

**MILITARY BOWL
CINCINNATI VS VIRGINIA TECH**

Cincinnati rallies past Virginia Tech 35-31 in Military Bowl

ANNAPOLIS, Md. -- Racing back and forth on a drenched field, Cincinnati and Virginia Tech put up some lofty numbers as the rain came down in the Military Bowl.

Michael Warren found his footing when it mattered most, scoring the go-ahead touchdown with 1:29 left for the Bearcats, whose 35-31 victory Monday ended Virginia Tech's run of 25 consecutive winning seasons.

Warren ran for a career-high 166 yards, including an 8-yard burst up the middle to cap a frantic five-play, 64-yard drive in which he had 54 yards rushing.

That was enough to decide a tight game that featured 905 yards in offense and seven lead changes.

"The O-line did a great job of getting the push, especially at the end," said Warren, voted the game's MVP. "When you keep running the ball and wearing the other team down, they're not going to want to see any more of that."

The Bearcats' offense got a big assist from backup quarterback Hayden Moore, a senior who made 12 starts last year. After throwing only 26 passes in 2018, Moore entered in the first quarter and completed 11 of 25 throws for 120 yards in addition to running for a 19-yard score.

The victory gave Cincinnati (11-2) its third 11-win season in the 131-year history of the program following two straight 4-8 finishes.

"We learned a lot from the failures from last year and even from the failures we had throughout January, February and March," second-year coach Luke Fickell said.

Playing in a bowl game for the 26th successive year -- the longest current run in the nation -- Virginia Tech needed a victory to avoid its first losing season since 1992. Ryan Willis threw two touchdown passes and ran for another score, but it wasn't enough to put an upbeat finish on an unsatisfying season for the Hokies (6-7).

"It stings. It's disappointing," said Virginia Tech defensive coordinator Bud Foster, a member of the coaching staff since 1987. "I'm proud of the consistency and how we have played over the years. We've got a young group of men, and some of them need to realize what it takes to perform and play at this level."

A touchdown run by Moore put the Bearcats up 28-24 with 12:44 left, and two minutes later Willis ran it in from the 5 to give Virginia Tech its last lead. The Hokies had a chance to extend the margin with just under nine minutes left but failed on a fourth-and-1 at the Cincinnati 3.

"We had an opportunity to go up by two scores but we didn't," Foster said. "And then we didn't respond defensively. That's kind of how we've been this year, kind of up and down that way."

Ridder hurt his right leg after being tripped up out of the pocket during the Bearcats' second series. The American Athletic Conference rookie of the year went 4 for 7 for 86 yards and a touchdown before leaving.

Moore picked up the slack.

"I knew this opportunity was coming sometime in the year," Moore said. "I didn't blink an eye. I just went and grabbed my helmet."

After a back-and-forth first half that ended 14-all, Virginia Tech moved 69 yards to open the third quarter before Brian Johnson kicked a field goal for a 17-14 lead. After Warren put the Bearcats in front with a 40-yard touchdown run, Willis threw a 2-yard touchdown pass to Chris Cunningham to make it 24-21 heading into the fourth quarter.

WET BALL

The Bearcats fumbled three times and recovered all of them, including a touchdown by Kahlil Lewis on a ball Warren lost at the Virginia Tech 1.

"It wasn't the cleanest (win) obviously," Fickell said. "Look at the weather."

THE TAKEAWAY

Cincinnati: The Bearcats are on the rise under Fickell, who can expect to accompany Cincinnati to more bowls in the years ahead.

Virginia Tech: The Hokies were way too inconsistent in a season that ended on a very disappointing note. Virginia Tech was 13th in the country in September and now must rebound from its first losing season in more than a quarter of a century.

Still, coach Justin Fuente had no complaints about his team's effort in this one.

"They laid it on the line today," Fuente said. "We had guys that wanted to finish this thing off the right way."

