

WEEK TEN  
 APPALACHIAN ST at SOUTH CAROLINA

**Appalachian St beats Gamecocks 20-15 for 2nd Power Five win**

COLUMBIA, S.C. -- Appalachian State just keeps adding to its rich, college football history.

The small school champions that took down mighty Michigan in the Big House 12 years ago has now beaten two Power Five programs -- and its first Southeastern Conference opponent -- after a 20-15 victory at South Carolina on Saturday night.

"Yeah, definitely means a lot," said Zac Thomas, the Mountaineers junior quarterback. "It's remarkable coming from a Group of Five conference. A lot of people don't do that. It makes you feel good."

Thomas ran for a 1-yard touchdown and safety Nicholas Ross scored on a 20-yard interception return for a 20-15 win at South Carolina, the program's second Power Five win this season.

Chandler Staton added field goals of 40 and 47 yards and Appalachian State's defense held off the Gamecocks' late rally.

Appalachian State's time in the college football spotlight looked finished after last week as it lost its national ranking, its undefeated start and a chance at the Cotton Bowl with a 24-21 home loss to Georgia Southern.

Instead, they bounced back the best way possible and added this Power Five takedown to their 34-31 victory at North Carolina on Sept. 21.

The Gamecocks (4-6) rallied from 20-9 down in the final quarter on Bryan Edwards' 23-yard touchdown with 2:58 left and drove to the App State 11 in the final seconds. But Ryan Hilinski pass to Edwards in the end zone was too high, touching off the latest improbable celebration for the Mountaineers.

"This team is something special," Mountaineers tight end Collin Reed said. "We've been building for a long time."

South Carolina's chances of making a bowl took a serious hit. The Gamecocks now must win at Texas A&M (something they've never done) and No. 4 Clemson in their final two games to make their fourth postseason trip under coach Will Muschamp.

Things turned right before halftime when Hilinski's hard throw over the middle bounced off Xavier Legette's hands and was intercepted by safety Nicholas Ross and returned 20 yards for a touchdown to put Appalachian State ahead for good 13-6.

Hilinski, the Gamecocks freshman, had not thrown a pick in his past five games until Ross got the deflected ball and took it in for the score.

Appalachian State defense took away what was expected to be the Gamecocks biggest edge in the run game. Season starter Rico Dowdle, who had missed the previous two games with an ankle sprain, had zero yards on 10 first-half carries in his return.

The Gamecocks came in averaging 184 yards a game on the ground but gained just 21 on 27 carries. South Carolina played without leading rusher Tavien Feaster, who sustained a groin injury last week.

"When we don't have the ability to run the ball, we're going to struggle," South Carolina coach Will Muschamp said.

Edwards finished with nine catches for 90 yards, the senior surpassing Alshon Jeffery for the school's all-time receiving yardage mark. Asked about his record, Edwards said simply, "We lost."

**THE TAKEAWAY**

Appalachian State: The Mountaineers made a strong case to re-enter the national rankings. They also made a strong impression on Power Five athletic directors about not wanting to add Appalachian State to future schedules.

South Carolina: Muschamp had touted this as his deepest, most talented group this summer. But the Gamecocks continue to confound as they struggled to make plays on both sides of the ball. It was the third time in four games, South Carolina was outplayed in the second half of losses with a chance to win the game. Florida outscored the Gamecocks in the fourth quarter while Tennessee had a 24-0 advantage in the second half. Add the Mountaineers to the list.

**BACK IN CHARGE**

Appalachian State coach Eliah Drinkwitz said his team wanted to win against South Carolina. They really want to capture the Sun Belt Conference crown and play well in top-flight bowl game. The Mountaineers were tied with Georgia Southern and Georgia State with only one conference defeat coming into the week. But Georgia Southern and Georgia State both fell in league play to give Appalachian State control of its Sun Belt destiny when it returns to conference play next week.

