

WEEK THIRTEEN
AIR FORCE at NEW MEXICO

Hammond's career day lifts Air Force past New Mexico 44-22

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. -- Air Force took to the wild blue yonder Saturday like it hasn't done in decades.

Falcons quarterback D.J. Hammond III only had 10 passing attempts, but his 327 yards was the most since 1976 and led Air Force to a 44-22 win over reeling New Mexico.

"It was fun," said Falcons receiver Benjamin Waters, who caught four passes for 171 yards and two touchdowns. "I'm fired up about that. We were saying before the game that we're going to pass the ball as many times as we could and we did it. Whenever you go into a game as an Air Force Falcon, you never think you're going to throw it so that was unreal."

It's not as if the Falcons channeled their inner Pat Mahomes.

Rather, Hammond who had four touchdown passes, along with Waters and fellow receiver Geraud Sanders, judiciously carved up the secondary with precision.

"Once we get in that position, we know our abilities and we know we can produce" said Saunders who finished with five catches for 171 yards and two scores. "And when given those opportunities, we take advantage of them. We're not given too many in this offense and that's totally fine. We love when our name is called so we want to make the best of the opportunity."

Hammond's only incompletion actually came after a review on a ball that was originally ruled a fumble on the field.

"It's all about the o-line," he said. "They gave me time to make things happen. The receivers getting wide open. I just wanted to do what I needed to do to help the team."

Air Force (9-2, 6-1 in Mountain West) was able to take advantage of one-one-one coverage, Lobos coach Bob Davie said.

"We couldn't cover them, which is an amazing thing to say when you play a triple option team," he said. "But I was worried about that going in quite honestly. We had a hard time matching up and covering them."

The gaps in the field were easily exploitable, Hammond said, particularly given the prowess of his receivers.

"The safeties were playing really far up and leaving the middle of the field wide open for our guys," he said. "Our guys won the routes and I put the ball on them where they needed to be. They get separation with ease and it's up to me to put the ball on them."

Before being hurt in the third quarter, quarterback Tevaka Tuioti rushed for 79 yards, and his replacement Trae Hall, threw for two touchdowns for the Lobos (2-9, 0-6).

With a field goal shortly before half, New Mexico trailed just 14-10.

Hall, who entered the game midway through third quarter after Tuioti injured his leg, completed his first collegiate pass for a 13-yard touchdown to Jordan Kress, the Lobos trailed 21-16.

The extra point attempt, however, caromed off a New Mexico player and Milto Bugg III returned it for a Falcons' two-point play, marking the first time the Lobos have surrendered such a special teams score.

"Anytime the defense scores, it's good little momentum boost for us," Birdow said. "But our offense had the confidence in ourselves to dominate."

Air Force then poured it on, scoring three straight touchdowns through the air.

The game was originally scheduled for Nov. 9, but New Mexico defensive end Nahje Flowers' death Nov. 5 led conference officials to reschedule the game to a date that both schools had open.

BIG PICTURE

Air Force: The win over New Mexico won't exactly boost the Falcons' RPI, and likely won't nudge them up beyond their unofficial ranking of 30th, but it is a sixth consecutive win and keeps Air Force's hopes of a earning a three-way tie with Boise State and Utah State in the conference's Mountain Division as the latter two met late Saturday. All three close the regular season with members of the bottom half of the division and all will be favored to win.

New Mexico: The Lobos are playing out the string with an eight-game losing streak. During that stretch, New Mexico has lost by less than double digits just once: the first game of the streak, a 17-10 loss to Liberty.

"There's not a guy involved in this, even you guys, all the way down to players coaches, managers, trainers, all of them, that doesn't look at that finish line coming," Davie said. But with that said, we will finish this thing off the right way with class and pride and some grit to us. I don't even blink about that."

