

Brawl mars Mississippi State's Armed Forces win over Tulsa

Associated Press

A bowl victory that increased Mississippi State's win total this season to four and No. 22 Tulsa's failed attempt to add another unlikely comeback to its impressive collection this season took a back seat to the melee that broke out Thursday shortly after the Armed Forces Bowl ended.

True freshman Will Rogers scored his first rushing touchdown of the season and had a 13-yard TD pass to lead Mississippi State past Tulsa 28-26 in a game that was tense from the start.

Minutes after it ended, the teams became involved in a large brawl on the field, with players punching and kicking one another. Tulsa coach Greg Montgomery said sophomore safety Kendarin Ray, who was helped off the field after being at the bottom of a dogpile during a scrum, was treated for "some sort of concussion."

"I'm not sure what exactly caused that," said Mississippi State coach Mike Leach, who referred to the altercation as a "mosh pit." "It was something before the game, too. We've never had any problem with that the entire season, so I can only guess without seeing the film."

In a video posted from Mississippi State's locker room, Malik Heath joked about kicking a Tulsa player in the facemask.

"The one thing I'll say is our program, our guys, we're a team that are going to stand up for each other and we're going to battle," Montgomery said. "We talk about faith, family, football,



Mississippi State linebacker Aaron Brule (3) hits Tulsa safety TieNeal Martin (7) on the facemask during a post-game fight after Mississippi State's win in the Armed Forces Bowl NCAA college football game in Fort Worth, Texas, Thursday, Dec. 31, 2020.

(Ian Maule/Tulsa World via AP)

and family's going to take care of family. We're a team that has battled all year long. We battled again today. From that standpoint, our guys are going to continue to protect each other and go from there."

American Athletic Conference Commissioner Mike Aresco said in a statement that the league will work with Tulsa to "conduct a thorough review of the altercation pursuant to our Conference Code of Sportsmanship process and expect that the university will respond accordingly."

Jo'quavious Marks scored a rushing touchdown on the game's first possession and Emmanuel Forbes returned an interception 90 yards for a touchdown for the Bulldogs (4-7), who finished the season with a second straight win in a game played at TCU's Amon G. Carter Stadium in cold, rainy conditions.

Mississippi State's 148 passing yards were its few-

est of the season. Marks' 72 rushing yards and his 28-yard run for the touchdown were the most in each category this season for the Bulldogs, whose 36-yard rushing average going into bowl play was the lowest in the FBS.

Forbes' third-quarter touchdown was initially called back on an illegal blocking penalty, but the Big Ten Conference officiating crew reversed its ruling to a penalty on Tulsa.

Deneric Prince and Corey Taylor II scored rushing touchdowns, Zach Smith had a 15-yard TD pass to Keylon Stokes and Zack Long kicked field goals of 27 and 33 yards for Tulsa (6-3, No. 24 CFP), which erased four double-digit deficits this season.

Smith was 26 for 46 passing for 347 yards with two interceptions. Tulsa outgained Mississippi State in total offense 484 yards to 271, but the Bulldogs got 138 valuable kickoff return yards from Lideatrik "Tulu" Griffin.

Tulsa pulled to within 21-19 with 12:30 left on Taylor's 5-yard run, but Smith's two-point conversion pass intended for Stokes was broken up in the end zone. Mississippi State answered with Rogers' 13-yard throw to Griffin to go ahead 28-19.

Smith's 15-yard scoring pass to Stokes came with 1:23 to play, and Tulsa failed to recover the ensuing onside kick. On the play, Mississippi State's Erroll Thompson leveled Tulsa's Ryan Nixon and was penalized 15 yards for taunting.

"It's just dumb," Leach said. "There was some stuff going back and forth during the course of the game. With any of it on our side, I don't want to see it because I feel like I got shorted, what, 15 yards, 30 yards on deals where if we could keep our mouth shut, you know."

New Year's Hopes

I have no New Year's resolutions, no lofty or grand schemes or elevated plans for this new year, 2021. As I look back on the disaster of the year that my family, your families and the entire world experienced and sustained through this mysterious unfamiliar pandemic, I just want to survive with a semi-normal routine life and be able to say this time next year, "This year really was so good!"

I am just so tired of this contagion, talking about it, thinking about it, worrying about it, and yes living it. I am so worn out with all the distressing. I have for a long time, kept a prayer journal. If you ask me to pray for you, I write it down so that I will remember. My journal this year is so full and most of the request to HIM are for that of safety from this COVID-19. I will never attempt to understand His way of loving us but so many people have died while others have fought and persevered. None of us can help but ponder why some and not others?

There for so many months I heard everyday of acquaintances contacting this ailment, but they were just people I knew of in passing. Then it starts to hit close, so close to home. First my children who work in our grocery stores were exposed and came down with the milady. As they are home recovering, others are dropping like flies on sticky paper. And then, three weeks ago, my husband and I start to cough and run fever. Yep, right, we are tested positive and for the next three weeks we isolate, cough-cough-cough, have fevers and chills, un-

able to eat and totally dependent on others to bring food to our front doors and "Back Away!"

But preserve we did! And just as some of you have, we have made it to the other side of this dark tunnel. I have heard so much speculation as to whether or not we should take the vaccine that was so hurriedly processed and let me tell you from a close up and personal experience, nothing could be worse than going through the sickness

itself. Take the vaccine. We, our family has so much to look forward to this year. In a few short weeks our little Emmie Jo will be born, and we will get to experience a little girl for the

first time ever and this, this is miraculous! Our log home will be rebuilt, and we can once again enjoy the love of our Circle S. My family is once again well, and the wonder drug vaccine is on the way.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

I have a few avid deer hunters, especially one and he is always cooking deer meat and has become a really good deer chef. He talked me into cooking a roast for him the other day, my first one ever. Hers's my recipe.

One three-pound deer roast soaked all day in water and 1/4 cup vinegar. Drain and soak in plain water overnight. Place in crockpot and cover with 1/4 cup Worcestershire sauce, 1/8 cup soy sauce, garlic pepper, and salt to taste. Sprinkle with dried onion soup mix and pour over a large can of cream of mushroom soup. Cook on low for 6 hours and eat over rice or creamed potatoes.

*Peggy Sims is a life-long resident of Attala County and columnist.



Peggy's Take

3 Mississippi Supreme Court justices begin new 8-year terms

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Three Mississippi Supreme Court justices are beginning new eight-year terms.

Those being inaugurated Monday are Chief Justice Mike Randolph, Presiding Justice Leslie D. King and Justice Josiah Dennis Coleman.

Randolph is the longest-serving current member of the nine-person court, and he has been chief justice since February.

Randolph was appointed to the Supreme Court in April 2004 by then then-Gov. Haley Barbour. Randolph was elected in November 2004, November 2012 and November 2020. He has homes in Hattiesburg and Ocean Springs.

King lives in Greenville. He served in the Mississippi House from 1980 to 1994 and was one of the original mem-

bers elected to the Mississippi Court of Appeals in 1994.

King became chief judge of the 10-member appeals court in April 2004, and he remained in that role until Barbour appointed him to the Supreme Court in March 2011. King was elected to the Supreme Court in 2012 and 2020.

Coleman was previously elected to the Supreme Court in 2012 and 2020. He lives in the Fentress community in Choctaw County.

Mississippi has three Supreme Court districts. Randolph is from the southern district, King is from the central district and Coleman is from the northern district.

Justice Kenny Griffis was also reelected to a central district Supreme Court seat in November, but his new term doesn't start until January 2022.

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