**ALL THIS AND MORE**

Along with the victory, Appalachian State left with \$900,000 for coming to South Carolina. The teams will play twice more, including a game in Boone, North Carolina in 2025.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
APP	3	10	7	0	20
SC	6	0	3	6	15

**Scoring Summary -----**

	APP	SC
<b>FIRST QUARTER</b>		
SC FG 8:51 Parker White 41 Yd Field Goal		3
15 plays, 52 yards, 6:09	0	
APP FG 5:10 Chandler Staton 40 Yd Field Goal	3	
10 plays, 32 yards, 3:41		3
SC FG 1:22 Parker White 25 Yd Field Goal		6
8 plays, 60 yards, 3:48	3	
<b>SECOND QUARTER</b>		
APP FG 8:29 Chandler Staton 47 Yd Field Goal	6	
10 plays, 38 yards, 4:12		6
APP TD 1:51 Nicholas Ross 20 Yd Interception Return (Chandler Staton Kick)	13	6
3 plays, -2 yards, 0:49		
<b>THIRD QUARTER</b>		
SC FG 11:08 Parker White 50 Yd Field Goal		9
4 plays, 3 yards, 1:22	13	
APP TD 7:10 Zac Thomas 1 Yd Run (Chandler Staton Kick)	20	9
7 plays, 39 yards, 3:58		
<b>FOURTH QUARTER</b>		
SC TD 2:58 Bryan Edwards 23 Yd pass from Ryan Hilinski (Two-Point Pass Conversion Failed)	20	15
12 plays, 78 yards, 2:03		

Team Stats	APP	SC
First Downs	11	22
Passes for First	4	15
Rushes for First	7	3
Penalties for First	0	4
Third Down Efficiency	2-13	4-18
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-1	4-5
Total Yards	202	346
Total Plays	57	85
Avg Gain Per Play	3.5	4.1
Net Yards Rushing	97	21
Rushes	41	27
Yards Per Rush	2.4	0.8
Net Yards Passing	105	325
Comp-Att	9-16	32-58
Yards Per Pass	6.6	5.6
Times Sacked	2	3
Yds Lost To Sacks	-17	-24
Interceptions	1	1
Punts	7	5
Punt Average	45.1	52.4
Penalties	8	8
Penalty Yards	46	50
Fumbles	0	2
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Time of Poss	29:50	30:10

**Individual Stats**

<b>RUSHING</b>					
APPALACHIAN ST	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Darrynton Evans	23	85	3.7	0	11
Marcus Williams Jr.	7	19	2.7	0	6
Jalen Virgil	1	0	0.0	0	0
Raykwon Anderson	1	0	0.0	0	0
Zac Thomas	9	-7	-0.8	1	9
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b>					
Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG	
Dakereon Joyner	3	14	4.7	0	6
Deshawn Fenwick	4	9	2.3	0	6
Rico Dowdle	14	9	0.6	0	5
Kevin Harris	1	2	2.0	0	2
Ryan Hilinski	5	-13	-2.6	0	9

<b>PASSING</b>							
APPALACHIAN ST	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Zac Thomas	9	15	105	7.0	0	1	26.1
Malik Williams	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	2.6
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b>							
Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat	
Ryan Hilinski	32	57	325	5.7	1	1	35.8
Team	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	--

<b>RECEIVING</b>					
APPALACHIAN ST	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Corey Xavier Sutton	3	38	12.7	0	23
Darrynton Evans	2	32	16.0	0	24
Collin Reed	1	22	22.0	0	22
Henry Pearson	1	9	9.0	0	9
Malik Williams	1	6	6.0	0	6
Raykwon Anderson	1	-2	-2.0	0	0
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b>					
Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG	
Bryan Edwards	9	90	10.0	1	23
Rico Dowdle	5	67	13.4	0	26
Kyle Markway	5	43	8.6	0	19
Xavier Legette	5	42	8.4	0	15
Trey Adkins	2	33	16.5	0	29
Dakereon Joyner	2	17	8.5	0	12
Chad Terrell	1	11	11.0	0	11
Jay Urch	1	11	11.0	0	11
Chavis Dawkins	2	11	5.5	0	7