

rally stuns Ohio

Mountaineers' late-game flurry results in wild 34-32 OVAC win

By RICK DeLUCA
Times Leader Sports Writer

If you were one of those who left the 22nd Annual Rudy Mumley OVAC Charity All-Star Football Classic at Wheeling Island Stadium a bit early Sunday night, shame on you!

In one of the most thrilling finishes ever in the annual Ohio-West Virginia gridiron classic, the Mountaineers staged an amazing comeback that put 20 points on the board in the final 2:53, then stopped a potential game-tying PAT to register an action-packed 34-32 win over the Buckeyes.

With a huge crowd of an estimated 10,000 screaming onlookers witnessing the late-game fireworks, the West Virginia stars halted a two-game Ohio win streak as the Ohio lead in the series dropped to 27-20 overall and 12-9 since the OVAC began sponsorship in 1972. Last year's contest was halted in the second quarter by weather and declared a 'no contest'.

Dave Caldwell, who coached the Beallsville Blue Devils to an OVAC championship last season, saw his Ohio gridders take a 26-14 lead late into the fourth quarter before West Virginia started its big comeback.

The much-anticipated battle between the Ohio Valley's all-time career rushing leader Bill West of Buckeye Local and highly-louted Wheeling Central back Curtis McGhee took a backseat to Bishop Donahue quarterback Mark Gordon, who passed for nearly 200 yards in the second half.

With the Ohioans leading by 26-14 as the third quarter closed with a spirited free-for-all in front of the Mountaineer bench that led to five player ejections, West Virginia mentor Rick Blake of Donahue decided to go to the air in the final frame.

West Virginia's first possession produced little to bolster the hosts' attack as defensive gems by Shadyside's Chad Wiley, Union Local's Matt Morris and Barnesville's Jason Plumly gave the Buckeyes control on their 11 with 8:02 remaining.

Ohio ran the clock down to 4:25 before Weir's Marcus Clausell returned an Ohio punt 35 yards to the Buckeye 20. West Virginia went to the air twice as Gordon connected with Wheeling Park's Justin Kiger for four yards and Clausell for 12 to the four-yard line. McGhee added a yard off tackle before sweeping the right side from the three for a score at the 2:53 mark. Wheeling Park's Matt DiLorenzo booted the PAT to cut the gap to 26-21.

West Virginia opted for the onside kick and played it to perfection, regaining possession at the midfield stripe on the ensuing kickoff.

Wiley and Mingo's Mark

	★	★	★	
West Virginia	0	7	7	20 - 34
Ohio	6	14	6	6 - 32
Ohio — Bill West, 3-yard run. Kick failed.				
West Virginia — Curtis McGhee, 8-yard run. Matt DiLorenzo kick.				
Ohio — Bill West, 1-yard run. Run failed.				
Ohio — Don Hendershot, 30-yard fumble recovery. Mike Call run.				
West Virginia — Curtis McGhee, 5-yard run. Matt DiLorenzo kick.				
Ohio — Matt Schehl, 2-yard run. Pass failed.				
West Virginia — Curtis McGhee, 3-yard run. Matt DiLorenzo kick.				
West Virginia — Artie Moore, 58-yard pass from Curtis McGhee. Kick failed.				
West Virginia — J. B. Burge, 43-yard pass interception. Matt DiLorenzo.				
Ohio — Andy Martin, 89-yard kickoff return. Run failed.				

Blackburn combined on a sack that threw Gordon for an eight-yard loss, but the loss wasn't enough. On the next play, Gordon flipped to the elusive McGhee and the Central standout took a few steps to his left before tossing a long pass to a wide-open Artie Moore near the Ohio 30 and the Bishop Donahue ace rambled to the endzone to complete a 58-yard scoring strike that gave the West Virginians their first lead at 27-26 with 1:59 on the board. DiLorenzo's placement missed its mark.

Ohio attempted to rally and had just picked up an important first down on a fourth-and-five pass from Bellaire's Mike Call to Martins Ferry's Josh Lucas when lightning struck.

