

WEEK THIRTEEN
NAVY AT TULANE

NEW ORLEANS -- Even before Tulane’s Justin McMillan connected with Jaetavian Toles for what could have been a tying touchdown with 1:27 left, coach Willie Fritz held up two fingers in the direction of the man who’d hired him to turn the downtrodden Green Wave football program around.

Athletic Director Troy Dannen he saw the third-year coach’s gesture about the time Tulane crossed midfield, adding, “I knew he had the play.”

McMillan began to roll left before lofting the ball back to the right to wide-open tight end Charles Jones, and Tulane avoided a devastating collapse with a 29-28 victory over Navy to become bowl eligible for the first time since 2013.

“We were doing really well offensively. Our defense was kind of tired,” Fritz said. “I went over and told the AD I was going for 2, just wanted make sure I still had that contract.

“He said I did, so we went ahead with it.”

McMillian said he could not see where exactly Jones was when he released his pass with the season in the balance.

“I knew the vicinity where he would be at, and I’d seen him release, and was like, `OK, Chuck should be somewhere over there,” McMillan recalled. “I just knew he would handle the rest.”

The game-winning score capped a seven-play drive that covered 71 yards in 2:11 and came after Tazh Maloy’s 9-yard TD run capped a stunning run of 25 straight points that turned Navy’s 21-3 half-time deficit into a late, 28-21 lead.

Tulane (6-6, 5-3 AAC) sealed the win by stopping Navy (3-8, 2-6) in four plays, capped by a sack and strip of Zach Abey. That allowed the Wave to run out the clock and storm the field in celebration, having won four of its last five games to reach the six-win plateau, normally the benchmark for bowl bids.

“Our loyal fans -- which we’ve got a ton -- they’ve had some tough times here, and it’s about time we got the opportunity to win and celebrate like that,” Fritz said.

McMillan threw for three touchdowns and rushed for one.

His first and longest scoring strike went 55 yards to Darnell Mooney, who broke behind the Navy secondary down the left sideline as McMillan hit him in stride. The second TD pass covered 52 yards on a deep crossing route to Jabril Clewis.

OUT OF CHARACTER

Abey passed for a 73-yard touchdown and caught a 37-yard scoring pass -- a sudden surge from a passing game that ranked last in the nation coming in.

“Obviously, that’s not really who we are, but in the time of need, we needed to do that and it showed that we were prepared for it,” Abey said. “We made some pretty good plays.”

Abey finished 7-of-13 for 167 yards, including a fourth-down completion that kept alive the go-ahead scoring drive in the fourth quarter.

ROARING BACK

Sean Williams’ interception and 36-yard return to the Tulane 7 set up a short field goal to ignite Navy’s second-half rally. Next came Malcom Perry’s halfback pass across the field to Abey.

“We’ve had that in the playbook for a long, long time, but I think it was the perfect time to do it,” Abey said. “When I pitched to Malcolm, the whole defense was just gone.”

After Tulane stalled again, Abey found Perry uncovered over the middle for his game-long scoring play. Abey then hit Taylor Jackson in the back of the end zone for a 2-point conversion to tie it.

Tulane responded by driving into Navy territory, but Merek Glover’s 32-yard field goal attempt smacked off the right upright, setting up the roller-coaster of finish.

THE TAKEAWAY

Navy: The Mids have lost 12-straight away from Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium. Navy’s last road victory was a 31-21 triumph at Tulsa on Sept. 30, 2017. But Navy had to be encouraged by newfound success in the passing game heading into its annual rivalry game with Army. Navy also went 4-for-5 on fourth-down conversions.

