

Appalachian State Stuns Michigan

September 2, 2007

Appalachian State **34**, No. 5 Michigan **32**



Duane Bureson/Associated Press

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANN ARBOR, Mich., Sept. 1 (AP) — Dexter Jackson sprinted through the secondary early in the first quarter, taunting nearly 110,000 Michigan fans by putting a finger over his lips en route to the end zone. Nearly three hours later, he got the desired result and the Big House was silent: Appalachian State 34, No. 5 Michigan 32.

Julian Rauch kicked a 24-yard field goal with 26 seconds left to put the Mountaineers ahead of the Wolverines and Corey Lynch blocked a field goal in the final seconds to seal a jaw-dropping upset that may have no equal.

“I told them to be quiet — we’re going to be out here all day,” Jackson said, explaining the gesture he used after scoring a 68-yard touchdown. “We’re playmakers. They were talking trash on us, now we’ve gotten them back.

“It was David versus Goliath.”

Mike Hart, Chad Henne and Jake Long, Michigan’s threesome of offensive stars who put off the N.F.L. and returned for their senior season to chase a national title, never saw this coming.

Coach Lloyd Carr did not, either, after tweaking his contract to possibly pave the way for this to be his last season on the sideline. Carr looked ashen as the upset unfolded, and did not sound much better when he finally arrived at his postgame news conference.

“I’ve never been part of a loss that wasn’t miserable,” he said.

Appalachian State made up for a slight size disadvantage with superior speed and, perhaps, more passion.

The Mountaineers, the two-time defending champions from the former Division I-AA, were ahead of Michigan, which has more victories than any college program, by 28-14 late in the second quarter, before their storybook afternoon seemed to unravel late in the fourth quarter. Hart’s 54-yard run with 4 minutes 36 seconds left put the Wolverines ahead for the first time since early in the second quarter.

One snap after the go-ahead touchdown, Michigan’s Brandent Englemon intercepted an errant pass, but the Wolverines could not capitalize and had their first of two field goals blocked.

Then Appalachian State drove 69 yards without a timeout in 1:11 to set up the go-ahead field goal.

Henne threw a 46-yard pass to Mario Manningham, giving Michigan the ball at Appalachian State’s 20 with six seconds left and putting the Wolverines in position to win it with a field goal.

Lynch blocked the kick and returned it 52 yards to the 18 as the final seconds ticked off. His teammates rushed across the field to pile on as the coaching staff and cheerleaders jumped with joy.

“We’re still sort of shocked,” Coach Jerry Moore said after being carried off the field by his players.

Appalachian State has won 15 consecutive games, the longest streak in the nation. The Mountaineers are favored to win the Football Championship Subdivision, but they were not expected to challenge a team picked to win the Big Ten and contend for the national title. No Division I-AA team had beaten a team ranked in the Associated Press poll from 1989-2006, and it is unlikely that it happened after Division I subdivisions were created in 1978.

“Someone said it might be one of the big victories in college football,” Moore said. “It may be the biggest.”