

**Defense delivers as Tennessee tops Mississippi State 20-10**

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. -- Tennessee's defense finally delivered the kind of performance that Jeremy Pruitt's teams produced consistently during his career as an assistant coach. The Volunteers intercepted three passes, shut down Southeastern Conference rushing leader Kylin Hill and withstood an injury to quarterback Brian Maurer in a 20-10 victory over Mississippi State on Saturday. Tennessee (2-4, 1-2 SEC) ended a six-game skid against Football Bowl Subdivision opponents by providing the kind of effort Vols fans had expected from their defense ever since Pruitt -- a former national championship defensive coordinator at Alabama and Florida State -- took over Tennessee's program last season.

"We played clean on defense," said Darrell Taylor, who recorded two of Tennessee's seven sacks. "We were preaching that all week. That has pretty much been our motto all week. We played clean on defense -- and we played fast." Before Saturday, Tennessee just had eight sacks all season to match Texas A&M and Vanderbilt for the lowest total of any SEC team. Tennessee recorded 10 tackles for loss against Mississippi State (3-3, 1-2) after having just two last week in a 43-14 loss to No. 2 Georgia. Tennessee safety Nigel Warrior said the difference was evident in practice this week and that defensive line coach Tracy Rocker had pointed it out.

"Coach Rocker, he said when we were younger we all had that little boy that just wanted to play football no matter what," said Warrior, who had an interception and two pass breakups. "We came out and played like those little boys who were in the front yard or back yard and wanted to go ball out and just wanted to touch the ball."

It was obvious in the way Tennessee handled Hill. Hill entered the day averaging 119.2 yards rushing per game, but Tennessee limited him to 13 yards on 11 carries. "We just couldn't find any offensive rhythm," Mississippi State coach Joe Moorhead said.

That dominant defense helped Tennessee overcome the loss of Maurer, who was 4 of 7 for 61 yards with two interceptions in his second career start. The Vols led 7-3 when Maurer dove at the end of a 13-yard run and landed head-first late in the second quarter. The freshman quarterback grabbed the back of his neck immediately after the play, stayed in the game for the rest of that series but didn't play again. Pruitt said after the game that Maurer sustained a concussion. Jarrett Guarantano, who had lost his job as Tennessee's starting quarterback last week, stepped in for Maurer and went 6 of 7 for 106 yards.

Guarantano's outing included a game-clinching 39-yard completion to Tyler Byrd with 2:35 left. Tennessee was clinging to a 13-10 lead when Byrd caught a pass about 2 yards beyond the line of scrimmage, went to his left and raced down the sideline until he reached the end zone. "Today was extremely fun," Byrd said. It wasn't nearly as much fun for Mississippi State,

Mississippi State quarterback Tommy Stevens was benched in favor of freshman Garrett Shrader after the Penn State graduate transfer went 6 of 11 for 67 yards and throwing two interceptions in the first half. Shrader was 5 of 10 for 79 yards with a touchdown and an interception. He also ran for 62 yards on 13 carries.

**THE TAKEAWAY**  
Mississippi State: The Bulldogs need to figure out their quarterback situation as they head into the toughest part of their schedule. Three of their next four games are against No. 5 LSU, No. 24 Texas A&M and No. 1 Alabama. Their lack of a consistent passing game is starting to hamper Hill. After rushing for over 100 yards in Mississippi State's first four contests, he's been held below 50 yards in back-to-back games.

Tennessee: The good news for the Vols is that their defense appeared to come of age Saturday. The bad news is that defensive back Trevon Flowers was injured in the first half and linebacker Henry To'o To'o received a targeting penalty in the second half. Pruitt said after the game that Flowers broke his leg. The targeting penalty to To'o To'o means one of the Vols' top defenders must sit out the first half of their game next week at No. 1 Alabama.

**STYLE CHANGE**  
Tennessee wore orange pants for the first time since a 49-36 victory over Kentucky on Nov. 12, 2016.

**BULLDOGS' SUSPENSION UPDATE**  
Mississippi State couldn't blame this loss on suspensions.

When the NCAA placed Mississippi State on probation in August after determining a part-time student tutor had completed coursework for athletes in an online class, 10 football players received eight-game suspensions as part of the penalties. Mississippi State can pick and choose which games the suspended players will sit out. All those players were eligible to participate in Saturday's game.