Call, trying to flip a pass to West coming out of the backfield, was picked off by John Marshall's J.B. Burge at the 43 and the Mountaineer raced to paydirt and a 34-26 lead with just 58 ticks remaining.

Showing some resilience of their own, the Buckeyes bounced right back as Wellsville's Andy Martin took the ensuing kickoff and raced 99 yards for an Ohio score, pulling the Bucks within two with 43 second left. West attempted to add the game-tying two-point conversion on a sweep around the right side, but was stopped short on a big tackle by Brooke High's Buck Neal.

Ohio appeared to set the tone early, staying on the ground and taking advantage of the outstanding running talents of West and a strong offensive line.

In the Buckeyes' opening possession starting from the 41, Caldwell called on West twice for gainers of seven and five yards and following a Martin pickup of three, West added 15 on an exciting run off tackle. The drive stalled, but the Ohioans hit paydirt on their next possession.

Regaining control on the West Virginia 45 after St. Clairsville's Scott Porterfield returned a Mountaineer punt 12 yards, the Buckeyes stayed on the ground. Martin carried for three, West added seven and Meadowbrook's Matt Schehl ran twice for 11 and three yards to the Mountaineer 19. West ran four straight times, getting four of right tackle, six sweeping the left side, six more sweeping the right side and the last three to the endzone over the left end with 3:58 on the first quarter clock.

Just as they were plagued throughout the contest, Ohio was shut out on the PAT.

West Virginia bounced back late in the first frame with a drive that highlighted the running of McGhee and was keyed by a 28-yard Gordon-to-McGhee pass. On the first play of the second frame, McGhee carried eight yards to paydirt and a DiLorenzo boot gave the Mountaineers a 7-6 upperhand.

West sparked the Ohio attack as the Buckeye's tried to retake the lead midway through the second quarter. The hard-running West broke loose on rushes of 26 and 16 yards and Call connected with Schehl for 10 yards, but the Buckeyes didn't score until their next possession.

Porterfield's 20-yard punt return gave the Buckeye possession on the W.Va. 16. West ran for seven yards, Schehl for six and West for two more before the University of Pitt recruit bulled over from the one with 5:42 on the clock. Ohio led by 12-7 as the PAT was unsuccessful.

W. Va.

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Two plays later, Ohio again got on the board as River's Don Hendershot stripped the West Virginia runner of the ball and returned the theft 30 yards for a score at 4:51. Call added the two-pointer for a 20-7 Ohio lead.

In the third quarter, West Virginia narrowed the gap to 20-14 as Gordon connected with Bishop Donahue's Artie Moore for 40 yards then McGhee scored from the five at 3:45. DiLorenzo again added the PAT.

Ohio retaliated in the third as the Beallsville passing combo of Dana Kelley and Ron Street combined on three completions for 27 yards and the running of Schehl and West added 26 more yards, with Schehl getting the final two at 1:16 to push the Buckeyes' lead to 26-14.

Ohio closed with 168 yards on the ground and 116 in the air as nine-of-21 passes clicked. The Buckeyes registered 17 first downs, were penalized five times for 51 yards and were intercepted three times. West led all rushers with 129 yards on 21 carries while Lucas caught five passes covering 45 yards.

West Virginia closed with 44 yards rushing and 298 in the air as Gordon and McGhee combined to complete 16-of-28 passes. The winners finished with 14 firsts, had seven penalties covering 75 yards and lost both fumbles. McGhee closed with

The fight...the flea-flicker...the fantastic finish — this one had it all

By RICH GIBSON
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The happiest man on Wheeling Island? Who else but Rudy Mumley?

"Wasn't that the greatest game you've ever seen?" Mumley asked. "There was so much excitement...so much enthusiasm. I hope everyone got their money's worth."

Mumley was hoping for something special to christen this — the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference's 50th anniversary season.

"It was — by far — the finest game in the 22 years I've been associated with it," Mumley added. "Probably the finest ever."

The masses stuck in post-game Island traffic had plenty to talk about. The fight...the flea-flicker...the fantastic finish.

