

Mizzou's Unbeaten Season Ends In Double Overtime

Sports

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Posted on : 2013/10/28 10:40:00

Columbia, MO (SportsNetwork.com) - Connor Shaw threw three touchdown passes in a superb relief effort that brought South Carolina back from a 17-point deficit, and the 20th-ranked Gamecocks remained alive in the SEC title chase with a thrilling 27-24 double-overtime triumph over No. 5 Missouri.



Playing through a sprained left knee that prompted Dylan Thompson to start the game at quarterback, Shaw completed 20-of-29 throws for 201 yards upon relieving his teammate with the Gamecocks trailing 17-0 in the third quarter. The senior's second TD strike, a 2-yarder to Nick Jones with 42 seconds in regulation, forged a 17-17 tie and brought about overtime.

"I wasn't even supposed to be playing in this game," Shaw said. "They said I was supposed to be out 2-3 weeks. I am thankful to be able to play in this game."

Missouri (7-1, 3-1 SEC) was able to force a successful 40-yard field goal attempt from Elliott Fry during the second OT, then had a chance to bring on a third when Andrew Baggett lined up for a 24-yard try that struck the left upright and sent the Tigers to their first loss of the season.

"He's a competitor, it is his job, it is his responsibility," Missouri head coach Gary Pinkel said when asked how Baggett was dealing with the miss. "There are other plays; there are plays you can look back and get a first down here, a third-down completion here, that type of thing through the entire game. So it's not one guy here."

The Tigers, coming off huge divisional wins over Georgia and Florida over the past two weeks, do still remain in the driver's seat in the SEC East race, with South Carolina (6-2, 4-2) one game back in the loss column along with the Bulldogs and Gators.

Bruce Ellington came up big as well in the Gamecocks' critical victory, catching two of Shaw's touchdown deliveries and finishing with career bests of 10 receptions and 136 yards. Mike Davis, who had two costly fumbles in the first half, added 99 yards on 10 grabs out of the backfield.

Thompson went 15-of-27 for 222 yards with one interception.

Missouri freshman Maty Mauk threw for 249 yards and teamed up with L'Damian Washington for a 96-yard touchdown in his second start in place of an injured James Franklin, but hit on just 11-of-25 attempts and was intercepted once. Marcus Murphy rushed for a pair of touchdowns in the heartbreaking setback.

The Tigers appeared well on their way to a third straight convincing conference win when Baggett's 27-yard field goal pushed their lead to 17-0 with 6:46 left in the third quarter.

Shaw replaced Thompson on the ensuing drive, and the Gamecocks' stagnant offense immediately came to life.

He made good on 7-of-10 throws, including a 10-yard strike to Carlton Heard on 4th-and-4 that kept

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the ball in South Carolina's hands. Davis later took a screen pass 20 yards to the Missouri six on 3rd-and-19, and Ellington kept his feet in on a diving grab on the next play to get the Gamecocks on the board with 12:13 remaining.

Baggett misfired on a 46-yard kick less than three minutes later, and Shaw had five more completions in directing a 10-play, 60-yard march culminating in Fry's 20-yard field goal with 5:03 to go in the fourth quarter.

South Carolina's defense aided the comeback cause by forcing a three-and-out on the Tigers' next series, giving Shaw the ball back at his team's 38 with 3:04 left to play.

A 20-yard hookup with Ellington and three catches from Davis, the last resulting in a 15-yard gain to the Missouri 1, had the Gamecocks on the doorstep with a minute left. Two plays later, Shaw rolled out and found Jones near the sideline for the game-tying score.

The Tigers received the ball first in overtime and needed just four running plays to reach the end zone, with Murphy crossing untouched from a yard away for a 24-17 lead.

Missouri was again on the verge of victory when defensive end Michael Sam pulled Shaw down for a loss and Jones couldn't come down with a catch near the goal line to bring on fourth down from the 15. Ellington beat his man on the following play, however, and Shaw hit him in stride for a touchdown that extended the game.

The Gamecocks failed to generate a first down during the second OT, but Fry calmly knocked home a 40-yard field goal to put South Carolina ahead for the first time of the night. Murphy scampered for 17 yards on the Tigers' first snap, creating a 1st-and-goal from the eight.

Murphy was stuffed on the next play and the Gamecocks ultimately held, leaving Baggett to come on for a seemingly easy kick that he pulled badly to the left and it struck the post.

Missouri was clinging to a 7-0 lead early in the second quarter when its defense produced the turning point of the first half. Thompson completed four straight pass attempts, including a 23-yarder to Ellington that brought the Gamecocks to the Tigers' 2-yard line. Davis was then stripped by Matt Hoch, however, with Kony Ealy recovering the loose ball to stave off the scoring chance.

Three plays afterward, Mauk found Washington open on a 3rd-and-8 situation with Missouri pinned in deep, and the senior receiver shook off a tackle before outsprinting the rest of the defense for a momentum-shifting 96-yard score.

Davis also fumbled in Tigers' territory on South Carolina's previous possession, which followed a 9-play, 77-yard Missouri trek capped by Murphy's 11-yard touchdown run off left tackle that put the hosts ahead late in the opening quarter. Prior to that series, Fry pulled a 40-yard field goal try wide left to end another promising drive without points.

The Tigers maintained a 14-0 advantage into halftime by coming up with one more big defensive stand, as lineman Shane Ray leaped over the pile to stone Thompson on a quarterback sneak on 4th-and-1 from the Mizzou 33 less than a minute before the break.

South Carolina turned it over on downs once again on its initial sequence of the second half, and a 28-yard connection from Mauk to Lucas on third down eventually led to Baggett's 27-yard field goal that extended the margin to 17-0.