

WEEK THIRTEEN
SMU at NAVY

Perry leads Navy past No. 21 SMU 35-28

ANNAPOLIS, Md. -- At one point in a tight game against No. 21 SMU Navy quarterback Malcolm Perry approached coach Ken Niumatalolo about giving someone else the ball.

Not a chance.

Perry found a seam and scampered 70 yards with just over six minutes remaining to break a tie and Navy beat the Mustangs 35-28 on Saturday. It was the culmination of a banner day for Perry, who generated 357 yards of total offense. He finished with 195 yards rushing on 38 carries with two touchdowns and completed 9 of 15 passes for 162 yards and another score.

"He actually told me at one time, 'Coach, you have to give me a break, man. Give somebody else the ball,' " Niumatalolo said. "I was like, 'Suck it up, we need you.' I didn't realize he carried the ball 38 times. . All I could see was (Perry) in my head. He was going to carry us."

The Midshipmen still have a shot at winning the West Division crown of the American Athletic Conference outright should No. 18 Memphis falter in the regular-season finale against No. 17 Cincinnati. The Tigers own the tiebreaker by virtue of their 35-23 victory over Navy on Sept. 26.

CJ Sanders had a 100-yard kickoff return for SMU (9-2, 5-2), tied for the longest in the 60-year history of Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium.

After trailing 21-10 at the half, the Midshipmen (8-2, 6-1) cut into the margin on a 1-yard plunge by Perry and a 25-yard field goal by Bijan Nichols on their first two possessions of the third quarter.

Navy forced a pair of three-and-outs to help shift the momentum and its deliberate running attack began to wear down SMU's defenders.

As the Mustangs stacked the box, Perry hit Ryan Mitchell with a 13-yard scoring pass, Mitchell's first career touchdown reception. Navy added a two-point conversion to regain the lead at 28-21 with 14:19 left.

"I was getting the ball a lot. I never complain about that," Perry said. "Just seeing what the defense was doing, I thought it would be a good idea to spread it out a little bit. But when it came down to it, the coach called me number and I enjoy it."

SMU tied it at 28-all on a 61-yard touchdown pass from Shane Buechele to Rashee Rice.

After Perry's long run broke the deadlock, the Midshipmen came up with a huge stop on a fourth-and-4 from their own 12 with 2:36 remaining.

Navy entered the game leading the nation with 349.3 yards rushing per game and finished with another 378 yards on the ground.

Buechele, a transfer from Texas, was 16 of 28 for 251 yards and two touchdowns.

The Midshipmen outgained the Mustangs 540 to 344 and dominated time of possession 39:40 to 20:20.

Last season, SMU edged Navy 31-30 for its first win over the Midshipmen in 20 years. Navy still has a 13-8 edge in the all-time series, which began in 1930.

"You have to give Navy credit," SMU coach Sonny Dykes said. "I thought they did a really good job of making adjustments in the second half and we did a really poor job of making adjustments. (Navy) made some plays down the stretch. Malcolm Perry converted on a couple of big third downs in critical situations where he just made plays and we didn't."

HOME SWEET HOME

The Midshipmen went undefeated at home (4-0) in the regular season for the first time since 2016, and they still could host the AAC championship game or perhaps play in the Military Bowl that is held in Annapolis.

THE TAKEAWAY

SMU: The Mustangs are likely out of the running for a conference title, but they have already won four more games than last season.

Navy: The Midshipmen still have a shot at the AAC championship and can win the Commander-in-Chief's Trophy with a victory over Army on Dec. 14.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
SMU	7	14	0	7	28
NAVY	7	3	10	15	35

Scoring Summary -----

	SMU	NAVY
FIRST QUARTER		
NAVY TD 2:36 Chance Warren 22 Yd Run (Bijan Nichols Kick)	0	7
8 plays, 65 yards, 3:28		
SMU TD 2:21 CJ Sanders 100 Yd Kickoff Return (Kevin Robledo Kick)	7	7
0 plays, 0 yards, 0:00		
SECOND QUARTER		
NAVY FG 11:44 Bijan Nichols 41 Yd Field Goal	7	10
11 plays, 51 yards, 5:37		
SMU TD 6:22 James Proche 8 Yd pass from Shane Buechele (Kevin Robledo Kick)		10
12 plays, 75 yards, 5:22	14	
SMU TD 4:01 Xavier Jones 9 Yd Run (Kevin Robledo Kick)	21	10
2 plays, 42 yards, 0:22		
THIRD QUARTER		
NAVY TD 8:58 Malcolm Perry 1 Yd Run (Bijan Nichols Kick)	21	17
13 plays, 75 yards, 6:02		
NAVY FG 4:04 Bijan Nichols 24 Yd Field Goal	21	20
9 plays, 73 yards, 4:22		
FOURTH QUARTER		
NAVY TD 14:19 Ryan Mitchell 13 Yd pass from Malcolm Perry (Malcolm Perry Pass to CJ Williams for Two-Point Conversion)	21	28
10 plays, 76 yards, 3:48		
SMU TD 12:14 Rashee Rice 61 Yd pass from Shane Buechele (Kevin Robledo Kick)	28	28
6 plays, 85 yards, 2:05		
NAVY TD 6:11 Malcolm Perry 70 Yd Run (Bijan Nichols Kick)	28	35
3 plays, 70 yards, 0:50		

Team Stats	SMU	NAVY
First Downs	15	28
Passes for First	8	8
Rushes for First	6	18
Penalties for First	1	2
Third Down Efficiency	5-13	6-17
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	4-6
Total Yards	344	540
Total Plays	56	88
Avg Gain Per Play	6.1	6.1
Net Yards Rushing	93	378
Rushes	27	73
Yards Per Rush	3.4	5.2
Net Yards Passing	251	162
Comp-Att	16-29	9-15
Yards Per Pass	8.7	10.8
Times Sacked	0	3
Yds Lost To Sacks	0	-19
Interceptions	0	0
Punts	5	1
Punt Average	40.2	39.0
Penalties	4	5
Penalty Yards	35	31
Fumbles	1	0
Fumbles Lost	1	0
Time of Poss	20:20	39:40

Individual Stats

RUSHING

SMU	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Xavier Jones	18	61	3.4	1	11
Shane Buechele	5	22	4.4	0	15
Ke'Mon Freeman	3	8	2.7	0	5
James Proche	1	2	2.0	0	2
NAVY	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Malcolm Perry	38	195	5.1	2	70
Jamale Carothers	11	53	4.8	0	22
Keoni-Kordell Makekau	5	43	8.6	0	13
CJ Williams	8	31	3.9	0	21
Chance Warren	1	22	22.0	1	22
Tazh Maloy	4	20	5.0	0	9
Nelson Smith	4	17	4.3	0	15
Team	2	-3	-1.5	0	0

PASSING

SMU	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Shane Buechele	16	28	251	9.0	2	0	71.4
Tyler Page	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	3.3
NAVY	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Malcolm Perry	9	15	162	10.8	1	0	75.5

RECEIVING

SMU	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Rashee Rice	3	76	25.3	1	61
James Proche	7	60	8.6	1	14
CJ Sanders	3	51	17.0	0	33
Tyler Page	1	31	31.0	0	31
Kylen Granson	1	30	30.0	0	30
Ryan Becker	1	3	3.0	0	3
NAVY	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Ryan Mitchell	3	48	16.0	1	20
Mychal Cooper	3	41	13.7	0	23
CJ Williams	1	33	33.0	0	33
Keoni-Kordell Makekau	3	32	32.0	0	32
Chance Warren	1	8	8.0	0	8