

Sam Houston wins Battle of the Piney Woods over SFA in shootout!

Written by Yolande Y. Lezine, Sports Editor
Friday, 12 October 2012 12:21



Lumberjacks quarterback Brady Attaway's fourth-down pass fell incomplete near the goal line with just 28 seconds remaining in the game to allow the Sam Houston State Bearkats to slip past SFA 51-43 in the annual Battle of the Piney Woods Classic in front of a record crowd of 26,185 at Reliant Stadium.

Attaway had an outstanding performance in a losing effort passing for 545 yards and 6 touchdowns vs. the Bearkats. He connected with receivers Cordell Roberson (199 yards, 3 TD) and DJ Ward (129 yards, 1 TD) for 328 yards passing and four touchdowns.

Sam Houston State, 3-2,1-1 in the Southland Conference was outgained 566-396 in total yards but scored in all three phases, including touchdowns off an interception return and a fake field goal, to make up for a horrible first quarter in which the Bearkats had no first downs and committed two turnovers.

"I am so proud of our team and the heart that they have," SFA head football coach J.C. Harper stated. "When you look at the performance that Brady had (545 yards passing) and Cordell (199 yards receiving and 3 TD), you can't help but be proud."

"We would have liked the win tonight, but we just fell short."

Sam Houston State junior QB Brian Bell accounted for 5 of the Bearkats touchdowns, throwing

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for three and rushing for two more. Bell connected with Trey Diller, Torra Williams, and KJ Williams on touchdown passes of 31, 30, and 5 yards in the game.

Diller had 224 all-purpose yards in the game and junior All-American running back Tim Flanders rushed for 125 yards on 27 carries.

“In the first half, we were beating ourselves,” Bearkats quarterback Brian Bell stated. “In the second half, we started executing, getting level-headed and getting some confidence under us.”

Sam Houston State cornerback Bookie Sneed set a school record for the longest interception return with a 92-yard touchdown after picking off an Attaway pass late in the second quarter, giving the Bearkats their first lead at 20-14.

SFA, (2-4,1-1) in SLC, led 14-3 early in the second quarter, but the Bearkats scored 41 of the game's next 48 points.

“This was a tough, hard-fought victory,” Sam Houston State head coach Willie Fritz said. “I’m just really proud of the effort and the never-say-never attitude that our kids had.”