

POTATO BOWL
OHIO vs NEVADA

Ohio beats Nevada 30-21 in Famous Idaho Potato Bowl

BOISE, Idaho -- Ohio quarterback Nathan Rourke is projected to be the top quarterback taken in the Canadian Football League draft this spring. He's pretty good at the American collegiate version, too.

Rourke, from Oakville, Ontario, accounted for 231 yards of offense and ran for a touchdown to help Ohio beat Nevada 30-21 on Friday in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl.

Ohio (7-6) rebounded from a 1/3 start for its fifth straight winning season under coach Frank Solich. The 75-year-old former Nebraska coach received a two-year contract extension this week.

Nevada (7-6), which dismissed defensive coordinator Jeff Casteel and two other defensive position coaches at the end of the regular season, didn't find much of an answer for Ohio's high-powered offense until the fourth quarter.

The Wolfpack also were missing three key defensive starters, suspended for their participation in a fight in a loss to rival UNLV in the regular-season finale.

Rourke, who finished with 144 yards passing and 87 yards rushing along with one touchdown, garnered MVP honors, but was uninterested in talking about it. When asked about his award, he quickly pivoted to talk about the defense and their stand at the end of the game. Later, Rourke apologized for never winning a MAC championship during his three years at the school.

"I love coaching him," Solich said. "We've been blessed to have him and I appreciate everything he's done for this program. He really thinks beyond himself."

Rourke is also thinking beyond the CFL, hoping to fulfill his dream of playing in the NFL, even if it's not a traditional route.

"I'm used to being overlooked," said Rourke, tied Kareem Wilson's school career record of 49 rushing touchdowns. "I took a different path to get here, and I'm not afraid of taking a different path to reaching the NFL."

Rourke might be overlooked in the NFL draft, but he finished just one touchdown shy of joining an elite trio of college quarterbacks who threw for 50 or more touchdowns and rushed for 50 or more in their career--Lamar Jackson, Tim Tebow, and Colin Kaepernick, all of whom made it to the NFL. And Rourke, unlike Tebow and Kaepernick, achieved his stats in only three seasons.

Ohio raced to a 20-9 lead and scored the first 10 points of the third quarter before holding off Nevada's late rally.

The Bobcats lost leading rusher O'Shaan Allison late in the first quarter with an undisclosed injury. De'Montre Tuggle took over, rushing for 97 yards and a touchdown to spark a ground attack that finished with 285 yards on 50 carries spread among five players.

Rourke tied Kareem Wilson's school record for career rushing touchdowns of 49. Wilson played from 1995-98.

BROKEN FINGER, NO PROBLEM

After the game, Solich revealed that Tuggle, who finished as the Bobcats' leading rusher, broke his pinky finger in warmups and wasn't sure if he was going to play. But when Allison went out with an injury, Tuggle didn't hesitate to go.

"I was wondering whether or not he needed to carry the ball in the opposite hand all the time," Solich said. "He said no, he'd be able to handle it. Starting out we weren't real sure how he was going to be able to function. Then when he had to get in and start playing, it was obvious he was going to be able to play with it."

TATERS OVER WATER

After the victory, Solich got a traditional victory bath. But this time he was doused in french fries instead of water.

"That's a lot better than water on you," Solich said. "Over the course of the years, I've had some water on me. I will take those potatoes any time."

THE TAKEAWAY

Ohio: The Bobcats will have a big question next season at quarterback with Rourke graduating, but there are plenty of reasons to think Ohio will be a serious contender for the MAC title. Losing just two starters on offense and three on defense, it will be one of the most experienced returning teams in the conference.