Final	1	2	3	4	T
CIN	7	7	7	14	35
VT	7	7	10	7	31

Scoring Summary -----

	CIN	VT
FIRST QUARTER		
VT TD 10:22 Eric Kumah 21 Yd pass from Ryan Willis (Brian Johnson Kick)	0	7
CIN TD 7:46 Charles McClelland 38 Yd pass from Desmond Ridder (Ryan Jones Kick)	7	7
second Quarter		
CIN TD 11:22 Kahlil Lewis 0 Yd Fumble Return (Ryan Jones Kick)	14	7
VT TD 7:04 Steven Peoples 1 Yd Run (Brian Johnson Kick)	14	14
third Quarter		
VT FG 10:21 Brian Johnson 28 Yd Field Goal	14	17
CIN TD 9:16 Michael Warren II 40 Yd Run (Ryan Jones Kick)	21	17
VT TD 1:52 Chris Cunningham 2 Yd pass from Ryan Willis (Brian Johnson Kick)	21	24
fourth Quarter		
CIN TD 12:44 Hayden Moore 19 Yd Run (Ryan Jones Kick)	28	24
VT TD 10:32 Ryan Willis 5 Yd Run (Brian Johnson Kick)	28	31
CIN TD 1:29 Michael Warren II 8 Yd Run (Ryan Jones Kick)	35	31

	CIN	VT
Team Stats		
First Downs	23	24
Total Yards	462	443
Total Plays	68	76
Avg Gain Per Play	6.8	5.8
Net Yards Rushing	256	224
Rushes	36	45
Yards Per Rush	7.1	5.0
Net Yards Passing	206	219
Comp-Att	15-32	20-31
Yards Per Pass	6.4	7.1
Times Sacked	0	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	0	-1
Interceptions	1	1
Punts	5	4
Punt Average	42.2	48.5
Penalties	13	10
Penalty Yards	96	92
Fumbles	3	1
Fumbles Lost	0	1
Possession	28:55	31:05

Individual Stats

RUSHING

	CIN	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
3 Michael Warren II	20	166	8.3	40	2	
8 Hayden Moore	9	64	7.1	19	1	
5 Tavion Thomas	3	9	3.0	8	0	
9 Desmond Ridder	1	9	9.0	9	0	
10 Charles McClelland	1	2	2.0	2	0	
VT	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD	
33 Deshawn McCleale	13	102	7.8	26	0	
13 Jalen Holston	10	40	4.0	13	0	
5 Ryan Willis	12	33	2.8	13	1	
32 Steven Peoples	9	26	2.9	6	1	
11 Tre Turner	1	23	23.0	23	0	

PASSING

	CIN	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
8 Hayden Moore	11	25	120	4.8	0	1	76.3	
9 Desmond Ridder	4	7	86	12.3	1	0	207.5	
VT	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat	
5 Ryan Willis	20	31	219	7.1	2	1	138.7	

RECEIVING

	CIN	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Charles McClelland	2	47	23.5	38	1	
17 Rashad Medaris	2	43	21.5	32	0	
13 Trent Cloud	3	35	11.7	20	0	
21 Jayshon Jackson	1	22	22.0	22	0	
1 Kahlil Lewis	1	14	14.0	14	0	
85 Thomas Geddis	1	12	12.0	12	0	
3 Michael Warren II	1	10	10.0	10	0	
26 Jerron Rollins	1	9	9.0	9	0	
80 Malick Mbodj	1	6	6.0	6	0	
87 Bruno Labelle	1	5	5.0	5	0	
83 Josiah Deguaral	3	3.0	3.0	0	0	
VT	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD	
14 Damon Hazelton	6	57	9.5	17	0	
83 Eric Kumah	3	45	15.0	21	1	
11 Tre Turner	1	40	40.0	40	0	
85 Chris Cunningham	2	22	11.0	20	1	
29 Dalton Keene	4	19	4.8	7	0	
13 Jalen Holston	1	14	14.0	14	0	
6 Hezekiah Grimsley	1	8	8.0	8	0	
33 Deshawn McCleale	1	8	8.0	8	0	
8 Phil Patterson	1	6	6.0	6	0	