

Falcons Fall Just Short Vs. Akron, 27-21

Gibson rushes for 149 yards.

Stats

Oct. 7, 2000

BOWLING GREEN, Ohio - The Bowling Green State University football team put forth a spirited effort before a Homecoming crowd, but fell just short. The University of Akron used a pair of fourth-quarter goal-line stands to gain a 27-21 win over the Falcons at Perry Stadium Saturday (Oct. 7).

The Falcons (1-5 overall, 1-2 MAC East) set season highs in rushing yards and total yards in the game. BGSU ran for 159 yards as a team, led by John Gibson's career-best 149 yards. The performance was the first 100-yard effort by a Falcon runner this year.

BGSU and Akron (4-2, 3-0 MAC East) were dead even in total yards, with 344 apiece. The Zips had 259 of their team total through the air.

Falcon sophomore Andy Sahm threw for 185 yards on the day, completing 15 of his 24 attempts. His favorite target on the afternoon was junior David Bautista, who had his second 100-yard receiving game of the year. Bautista caught eight balls for a total of 104 yards on the day.

The Zips held BGSU on the first drive of the game, then opened the scoring with a 52-yard drive on their opening possession. Quarterback James "Butchie" Washington capped the nine-play drive with a 25-yard pass to Jake Schifino with 9:09 remaining in the quarter.

The Falcons came right back with a nine-play drive of their own. BGSU moved 70 yards, with Gibson running for 33 of those yards and Sahm going 3-of-4 through the air. Bautista caught two of those throws, including a five-yarder for the score. Mike Knapp's point-after attempt tied the game at 7-7.

The Falcon defense forced UA to punt on the next possession, but on the third drive of BG's next possession, Akron's Mike Hughes intercepted Sahm and took the ball 26 yards to paydirt on the last play of the first quarter.

Again, the Falcons answered in convincing fashion. Freshman Josh Harris returned the kickoff 39 yards into Akron territory, and the Brown and Orange went 47 yards in eight plays. Other than one UA penalty, Gibson accounted for all of the BGSU yardage. The workhorse had eight carries for 31 yards, including a one-yard TD run.

Akron, though, would score again before halftime. Washington threw a 14-yard pass over the middle to Tim Ritley with 2:44 left in the second quarter, and Zac Derr's PAT gave the Zips a lead they would not relinquish.

Akron upped the lead to 27-14 on the opening drive of the second half. The Zips went 65 yards in eight plays, with Lavel Bailey catching a 21-yard strike from Washington for the score. The Zips were hit with a dead-ball foul after the TD, though, and Derr's extra-point attempt from the BGSU 18-yard line was no good.

The Falcons would cut the lead to six points late in the third quarter. Sahm led the Brown and Orange 64 yards to the end zone, with junior Kurt Gerling on the receiving end of a 34-yard TD strike. Gerling, who was seeing action for the first time since the season-opening game at Michigan (Sept. 2), caught two passes on the day, extending his streak to 24 consecutive games with a reception.

Akron drove as far as the BGSU 16 on the next possession, but Derr's field-goal try was wide left. BGSU took over at the 20-yard line and proceeded to go 79 yards. Gibson carried the ball eight times on that drive, and Harris had the first four carries of his collegiate career, including a 19-yard run on his first-ever carry. BGSU got inside the UA five, and Harris carried to the three-yard line on first down. After an incompletion, Gibson gained two yards on third down. But, the Zips stopped Gibson short of the goal line on fourth down with 7:04 left in the game.

The Falcon defense rose to the occasion, holding Akron to a three-and-out. After an Akron punt sailed out of bounds at the UA 36, the Falcons again drove inside the red zone. Sahm completed a 13-yard pass to Bautista on a fourth-and-11 play, setting up BG at the UA 24. Then, Gibson ran for eight yards, and Sahm found Bautista again, this time for nine yards to the Zip seven-yard line.

On first down, Gibson ran for six yards. But, once again, the Zips kept the Falcons out of the end zone. Gibson was stopped short on the next three plays, with Rich Reliford meeting Gibson just inches short of the goal line on fourth down with 2:25 left in the game.

The Zips gained a first down and ran out the clock.

Washington threw for 242 yards on the day, completing 16 of his 26 passes. Bailey had six catches for 108 yards, while Schifino caught five balls for 87 yards.



Junior Kurt Gerling, playing his first game since the season opener, caught a touchdown pass vs. Akron

The Falcons return to action next Saturday (Oct. 14), heading to Miami for a 2:00 p.m. contest.