

No. 10 Nittany Lions survive Appalachian St. in OT

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. -- After the squandering of a 14-point, fourth-quarter lead against a program with a history of being a giant-killer, things grew tense in Happy Valley.

But not for Penn State quarterback Trace McSorley.

The Heisman Trophy hopeful led a game-tying drive with less than a minute to go to force overtime, and No. 10 Penn State rebounded to hold off Appalachian State 45-38 exactly 11 years after the Mountaineers stunned Michigan in one of the biggest upsets in college football history.

With two defenders in his face, McSorley, who was 21-for-36 passing for 230 yards and two rushing touchdowns, fired off his back foot to KJ Hamler for a 15-yard score with 42 seconds left. Penn State's defense held on to send the game to overtime, in which Miles Sanders scored the go-ahead touchdown for the Nittany Lions (1-0) and cornerback Amani Oruwaraye intercepted a Zac Thomas pass in the end zone to seal the win.

"I don't know what's in the water in Boone, North Carolina, but it seems like they've been doing this for a long time against whoever they play," Penn State coach James Franklin said. "I started the game at 46 years old. I ended it at 51."

McSorley went on the field with 1:47 left and his team trailing 38-31 after watching the Mountaineers score on three straight possessions over 5:53 in the fourth quarter. Any stress?

"Not really," McSorley said. "I think it's just because I love playing football, and I think that's the best thing about our team. Everyone loves playing football. There's no one out there who's nervous."

Sanders, who played well in Saquon Barkley's shadow the past two seasons, looked calm in taking over primary rushing duties. He ran 19 times for 91 yards with two touchdowns, but it took a Jake Pinegar field goal for Penn State to head into halftime in a 10-10 tie.

In fact, the Mountaineers controlled much of the game before that and rebounded after surrendering two scoring drives to open the third. Thomas, who was briefly knocked out of the game after being sandwiched violently between defenders early in the fourth, led the way in front of more than 105,000 people, Penn State's largest home-opening crowd in a decade.

Making his first career start, Thomas completed 25 of 38 passes for 270 yards, threw for two touchdowns and ran for another for Appalachian State (0-1). Jalin Moore ran 18 times for 88 yards and scored a go-ahead touchdown on a 16-yard run. Malik Williams caught two touchdowns for the Mountaineers, and Chandler Staton added a 38-yard field goal.

"That was a resounding yes that we won't back down, we will keep fighting," Appalachian State coach Scott Satterfield said. "That's the heart of our program for the last 30 years, [at least] since I've been here."

**HISTORY NEARLY REPEATS**

In 2007, it was No. 5. Michigan fighting for its life and trying to make a game-winning kick at home against the I-AA Mountaineers. But Corey Lynch blocked Michigan's field goal attempt to seal the 34-32 win. No I-AA team had ever beaten a team ranked in The Associated Press Top 25 poll between 1989 and 2006, and it's unlikely that it had happened before. Afterward, the AP changed the way it conducted its poll, allowing schools from all divisions to be eligible to receive votes.

On Saturday, another storied Big Ten program was on its heels against the Mountaineers, a Sun Belt Conference powerhouse that went 8-4 a year ago. There was a late field goal try, but the 56-yard bid from Staton sailed wide right to set up OT.

**THE TAKEAWAY**

Appalachian State: The Mountaineers continued their trend of playing Top 25 teams tough in season openers. Two years ago, they lost in overtime on the road to a top-10 opponent (20-13 to No. 9 Tennessee), and they hung tough against Georgia last season. They looked poised to deliver another stunning performance in another massive stadium but came up just short. Despite the loss, they appear to have the pieces to make a run at what would be their third straight Sun Belt championship.

Penn State: Having lost their three top playmakers and vaunted offensive coordinator Joe Moorhead, who took over as Mississippi State's head coach, the Nittany Lions' offense looks like a work in progress. McSorley can do plenty with his legs if he and his receivers aren't on the same page, but Penn State's defense couldn't get a step in the fourth quarter, where the Nittany Lions were outgained and outscored 28-14.

**POLL IMPLICATIONS**

Penn State: It wasn't a pretty showing by any means, but the Nittany Lions have enough talent and one of the best players in the country in McSorley to stay among the poll's elites.

