

It Was Miller Time For W. Virginia Star Mountaineers Rally From 14-0 Deficit

By BRET GIBSON
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Ohio, welcome to the Art Miller show.

Miller, Weir High all-stater, rushed 22 times for 126 yards and three second-half touchdowns to lead West Virginia to a stunning 19-14 comeback win over Ohio Sunday night in the 23rd annual Rudy Mumley OVAC All-Star Football Classic at jam-packed Wheeling Island Stadium.

"Our offense is designed to take what the defense gives us," said West Virginia Coach P.K. Poling. "The cutback and the lead plays were all working out in the second half. When you have a running back like Miller, you would be a fool not to get the ball in his hands."

Statistics

	Ohio	WV
First downs	7	11
Rushes-yards	20-78	42-142
Passing	146	21
Return Yards	17	10
Comp-Att-Int	11-23-1	3-10-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	3-15	8-60
Punts	4-38	5-23
Fumbles-Lost	2-3	1-1
Penalties-Yards	8-50	3-20

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Ohio, Roby 8-58, Kuczykowski 4-19, Coyne 1-6, Singleton 1-1. West Virginia, Miller 22-126, Starcher 4-16, Pezik 4-13, Burditt 4-6, Simpson 1-4, 0. West Virginia, Hunt 2-4-0, 12, Isaly 1-7-1.

RECEIVING—Ohio, Blake 2-51, Coyne 1-34, Kuntz 1-23, Martin 4-21, Singleton 1-40. West Virginia, Licata 2-16, Burditt 1-4.

MISSED FIELD GOALS—None

The Mountain State coaches set out to prove they were going to get it in the 5-11 210-pounder's hands from the beginning of the game. In West Virginia's first drive, Miller carried the ball seven times and ran 32 yards with it.

"I was prepared for this game because the coaches said I was going to get my chance to run it," Miller said. "I got to run the ball only twice in the North-South game, so I used this game to shine."

Although the Red Rider tailback earned got his yards early, West Virginia had to punt after its first drive sputtered.

Led by Steubenville Central quarterback Mike Orlando, the Ohio squad drove the ball down to the West Virginia 49-yard line. But after Orlando was sacked twice, the Buckeyes had to punt as well.

Linsly's Jamie Youssef mishandled the kick and Ohio was back in business, at the Mountaineer 19. Martins Ferry tailback Mikale Roby took a fourth-and-one handoff 10 yards around right end to score the evening's first touchdown. On its third series, Ohio marched down the Island field again with a Scott Coyne fake punt run of 5 yards that gave the Buckeyes new life.

Roby capped the 64-yard scoring march by leaping into the end zone from one yard out. Purple Rider teammate Chad Martin took an end-around to the right side to complete

the two-point conversion and lead at halftime 14-0.

"We knew we were alright at halftime," Poling said. "Our kids didn't get down on themselves. They just sucked it up and jelled together."

The Mountaineers picked up in the second half by pouncing on a kickoff return fumble at Ohio's 35.

Aided by a 10-yard pass from Jeff Hunt to Charlie Licata, West Virginia had first-and-goal from the five.

A play that was set up for a half-back option, Miller instead tucked the ball away and shed three Ohio tacklers for West Virginia's first score.

"It was a pass, but the receiver was covered," Miller said. "It was just a broken play so I tried to just make something of it."

Hampered by poor field position and a second half-stingy West Virginia defense, the Ohio squad never got back on track and could not obtain a first down in the last half of play.

"Me, personally, I felt that I never got going," Orlando said. "We kept shooting ourselves in the foot, with penalties and fumbling. You can't do that in a ball game."

One of those proverbial bullets to the metatarsal was a Chad Martin fumble on his own 35-yard line.

Three plays later, Miller took a third-and-one handoff over the left tackle and scampered 26 yards untouched for his second score of the night.

West Virginia's point-after try was negated after a high snap from center, and the Mounties trailed by one, 14-13, with over 9 minutes left.

"That (the turnover) turned the game around," said Ohio coach Ron Pobolish. "The turnovers cost us dearly. It was just one of those games."

After a three-and-out series by the Buckeyes, the Mountain State team was aided again by an Ohio mistake. This time in the form of a personal foul.

Miller, who will be attending Hargrave (Va.) Military Academy in the fall, took the ball six plays later to score his third TD from three yards out to give West Virginia the lead for good with 3:08 showing on the clock.

"We let Art Miller do his show," said Pobolish. "We knew he would get his yards. He turned the notch up and we couldn't measure up."

Ohio ended all signs of a comeback when an Orlando pass sailed over the head of his intended receiver and into the hands of Wheeling Park's Bob Bennett.

"It was mistake after mistake after mistake," said the dejected Pobolish. "We were coming out trying to throw the football. We just couldn't overcome our mistakes."



West High's Art Miller, at left, breaks away from Ohio's defense during Sunday night's game at Wheeling Stadium, where he scored three second-half touchdowns as the West Virginia All-Stars rallied from a

14-0 halftime deficit to notch a 19-14 verdict over Ohio. That's Justin Abel, linebacking standout from of Union Local, making a lunge at Miller.

News-Register Photo/John Wickham

After a punt by West Virginia's Tom Phillips, Ohio made futile attempts to get down the field from its own 2-yard line, but to no avail.