**QUOTABLE**  
"I look back and I see a brown spot in the air, and I said, 'The only brown spot I know is the ball,' " Warrior describing his third-quarter interception.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
MSST	0	3	0	7	10
TENN	7	3	3	7	20

**Scoring Summary -----**

	MSST	TENN
<b>FIRST QUARTER</b>		
TENN TD 4:56 Tim Jordan 15 Yd Run (Brent Cimaglia Kick)		7
8 plays, 60 yards, 4:31	0	
<b>SECOND QUARTER</b>		
MSST FG 7:40 Jace Christmann 51 Yd Field Goal	3	7
13 plays, 59 yards, 7:08		
TENN FG 0:00 Brent Cimaglia 49 Yd Field Goal		10
4 plays, 5 yards, 0:59	3	
<b>THIRD QUARTER</b>		
TENN FG 6:12 Brent Cimaglia 22 Yd Field Goal		13
7 plays, 56 yards, 3:46	3	
<b>FOURTH QUARTER</b>		
MSST TD 8:27 Deddric Thomas 17 Yd pass from Garrett Shrader (Jace Christmann Kick)		13
8 plays, 90 yards, 3:37	10	
TENN TD 2:35 Tyler Byrd 39 Yd pass from Jarrett Guarantano (Brent Cimaglia Kick)		20
9 plays, 91 yards, 5:44	10	

Team Stats	MSST	TENN
First Downs	20	14
Passes for First	8	7
Rushes for First	10	7
Penalties for First	2	0
Third Down Efficiency	5-12	7-15
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-1	0-0
Total Yards	267	357
Total Plays	58	58
Avg Gain Per Play	4.6	6.2
Net Yards Rushing	121	190
Rushes	37	44
Yards Per Rush	3.3	4.3
Net Yards Passing	146	167
Comp-Att	11-21	10-14
Yards Per Pass	7.0	11.9
Times Sacked	1	7
Yds Lost To Sacks	-5	-33
Interceptions	3	2
Punts	4	4
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	4	3
Penalty Yards	15	34
Fumbles	1	0
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Time of Poss	26:58	33:02

**Individual Stats**

<b>RUSHING</b>									
	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG				
<b>MISSISSIPPI ST</b>									
Garrett Shrader	13	62	4.8	0	14				
Tommy Stevens	9	26	2.9	0	10				
Kylin Hill	11	13	1.2	0	4				
JaVonta Payton	1	11	11.0	0	11				
Nick Gibson	2	5	2.5	0	4				
Isaiah Zuber	1	4	4.0	0	4				
<b>TENNESSEE</b>									
Ty Chandler	16	63	3.9	0	15				
Tim Jordan	19	59	3.1	1	15				
Brian Maurer	3	41	13.7	0	23				
Jauan Jennings	1	22	22.0	0	22				
Eric Gray	2	7	3.5	0	5				
Dominick Wood-Anderson	1	5	5.0	0	5				
Team	1	-2	-2.0	0	0				
Jarrett Guarantano	1	-5	-5.0	0	0				
<b>PASSING</b>									
	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat		
<b>MISSISSIPPI ST</b>									
Garrett Shrader	5	10	79	7.9	1	1	59.1		
Tommy Stevens	6	11	67	6.1	0	2	22.2		
<b>TENNESSEE</b>									
Jarrett Guarantano	6	7	106	15.1	1	0	99.0		
Brian Maurer	4	7	61	8.7	0	2	77.1		
<b>RECEIVING</b>									
	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG				
<b>MISSISSIPPI ST</b>									
Osirus Mitchell	5	58	11.6	0	21				
Stephen Guidry	2	36	18.0	0	19				
Deddric Thomas	2	25	12.5	1	17				
Lee Witherspoon	1	18	18.0	0	18				
Farrod Green	1	9	9.0	0	9				
<b>TENNESSEE</b>									
Tyler Byrd	3	56	18.7	1	39				
Ramel Keyton	1	41	41.0	0	41				
Dominick Wood-Anderson	1	28	28.0	0	28				
Jauan Jennings	3	17	5.7	0	15				
Josh Palmer	1	16	16.0	0	16				
Tim Jordan	1	9	9.0	0	9				