

WEEK TEN
AIR FORCE AT ARMY

WEST POINT, N.Y. -- Army is in rarefied air and coach Jeff Monken is impressed.

The third wheel in the annual round-robin series with service academy rivals Air Force and Navy -- the Falcons have won the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy 20 times and the Midshipmen 15 -- before Saturday Army had won the coveted hardware, emblematic of supremacy among the three schools, just seven times.

Make that eight -- and the first time in consecutive years.

Fullback Darnell Woolfolk rushed for 117 yards and a touchdown, Kelvin Hopkins Jr. scored on a 6-yard run, and Army held off rival Air Force 17-14 on Saturday.

It was the 11th straight victory at Michie Stadium for Army (7-2), which won the trophy outright last season for the first time since 1996 and will keep possession no matter the outcome of its game against archrival Navy next month.

"That epitomizes the mental toughness of this team," Monken said. "It wasn't always pretty. We could have done better. I'm really, really glad that we won the game. It's an emotional game. It feels good to win.

"It was a battle. I was proud our team was able to find a way to win. I think our guys were pressed into a corner. Give them (Air Force) credit. They were fighting, too."

Air Force (3-6), which beat Navy 35-7 a month ago, is 33-14 in Commander in Chief's Trophy games against Army since the trophy was first awarded in 1972 and could have won the trophy again on Saturday with a victory. The Falcons had won 18 of the previous 21 in the series against the Black Knights, but they couldn't overcome a costly interception by Army's Mike Reynolds at the Army 4 in the final minute of the first half.

"There was a chance to seize this one, but I'm not putting any blame on the offense at all," Air Force linebacker Kyle Johnson said. "We didn't do the job just the same way they didn't."

The Falcons were unable to score in the opening half with Isaiah Sanders at quarterback, fell behind by two scores, and couldn't recover despite dominating the second half. Air Force outgained Army 212-77 after halftime with Donald Hammond III at quarterback. The Black Knights secured the victory when Hammond was stopped for no gain on a fourth-and-3 play at the Army 40 with under 2 minutes to play.

"We were driving downfield. We should have made some plays we didn't make," Hammond said. "I just wanted to win this game for the team. We're never going to give up. That's one thing we're not going to do."

Hammond, who excelled in the victory over Navy, accounting for four touchdowns in his first college start, replaced Sanders to start the third quarter and quickly hit Marcus Bennett for 31 yards into Army territory, but the drive ended when the Falcons were called for an illegal block on a fourth-and-3 play and had to punt.

Hammond had completions of 17 yards to Geraud Sanders and 13 yards to Marcus Bennett late in the third quarter, but the Falcons turned the ball over on downs when a fourth-down pass by Hammond attempt fell incomplete.

The Falcons finally caught a break when safety Jeremy Fejedelem got a hand on a punt by Army's Nick Schrage and it traveled just 4 yards to give Air Force a first down at the Army 34 and they capitalized. Hammond scored from the 1 two plays after converting a fourth-and-1 play, cutting the lead to 14-6 with under a minute to play in the third. Jake Koehnke's point-after try hit the left goalpost and stayed out.

Senior John Abercrombie kicked a 30-yard field goal with 8:35 left to complete a 13-play drive that took 7:19 off the clock on a gusty day and gave Army a 17-6 lead midway through the fourth.

Undaunted, Hammond drove the Falcons 75 yards in 10 plays to pull within a field goal. The drive was kept alive by a pass interference call against Army on a third-and-10 play. Cole Fagan's 30-yard catch-and-run set up Joseph Saucier's 6-yard touchdown run off a pitch. Saucier also converted on the 2-point try to make it 17-14.

"When our backs are against the wall, we never flinch," said Army linebacker Cole Christiansen, who combined with James Nachtigal to make the saving tackle on Hammond. "Definitely in the second half they came at us differently. We got it done."

THE TAKEAWAY

Air Force: The Falcons are faltering in the Mountain West Conference at 1-4 and have to win their final three games to qualify for the postseason. At least two of the games are at Falcon Stadium.

Army: The Black Knights have beaten Air Force and Navy two straight times. Another victory over Navy in December will clinch the 170-pound trophy outright.