Nevada: The Wolfpack will also enter next season with high hopes with Norvell entering his fourth season with a bevy of returnees, including quarterback Carson Strong, who finished with over 2,000 yards passing, and leading wide receiver Elijah Cooks.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
OHIO	3	17	10	0	30
NEV	3	6	0	12	21

Scoring Summary -----

	OHIO	NEV
FIRST QUARTER		
NEV FG 12:26 Brandon Talton 51 Yd Field Goal		3
6 plays, 46 yards, 2:34	0	
OHIO FG 7:00 Louie Zervos 29 Yd Field Goal		3
10 plays, 65 yards, 5:26	3	
second Quarter		
OHIO TD 12:28 Julian Ross 12 Yd Run (Louie Zervos Kick)		3
15 plays, 71 yards, 7:47	10	
NEV FG 7:21 Brandon Talton 36 Yd Field Goal		6
10 plays, 59 yards, 5:07	10	
OHIO TD 6:21 Nathan Rourke 35 Yd Run (Louie Zervos Kick)		6
3 plays, 77 yards, 1:00	17	
OHIO FG 2:17 Louie Zervos 33 Yd Field Goal		6
5 plays, 20 yards, 2:02	20	
NEV FG 0:00 Brandon Talton 33 Yd Field Goal		9
12 plays, 67 yards, 2:17	20	
third Quarter		
OHIO FG 11:00 Louie Zervos 26 Yd Field Goal		9
9 plays, 66 yards, 4:00	23	
OHIO TD 5:26 De'Montre Tuggle 2 Yd Run (Louie Zervos Kick)		9
5 plays, 50 yards, 2:26	30	
fourth Quarter		
NEV TD 10:48 Elijah Cooks 8 Yd pass from Carson Strong (Brandon Talton PAT blocked)		15
10 plays, 78 yards, 3:33	30	
NEV TD 8:42 Devonte Lee 1 Yd Run (Two-Point Pass Conversion Failed)		21
3 plays, 21 yards, 0:57	30	

Team Stats	OHIO	NEV
First Downs	25	24
Passes for First	7	17
Rushes for First	16	6
Penalties for First	2	1
Third Down Efficiency	2-11	3-12
Fourth Down Efficiency	2-2	2-3
Total Yards	429	430
Total Plays	67	69
Avg Gain Per Play	6.4	6.2
Net Yards Rushing	285	29
Rushes	50	19
Yards Per Rush	5.7	1.5
Net Yards Passing	144	401
Comp-Att	9-17	32-50
Yards Per Pass	8.5	8.0
Times Sacked	1	3
Yds Lost To Sacks	-10	-30
Interceptions	0	0
Punts	2	3
Punt Average	42.0	46.3
Penalties	2	4
Penalty Yards	20	58
Fumbles	2	2
Fumbles Lost	2	2
Time of Poss	33:13	26:47

Individual Stats

RUSHING

OHIO	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
De'Montre Tuggle	10	97	9.7	1	32
Nathan Rourke	10	87	8.7	1	35
Julian Ross	17	57	3.4	1	12
O'Shaan Allison	9	46	5.1	0	14
Tyler Walton	1	1	1.0	0	1
Team	3	-3	-1.0	0	0
NEVADA	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Toa Taua	6	48	8.0	0	19
Devonte Lee	9	9	1.0	1	7
Carson Strong	4	-28	-7.0	0	2

PASSING

OHIO	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Nathan Rourke	9	17	144	8.5	0	0	93.9
NEVADA	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Carson Strong	31	49	402	8.2	1	0	49.2
Toa Taua	1	1	-1	-1.0	0	0	3.3

RECEIVING

OHIO	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Isiah Cox	3	73	24.3	0	38
Tyler Walton	2	22	11.0	0	15
Cameron Odum	1	14	14.0	0	14
Julian Ross	1	14	14.0	0	14
DL Knock	1	12	12.0	0	12
Ryan Luehrman	1	9	9.0	0	9
NEVADA	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Elijah Cooks	14	197	14.1	1	42
Melquan Stovall	7	84	12.0	0	22
Ben Putman	6	73	12.2	0	24
Brendan O'Leary-Orange	3	24	8.0	0	12
Cole Turner	1	18	18.0	0	18
Henry Ikahihifo	1	5	5.0	0	5