	1	2	3	4	OT	T
APP	10	0	0	28	0	38
PSU	7	3	14	14	7	45

**Scoring Summary**

	APP	PSU
<b>first Quarter</b>		
APP TD 12:02 Trace McSorley 12 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)	7	0
7 plays, 75 yards, 2:58	0	7
APP TD 11:48 Darrynton Evans 100 Yd Kickoff Return (Chandler Staton Kick)	7	0
0 plays, 0 yards, 0:00	7	7
PSU FG 4:10 Chandler Staton 38 Yd Field Goal	10	7
12 plays, 60 yards, 6:37	10	7
<b>second Quarter</b>		
PSU FG 0:12 Jake Pinegar 32 Yd Field Goal	10	10
12 plays, 77 yards, 4:32	10	10
<b>third Quarter</b>		
PSU TD 9:41 Trace McSorley 10 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)	10	17
8 plays, 65 yards, 3:22	10	17
PSU TD 2:41 Ricky Slade 27 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)	10	24
8 plays, 72 yards, 3:40	10	24
<b>fourth Quarter</b>		
APP TD 13:39 Malik Williams 17 Yd pass from Zac Thomas (Chandler Staton Kick)	17	24
10 plays, 75 yards, 4:02	17	24
PSU TD 11:17 Miles Sanders 2 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)	17	31
6 plays, 75 yards, 2:22	17	31
APP TD 7:40 Malik Williams 24 Yd pass from Zac Thomas (Chandler Staton Kick)	24	31
9 plays, 80 yards, 3:32	24	31
APP TD 6:03 Zac Thomas 1 Yd Run (Chandler Staton Kick)	31	31
4 plays, 53 yards, 1:36	31	31
APP TD 1:47 Jalin Moore 16 Yd Run (Chandler Staton Kick)	38	31
4 plays, 42 yards, 1:12	38	31
PSU TD 0:42 KJ Hamler 15 Yd pass from Trace McSorley (Jake Pinegar Kick)	38	38
7 plays, 48 yards, 0:00	38	38
<b>Overtime</b>		
PSU TD Miles Sanders 4 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)	38	45
4 plays, 25 yards	38	45

**Team Stats**

	APP	PSU
First Downs	22	24
Total Yards	451	434
Total Plays	76	79
Avg Gain Per Play	5.9	5.5
Net Yards Rushing	159	204
Rushes	37	43
Yards Per Rush	4.3	4.7
Net Yards Passing	292	230
Comp-Att	26-39	21-36
Yards Per Pass	7.5	6.4
Times Sacked	1	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	-8	-14
Interceptions	1	0
Punts	6	5
Punt Average	43.5	43.0
Penalties	9	2
Penalty Yards	100	10
Fumbles	1	0
Fumbles Lost	0	0
<b>Possession</b>	<b>32:28</b>	<b>27:32</b>

**Individual Stats**

**RUSHING**

App St.	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Jalin Moore	18	88	4.9	16	1
ac Thomas	15	43	2.9	22	1
Dominique Heath	1	19	19.0	19	0
Darrynton Evans	3	9	3.0	6	0
Penn St.	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Miles Sanders	19	91	4.8	15	2
Trace McSorley	12	53	4.4	12	2
Ricky Slade	6	39	6.5	27	1
Mark Allen	5	24	4.8	7	0

**PASSING**

APP St.	Comp	Att	Pct	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Zac Thomas	25	38	65.8	270	7.1	2	0	137.6
Peyton Derrick	1	1	100.0	22	22.0	0	0	284.8
Penn St.	Comp	Att	Pct	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
9 Trace McSorley	21	36	58.3	230	6.4	1	0	121.2

**RECEIVING**

Appalachian St.	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Corey Sutton	6	87	14.5	39	0
Malik Williams	4	66	16.5	24	2
Jalin Moore	5	36	7.2	14	0
Dominique Heath	2	35	17.5	22	0
Thomas Hennigan	4	28	7.0	14	0
Jalen Virgil	1	14	14.0	14	0
Darrynton Evans	2	10	5.0	6	0
89 Devin Papenheim	1	8	8.0	8	0
88 Henry Pearson	1	8	8.0	8	0
Penn St.	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
KJ Hamler	4	68	17.0	46	1
Juwan Johnson	6	67	11.2	17	0
Jonathan Holland	2	36	18.0	29	0
Miles Sanders	3	20	6.7	10	0
Brandon Polk	2	19	9.5	10	0
Mark Allen	3	18	6.0	9	0
80 Danny Dalton	1	2	2.0	2	0
DeAndre Thompkins	0	0	-	-	0