

Football Falls At Toledo, 51-17

Gary Blackney Era comes to a close.

Nov. 22, 2000

Box Score

TOLEDO, Ohio - The Toledo Rockets, after leading by just a 17-10 score at halftime, pulled away in the third quarter en route to a 51-17 win over the Bowling Green State University football team. The arch-rivals met in a nationally-televised game (ESPN2) at UT's Glass Bowl.

The loss ended BGSU's season at 2-9, and marked the end of head coach Gary Blackney's 10-year tenure. Toledo improves to 10-1.

The Rockets broke on the scoreboard with a touchdown late in the first quarter, but the Falcons responded with an eight-play, 61-yard drive. After sophomore Joe Alls returned the kickoff 29 yards to the 39, the Falcons moved down the field. Freshman quarterback Josh Harris had a 23-yard run during the drive, which culminated with a three-yard scoring run by junior fullback Eric Clark. The touchdown was the first of Clark's career.

UT responded with a touchdown, and forced the Falcons to punt on the next drive. On that Toledo drive, however, BG senior Ken Dobbs stepped in front of a Tavares Bolden pass for his first career interception at midfield. He returned the pick 47 yards to the UT three-yard line, but a personal foul moved the ball back to the 18. The Falcons got a 39-yard field goal from Mike Knapp to cut the Rocket lead to 14-10.

A late UT field goal upped the Rockets' halftime margin to 17-10, but the hosts would extend that lead early in the third quarter.

After forcing the Falcons to punt on the opening drive of the half, the Rockets took just two plays to score. Bolden found Mel Long for an 83-yard scoring pass. Then, an interception by UT's Brandon Hefflin led to a field goal, and Hefflin picked off another pass on the next drive and returned it 52 yards for a score.

Bowling Green would score once more, on a 16-play, 80-yard drive that ended with a one-yard run by Harris on a fourth-and-goal play. Knapp's extra-point kick provided the final margin.

The Rockets held a 19-13 edge in first downs and outgained the Falcons by a 449-217 margin. For the Brown and Orange, Harris gained a team-high 61 yards in eight carries on the ground. Through the air, he completed 14 of his 31 passes for 136 yards.

Nine of those Harris completions went to junior David Bautista, for a total of 95 yards. The junior-college transfer ended his first year with the Falcons with team-high totals of 69 catches and 915 yards.

Junior Kurt Gerling caught the other five BG completions, for 41 yards. Gerling extended his streak of consecutive games with at least one reception to 29 games. The 1998 MAC Freshman of the Year missed four games due to injury this fall, and has had at least one catch in every game in which he has played.

Blackney ends his career with a 5-5 record against the Rockets.

"Toledo is as good a football team as we've faced this season," Blackney said. "I'm talking about both conference and non-conference games. They have an excellent coach in Gary Pinkel.

"I really hope they get an opportunity for a bowl game. They deserve it. They are well-coached, both offensively and defensively, and they play very hard."

Blackney said that, as the final moments ticked down in the fourth quarter, he did not think about the fact that the game was his last on the Falcon sideline.

"You have to be a coach to understand, I think. You're coaching until the final tick. I haven't thought about myself, I've just been concerned with those guys in the lockerroom and the assistant coaches.

"I thanked them for letting me be their coach. I wished the underclassmen the best in their future at Bowling Green, and I told the upperclassmen that, if there is anything I can do for them, to please let me know.

"That's a special group of guys. They fought real hard this year, but came up short."

Blackney ends his BG tenure ranked third on the school's win list. He posted a record of 60-50-2 with the Brown and Orange, and is the only coach in school history to win a bowl game, having captured both the 1991 California Raisin Bowl and the 1992 Las Vegas Bowl.



Junior David Bautista ended his first season as a Falcon with team-high totals of 69 receptions and 915 yards