Ohio coach Dave Caldwell probably deserved a better fate. Leaning against a stanchion in the locker-room, the Beallsville boss exemplified the agony of defeat.

With under six minutes to play, the die most assuredly appeared cast.

Leading 26-14, Ohio received a major break when West Virginia was detected for too many men on the field on a Buckeye punt.

With the Scarlet and Gray retaining possession at 5:57, a sizable number of partisans on the West Virginia side opted to head for the parking lots. Big mistake.

They only missed one of the greatest comebacks in this game's history. The Mountaineers stunned Ohio with a dramatic three-touchdown barrage in a span of 1:55.

Wheeling Central's Curtis McGhee lit the fuse, slashing three yards with under three minutes to play, bringing the Blue and Gold within five points.

Seconds later, West Virginia had the football back after covering an on-side kick.

The tide was temporarily stemmed when Shadyside's Chad Wiley teamed with Mingo's Mark Blackburn on a first down sack of Bishop Donahue QB Mark Gordon.

But Mountie head coach Rick Blake (Bishop Donahue) was ready to roll the dice.

On second and long, Gordon threw a short lateral to McGhee, who unloaded, downfield for streaking wideout Artie Moore. The Bishop Donahue speedster made the catch in stride and cruised home.

"That's an old Central play...one we worked on at camp," McGhee grinned. "(They) had good pressure coming. I never saw (him) catch it. I just looked up and saw our side going wild."

Despite Matt DiLorenzo's missed PAT, West Virginia had grabbed a 27-26 edge.

"That was just great execution on their part," Caldwell lamented. "No excuses, but (you) don't have a lot of time to prepare in practice."

Moments later, John Marshall's J.B. Burge picked off a Mike Call pass and raced 43 yards for what appeared the knockout punch — a 34-26 lighting.

Ohio's Andy Martin, who experienced a frustrating night in the Bucks' defensive backfield, was not quitting.

The Wellsville ace found a seam at the Ohio 25 and broke loose on a dazzling coast-to-coast gallop covering 99 yards.

Ohio was a two-point conversion away from salvaging a tie. Following a West Virginia timeout, Caldwell called the number of Buckeye Local's Billy West.

The Pitt-bound tailback took a Dana Kelley pitch and angled for the right corner. But Brooke's Buck Neel fought off a block and made contact, driving West out of bounds, two yards short.

"I'd make that same decision again," Caldwell remarked. "Put the ball in Billy West's hands and the chances are in your favor."

West, who scored twice, was bothered by a hamstring injury, yet managed a game-leading 129 yards and two scores.

"Sure, it's difficult to lose but this was a good tuneup. It helped get me in better shape," said West, who reports to Pitt next Saturday.

Where were you during the rum-

ble, Billy? "I was one of the referees," he advised.

EXTRA POINTS

WEIR'S flashy Marcus Clausell wasn't laughing after taking a sideline hit on the third period's final play.

The antics quickly escalated into full-scale warfare, leading referee Dave Clutter and his crew scurrying to break up assorted skirmishes.

"You could almost see it coming," Clausell would say after the game. "There was some talk going around camp and it carried over to the game. I'm just glad nobody got hurt."

After a lengthy discussion, ejection, *FANTASTIC*, page 3B

Fantastic

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tions were forthcoming, including Ohio ironman Tim McCabe of Bellaire who didn't take his ouster lightly. It was McCabe's final football game before heading to Tennessee and Carson-Newman College to play baseball.

"I don't know how they could have thrown Tim out," said Wiley, who played outstanding defense. The Shadyside High product, headed for Wagner College in New York, made three QB sacks and made a jolting hit, forcing a W. Va. fumble.

McGHEE'S reaction to the rumble? "I was right in the middle of it all. It definitely made my day." McGhee, who will attempt to walk on at Pitt, hopes to room with West...

THE EVENING was greatly enhanced by a stirring halftime performance from the McDonald's-OVAC All-Star band. The 214-piece unit, comprised of 27 conference schools, concluded with a tribute to the OVAC's 50th season. The finale was highlighted by a well-deserved standing ovation...