Tulane: An enthusiastic crowd on senior day looked and sounded incredulous as chances for a first bowl in five years seemed to slip away -- all because of big passing plays by a struggling Navy team that hardly throws and hadn’t won on the road all season. But the Tulane faithful were jubilant after the Green Wave offense regrouped just in time. The Wave defense sold out to stop the run, holding Navy to 117 yards rushing, 187 yards below its average coming in.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
NAVY	0	3	18	7	28
TULN	0	21	0	8	29

Scoring Summary -----				
SECOND QUARTER			NAVY	TULN
TULN TD 14:53				
Darnell Mooney 55 Yd pass from Justin McMillan (Merek Glover Kick)				
3 plays, 80 yards, 1:09			0	7
NAVY FG 7:40				
Bennett Moehring 48 Yd Field Goal				
13 plays, 44 yards, 7:13			3	7
TULN TD 4:26				
Justin McMillan 5 Yd Run (Merek Glover Kick)				
7 plays, 77 yards, 3:07			3	14
TULN TD 1:00				
Jabril Clewis 52 Yd pass from Justin McMillan (Merek Glover Kick)				
4 plays, 75 yards, 1:15			3	21
THIRD QUARTER			NAVY	TULN
NAVY FG 9:42				
Bennett Moehring 19 Yd Field Goal				
4 plays, 4 yards, 2:07			6	21
NAVY TD 4:02				
Zach Abey 37 Yd pass from Malcolm Perry (Bennett Moehring Kick)				
4 plays, 61 yards, 1:32			13	21
NAVY TD 2:47				
Malcolm Perry 73 Yd pass from Zach Abey (Zach Abey Pass to Taylor Jackson for Two-Point Conversion)				
1 play, 73 yards, 0:11			21	21
FOURTH QUARTER			NAVY	TULN
NAVY TD 3:44				
Tazh Maloy 9 Yd Run (Bennett Moehring Kick)				
14 plays, 80 yards, 8:13			28	21
TULN TD 1:27				
Jaetavian Toles 26 Yd pass from Justin McMillan (Justin McMillan Pass to Charles Jones II for Two-Point Conversion)				
7 plays, 71 yards, 2:11			28	29

Team Stats	NAVY	TULN
First Downs	13	19
Total Yards	321	420
Total Plays	61	61
Avg Gain Per Play	5.3	6.9
Net Yards Rushing	117	129
Rushes	45	32
Yards Per Rush	2.6	4.0
Net Yards Passing	204	291
Comp-Att	8-16	18-29
Yards Per Pass	12.8	10.0
Times Sacked	2	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	-15	-8
Interceptions	0	1
Punts	5	5
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	2	2
Penalty Yards	10	20
Fumbles	2	0
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Possession	32:19	27:41

Individual Stats					
RUSHING					
NAVY	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Anthony Gargiulo	12	44	3.7	0	13
Nelson Smith	7	35	5.0	0	10
Tazh Maloy	2	11	5.5	1	9
Zach Abey	14	11	0.8	0	5
Malcolm Perry	4	8	2.0	0	5
Mike Martin	3	4	1.3	0	2
Tre Walker	1	2	2.0	0	2
Mychal Cooper	1	2	2.0	0	2
Garret Lewis	1	0	0.0	0	0
TULN	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Darius Bradwell	15	66	4.4	0	15
Justin McMillan	8	51	6.4	1	28
Corey Dauphine	6	14	2.3	0	4
Amare Jones	1	0	0.0	0	0
Team	2	-2	-1.0	0	0

PASSING							
NAVY	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Zach Abey	7	13	167	12.8	1	0	63.2
Malcolm Perry	1	1	37	37.0	1	0	31.9
Garret Lewis	0	2	0	0.0	0	0	2.5
TULN	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Justin McMillan	18	29	291	10.0	3	1	84.0

RECEIVING					
NAVY	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Malcolm Perry	1	73	73.0	1	73
Ryan Mitchell	2	52	26.0	0	26
Zach Abey	1	37	37.0	1	37
CJ Williams	2	24	12.0	0	22
Taylor Jackson	1	13	13.0	0	13
OJ Davis	1	5	5.0	0	5
TULN	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Darnell Mooney	5	135	27.0	1	55
Jabril Clewis	4	83	20.8	1	52
Terren Encalade	5	35	7.0	0	10
Jaetavian Toles	1	26	26.0	1	26
Charles Jones II	1	6	6.0	0	6
Darius Bradwell	2	6	3.0	0	8