the playoff game live!

During Saturday's Battle of the Ravine, the Tigers trailed 17-7 at the end of the first quarter before outscoring the HSU Reddies 34-3 to finish the season undefeated and claim the GAC title with the 41-20 victory.

Senior Steven Kehner rushed for 126 yards and three touchdowns, setting the GAC single-season record with 16 touchdowns this season. Quarterback Kiehl Frazier went 12-22 for 177 yards and two touchdowns. He also rushed for 27 yards and scored from one yard out to put the game away for Ouachita.

The Tigers intercepted All-American Reddie quarterback Kevin Rogers twice in the second half, one by safety Zack Mitchell and the other by defensive end Kyle Lamothe. The Tigers' defensive line got to Rogers three times, with two of those sack coming in the second half.

Ouachita held the Reddies to 362 yards of total offense, 148.5 yards below their season average of 510.5. Henderson State managed only 49 rushing yards in the game, nearly 100 yards below their season average.

Henderson scored on their second drive of the game to take a 7-0 lead. Ryan McDonald carried it in from two yards out early in the first quarter. Ouachita responded on the ensuing drive, scoring on a 38-yard touchdown pass from Frazier to Jalen Jones.

Kevin Rogers found JaVante Mack on a 16-yard route to put the Reddies up 14-7 with 4:19 left in the opening quarter. The Tigers fumbled on the next possession, giving HSU the ball on the Ouachita 14 yard line. The Tigers held Henderson to a field goal and Ouachita trailed 17-7 at the end of the first quarter.

With 9:34 left in the second quarter, Steven Kehner punched it in for Ouachita from three yards out, capping a six-play, 54-yard drive. After forcing a Reddie punt, Kehner took the ball on a first and 10 from the HSU 45 yard line and ran untouched into the end zone to give the Tigers a 21-17 lead.

With the Tigers driving, HSU forced another Ouachita fumble, recovering it on their own 44 yard line. Rogers completed five straight passes, getting the Reddies into field goal position. Henderson State closed within one on a 47-yard field goal, trailing 21-20 at the half.

Henderson was stalled on its opening drive in the second half. The Tigers defense stopped them on a fourth and one conversion attempt. Henderson State forced a Ouachita three-and-out, but was again denied a chance to retake the lead after missing a 27-yard field goal attempt.

Frazier led the Tigers on a 14-play, 80-yard drive culminating on a third and goal touchdown reception by Drew White from the 12 yard line. It was Frazier's second touchdown pass of the game.

On the first play of the next Reddie drive, OBU senior safety Zack Mitchell made an acrobatic interception to give the Tigers the ball back on the HSU 41. The quarter ended with the Tigers leading 28-20.

After driving down to the HSU one yard line, Frazier rolled off his center on the keeper and put the Tigers up 34-20. The Tigers missed the PAT. Henderson was forced to punt, but a high snap gave Ouachita the ball on the Reddie 10 yard line.

Kehner scored his third rushing touchdown of the day on a one-yard run, giving him 16 on the year and breaking the GAC single-season record of 15 set last season by Keaton Stigger of HSU.

The Ouachita defense held strong, getting another turnover via the interception by Kyle Lamothe and forcing the Reddies to punt on their last possession. With the 41-20 win and undefeated 10-0 season, Ouachita claimed its second GAC title in four seasons.