NO GAMBLE

Trailing 7-0 early in the second quarter, Air Force coach Troy Calhoun elected to punt on fourth-and-2 just inside Army territory. The Black Knights were 3 for 3 on fourth down to up their season total to 29 conversions in 32 attempts.

| Final | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | T |
|-------|---|---|---|---|----|
| AFA | 0 | 0 | 6 | 8 | 14 |
| ARMY | 7 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 17 |

Scoring Summary -----

| | AFA | ARMY |
|---|-----|------|
| FIRST QUARTER | | |
| ARMY TD 2:05 | | |
| Darnell Woolfolk 1 Yd Run (John Abercrombie Kick) | 0 | 7 |
| 21 plays, 75 yards, 12:55 | | |
| SECOND QUARTER | | |
| ARMY TD 4:03 | | |
| Kelvin Hopkins Jr. 6 Yd Run (John Abercrombie Kick) | 0 | 14 |
| 11 plays, 89 yards, 6:47 | | |
| THIRD QUARTER | | |
| AFA TD 0:54 | | |
| Donald Hammond III 1 Yd Run (Jake Koehnke PAT failed) | 6 | 14 |
| 9 plays, 34 yards, 3:50 | | |
| FOURTH QUARTER | | |
| ARMY FG 8:35 | | |
| John Abercrombie 30 Yd Field Goal | 6 | 17 |
| 13 plays, 62 yards, 7:19 | | |
| AFA TD 5:27 | | |
| Joseph Saucier 6 Yd Run (Joseph Saucier Run for Two-Point Conversion) | 14 | 17 |
| 10 plays, 75 yards, 3:08 | | |

| Team Stats | AFA | ARMY |
|-------------------|-------|-------|
| First Downs | 17 | 16 |
| Total Yards | 322 | 285 |
| Total Plays | 57 | 64 |
| Avg Gain Per Play | 5.6 | 4.5 |
| Net Yards Rushing | 125 | 242 |
| Rushes | 35 | 59 |
| Yards Per Rush | 3.6 | 4.1 |
| Net Yards Passing | 197 | 43 |
| Comp-Att | 12-22 | 3-5 |
| Yards Per Pass | 9.0 | 8.6 |
| Times Sacked | 0 | 0 |
| Yds Lost To Sacks | 0 | 0 |
| Interceptions | 1 | 0 |
| Punts | 3 | 4 |
| Punt Average | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Penalties | 5 | 5 |
| Penalty Yards | 55 | 69 |
| Fumbles | 0 | 0 |
| Fumbles Lost | 0 | 0 |
| Possession | 22:28 | 37:32 |

Individual Stats

RUSHING

| AFA | Rush | Yds | Avg | TD | Long |
|--------------------|------|-----|------|----|------|
| Cole Fagan | 10 | 37 | 3.7 | 0 | 9 |
| Donald Hammond III | 9 | 30 | 3.3 | 1 | 11 |
| Joseph Saucier | 6 | 21 | 3.5 | 1 | 9 |
| Isaiah Sanders | 5 | 21 | 4.2 | 0 | 7 |
| Kadin Rensberg | 4 | 13 | 3.3 | 0 | 7 |
| Dailen Sutton | 1 | 3 | 3.0 | 0 | 3 |
| ARMY | Rush | Yds | Avg | TD | Long |
| Darnell Woolfolk | 21 | 117 | 5.6 | 1 | 52 |
| Kelvin Hopkins Jr. | 19 | 75 | 3.9 | 1 | 13 |
| Andy Davidson | 8 | 30 | 3.8 | 0 | 13 |
| Kell Walker | 4 | 7 | 1.8 | 0 | 5 |
| Glen Coates | 1 | 4 | 4.0 | 0 | 4 |
| Connor Slomka | 2 | 4 | 2.0 | 0 | 3 |
| Cam Thomas | 1 | 3 | 3.0 | 0 | 3 |
| Jordan Asberry | 2 | 3 | 1.5 | 0 | 7 |
| Team | 1 | -1 | -1.0 | 0 | 0 |

PASSING

| AFA | Comp | Att | Yds | Y/A | TD | Int | QBRat |
|--------------------|------|-----|-----|------|----|-----|-------|
| Donald Hammond III | 7 | 15 | 120 | 8.0 | 0 | 0 | 63.8 |
| Isaiah Sanders | 5 | 7 | 77 | 11.0 | 0 | 1 | 44.4 |
| ARMY | Comp | Att | Yds | Y/A | TD | Int | QBRat |
| Kelvin Hopkins Jr. | 3 | 5 | 44 | 8.8 | 0 | 0 | 73.4 |

RECEIVING

| AFA | Rec | Yds | Avg | TD | Long |
|-----------------|-----|-----|------|----|------|
| Geraud Sanders | 3 | 55 | 18.3 | 0 | 19 |
| Marcus Bennett | 2 | 44 | 22.0 | 0 | 31 |
| Brandon Lewis | 3 | 32 | 10.7 | 0 | 18 |
| Cole Fagan | 1 | 30 | 30.0 | 0 | 30 |
| Joseph Saucier | 1 | 29 | 29.0 | 0 | 29 |
| Kadin Rensberg | 1 | 5 | 5.0 | 0 | 5 |
| Kade Waguespack | 1 | 2 | 2.0 | 0 | 2 |
| ARMY | Rec | Yds | Avg | TD | Long |
| Jordan Asberry | 2 | 35 | 17.5 | 0 | 21 |
| Glen Coates | 1 | 9 | 9.0 | 0 | 9 |