"This is the biggest win I've ever had in high school," Miller said. "To play my last game and go out with a win, I loved it."

NOTES...West Virginia, with the back-to-back wins in 1993 and 1994, marks the first time it has achieved the feat since 1976-77...Ohio still leads the series 12-10-1...WV quarterback Jeff Hunt suffered a strained or pulled ligament in his right knee (team doctors said. Hunt suffered the injury when he was clobbered after trying to complete a screen pass...St. Clairsville tackle Heath Jordan did not participate in the game because he suffered a ligament pull in his knee at practice. The 6-1, 250-pounder will have the knee scoped before he attends Youngstown State.

Ohio	West Virginia
8-8-0, 8-14	0-0-7, 12-15
First Quarter	0—Roby 10 run (kick failed)
Second Quarter	0—Roby 1 run (Martin run)
Third Quarter	WV—Miller 6 run (Quinting kick)
Fourth Quarter	WV—Miller 28 run (kick failed)
	WV—Miller 3 run (kick failed)
	A—10:35

VAN HORNE

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Sports



By BILL VAN HORNE

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The size and enthusiasm of the crowds that have poured into Wheeling Stadium to see the Ohio and West Virginia All-Stars knock heads in their annual transpontine rivalry must be tremendously gratifying to Rudy and Sam Mumley and their OVAC compatriots responsible for reviving the series back in 1972.

The game has become the greatest annual one-night sports spectacle, from the standpoint of crowd-size and color, in the valley. And the last two contests have produced the kind of football drama which should lure the fans back to the South Island facility in mega numbers.

The all-star game has been a huge financial and artistic success and a just reward for those who had the imagination, the energy, and the foresight to revive it, with a special bow being due to the Mumleys, Ron Mauck, Bill Hinegardner, et al.

However, I note that reporting on this year's classic ignored the early history of the inter-state series. Let us keep things in perspective. This event dates back all the way to 1940 and it was initiated by, of all things, a group of sportswriters.

The late Bill DeMuth, then sports editor of the Wheeling Intelligencer, was the guy who dreamed it up. I understand that it was Howard Voitle, then a Moundsville newspaperman, who mustered much of the early financing.

The rival teams did not go to camp then. They gathered at area high school gridirons for practice sessions.

There was no national letter-of-intent day back then and collegiate recruiting was neither as intense nor as complicated as it is now. So when Charlie Helinski, who had been a great player for Union High School, performed brilliantly in a 13-7 victory for the West Virginia stars, he was immediately offered a scholarship by Bill Kern, then head coach at WVU.

West Virginia won again in '41, 7-0, but Ohio, with Lou Groza as one of the mainstays, triumphed in '42, by a 20-7 count. As I recall, Gomer Jones was one of the Ohio mentors.

There was no game the next three summers because athletes were hardly out of high school before they were being hustled off to World War II. Fact is, some of them went in the draft before commencement days.

But when the game was revived after the war, with Bob Roe running the show, it was decided that players who had been graduated in 1943-44-45 and '46 would be eligible to participate. So those all-star teams of '46 had more great talent (and more maturity) than any others in the long series.

The teams were picked by vote of the fans through ballots printed daily in newspapers around the valley.

Roe had the bright idea of bringing in collegiate coaches to direct the rival teams. Over the next few years, such men as Charlie Caldwell of Princeton, Rip Engle of Penn State, Frank Thomas of Alabama, and Lynn "Pappy" Waldorf of Northwestern were involved.

In '46, Frank Thomas was coaching Ohio and I recall that he told me the first essential was to have two outstanding tailbacks. He got Johnny Stojack, of Steubenville, and Bill Young, of Martins Ferry, and was very happy with them as the Buckeyes won, 26-7.

Thomas wound up taking two of the Ohio players, ex-servicemen Jim Franko of Yorkville and Nick Vrotsos of Martins Ferry, back to Tuscaloosa. Franko became a four-year letterman with the Tide. Vrotsos tore up a knee but then went out for basketball and became captain of the Tide cagers.

Eventually, Booster organizations on both sides of the river became involved in the sponsorship and the game continued through '69, although there was a one-year break in '63.

After the '69 game, the NCAA intervened. The National Collegiate Athletic Association ruled that players with college scholarships could not participate, unless they represented an approved charity. The Booster clubs could not get NCAA approval so the game had to be abandoned.

When the OVAC decided it would try to revive the contest in '72, first thing executive secretary Sam Mumley did was get an NCAA sanction.

Since the revival game in '72, Ohio leads in the series, 12-10 and overall the Buckeyes have a 27-21 edge. But West Virginia has been closing the gap, with spectacular victories in the last two years.

There have been 18 shutouts in the series, with 10 credited to the Mountaineer defenders. Highest point total was the 47 points scored by Ohio in 1979 when Tim Spencer ran wild. A few months later, he was playing in the Rose Bowl.

Highest West Virginia point total was in a 38-20 Mountaineer victory in '73. Lowest scoring game was in '64, when Ohio won on a safety, 2-0.

There have been more close games than runaways. Four games have been decided by one point and three by two points, including last year's 34-32 thriller, regarded by many fans as the greatest pulse-pounder in the rivalry.