Final	1	2	3	4	T
AFA	7	7	16	14	44
UNM	7	3	6	6	22

Scoring Summary -----

	AFA	UNM
FIRST QUARTER		
UNM TD 8:42 Bobby Cole 3 Yd Run (Andrew Shelley Kick)		7
12 plays, 65 yards, 6:18	0	
AFA TD 3:43 Donald Hammond III 1 Yd Run (Jake Koehnke Kick)	7	
10 plays, 75 yards, 4:59	7	
SECOND QUARTER		
AFA TD 13:53 Taven Birdow 4 Yd Run (Jake Koehnke Kick)	14	7
7 plays, 72 yards, 3:11		
UNM FG 0:24 Andrew Shelley 40 Yd Field Goal		10
10 plays, 72 yards, 4:24	14	10
THIRD QUARTER		
AFA TD 11:05 Geraud Sanders 46 Yd pass from Donald Hammond III (Jake Koehnke Kick)	21	10
8 plays, 75 yards, 3:55		
UNM TD 5:24 Jordan Kress 13 Yd pass from Trae Hall (Andrew Shelley PAT blocked)		16
10 plays, 74 yards, 5:35	21	16
AFA D2P 5:24 Milton Bugg III Defensive PAT Conversion		16
10 plays, 74 yards, 5:35	23	16
AFA TD 2:26 Benjamin Waters 59 Yd pass from Donald Hammond III (Jake Koehnke Kick)	30	16
5 plays, 75 yards, 2:58		
FOURTH QUARTER		
AFA TD 13:08 Geraud Sanders 27 Yd pass from Donald Hammond III (Jake Koehnke Kick)	37	16
5 plays, 45 yards, 2:04		
AFA TD 7:50 Benjamin Waters 76 Yd pass from Donald Hammond III (Jake Koehnke Kick)	44	16
5 plays, 92 yards, 2:37		
UNM TD 1:57 Aaron Molina 27 Yd pass from Trae Hall (Two-Point Pass Conversion Failed)		22
10 plays, 77 yards, 5:46	44	22

Team Stats	AFA	UNM
First Downs	20	19
Passes for First	8	5
Rushes for First	12	14
Penalties for First	0	0
Third Down Efficiency	8-10	7-12
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-1	0-0
Total Yards	540	358
Total Plays	55	61
Avg Gain Per Play	9.8	5.9
Net Yards Rushing	213	268
Rushes	45	43
Yards Per Rush	4.7	6.2
Net Yards Passing	327	90
Comp-Att	9-10	8-18
Yards Per Pass	32.7	5.0
Times Sacked	1	0
Yds Lost To Sacks	-8	0
Interceptions	0	0
Punts	0	3
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	3	3
Penalty Yards	30	19
Fumbles	2	2
Fumbles Lost	1	1
Time of Poss	27:35	32:25

Individual Stats

RUSHING					
AIR FORCE	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Taven Birdow	17	110	6.5	1	31
Donald Hammond III	11	41	3.7	1	8
Kadin Remsberg	7	31	4.4	0	11
Christian Mallard	5	15	3.0	0	6
Timothy Jackson	1	11	11.0	0	11
Mike Schmidt	1	6	6.0	0	6
Ben Peterson	1	3	3.0	0	3
Team	2	-4	-2.0	0	0
NEW MEXICO	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Tevaka Tuioti	8	79	9.9	0	48
Bobby Cole	11	58	5.3	1	9
Kentraill Moran	7	37	5.3	0	9
Trae Hall	4	33	8.3	0	16
Micah Gray	5	29	5.8	0	13
Chad Alexander	5	25	5.0	0	7
Emmanuel Logan-Greene	1	6	6.0	0	6
Cedric Patterson III	2	1	0.5	0	5

PASSING							
AIR FORCE	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Donald Hammond	9	10	327	32.7	4	0	99.5
NEW MEXICO	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Trae Hall	5	7	55	7.9	2	0	87.4
Tevaka Tuioti	3	11	35	3.2	0	0	71.4

RECEIVING					
AIR FORCE	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Benjamin Waters	4	171	42.8	2	76
Geraud Sanders	5	156	31.2	2	46
NEW MEXICO	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Cedric Patterson	2	29	14.5	0	15
Aaron Molina	1	27	27.0	1	27
Jordan Kress	3	24	8.0	1	13
Anselem Umeh	1	5	5.0	0	5
Emmanuel Logan-Greene	1	5	5.0	0	8