

Sam Houston headed back to Championship Football Game

Written by Yolande Y. Lezine

Wednesday, 02 January 2013 00:00



For the second year in a row, the Sam Houston State Bearkats and North Dakota State will meet in the NCAA Division I Football Championship Game in Frisco, Texas on Saturday, January 5th at noon at FC Dallas Stadium in Frisco, Texas.

The Bearkats held on to defeat No. 2 seed Eastern Washington 45-42 at Roos Field to earn a return trip. Sam Houston led 35-0 at halftime, but quarterback Vernon Adams led an Eagle comeback for North Dakota State as the Bearkats had to run out the clock on their final possession to earn a win by the margin of Miquel Antonio's 42-yard field goal.

Sam Houston State's All-American running back Timothy Flanders rushed 34 times for 231 yards. The 231 yards rushing was Flanders second best rushing performance in his three year career. The junior, who has 25 100-plus rushing yard performances to his credit, ran for 287 yards in last year's semifinal victory over Montana.

Athlete/Wide Receiver Richard Sincere added to Sam Houston's 399 yards in the game, carrying 10 times for 69 yards. The teams combined for 1,007 total offense yards and 87 points.

The Bearkats went into the lockerroom with a 35-0 lead, but a different Eastern Washington team emerged in the second-half. Vernon Adams hit Greg Herd for a 31-yard touchdown to complete a seven play 79-yard drive. Then Adams found Brandon Kaufman for a 22-yard score ending a six-play, 55-yard scoring drive.

A successful on-side kick set up a third touchdown pass by Adams, this time for 43 yards to

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Aston Clark to make the score 35-21 with 1:05 left in the third period. Kaufman added another 43-yard touchdown with 13:08 remaining in the fourth quarter, to help Eastern Washington cut the lead to 35-28.

Sam Houston State responded after another score by the Eagles with 5:33 remaining, as Miguel Antonio kicked a 42-yard field goal which proved to be the game winner.

CHAMPIONSHIP NOTEBOOK:

*Sam Houston State will return to the national championship game for the second consecutive season. Kickoff for the national championship game is at noon, Central time, and it will be televised on ESPN2.

*This will mark the third time in FCS history that the same teams have met in the championship game in consecutive years.

*Sam Houston State improved to 2-1 all-time in the semifinal games. The Bearkats lost at Montana in 2004 34-13, and beat Montana at home in 2011, 31-28.

*The Bearkats will enter the national championship on a three-game win streak and with an 11-3 overall record.

*The loss snapped Eastern Washington 13-game win streak in games played on or after November 1st. The Eagles had not lost after that date since a first-round playoff loss to Stephen F. Austin on Nov. 28, 2009.

*Sam Houston State moved to 5-0 against Big Sky teams in the playoffs the last two seasons.

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*Sam Houston State will represent the Southland Conference in the championship, marking the eighth time a team from the Southland has played for the championship.

*Barkats kicker Miguel Antonio tied his career-long with a 42-yard field goal.

*Sam Houston State quarterback Brian Bell's 72-yard touchdown run was the longest run of his career, and Sam Houston's longest touchdown run.

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