

WEEK TWO
OLD DOMINION at VIRGINIA TECH

Willis leads Virginia Tech past Old Dominion, 31-17

BLACKSBURG, Va. -- Ryan Willis was having a nice makeup day, and then he wasn't, a fumble after a 13-yard run marring his performance.

Unlike a week ago, when five turnovers -- including four by Willis -- cost them in a 35-28 loss to Boston College, the Hokies did enough to hang on for a 31-17 victory against Old Dominion, but Willis also got the message that continuing to cough the ball up will cost him, too. "If we can keep the ball in our own hands, we've got a good chance of winning the game every week," he said.

Willis also threw for two touchdowns and ran for another as Virginia Tech (1-1) avenged a stunning loss to the Monarchs last season. He got his neck twisted up in the tackle after the long run and was pulled from the game, but coach Justin Fuente said concern was a factor.

"I was a little concerned and I also didn't like it that we turned the ball over," Fuente said of sending Hendon Hooker in, adding later that Willis "made a couple plays that were pretty dang impressive, really quick snap decisions. He got the ball in great spots, but there's still a few decisions that we've got to get better at. It's just simple. It sounds very easy and it's not. That's part of our focus moving forward."

The Hokies seemed likely to roll, leading 17-3 at the half and 24-3 in the third quarter, but got sloppy.

"We went through about a two-series stretch late in the third quarter, early fourth that we reverted back to really poor execution and poor tackling," defensive coordinator Bud Foster said, adding that he was pleased with his young defense for the rest of the day.

Those two series allowed ODU to get within 24-17, and then the Hokies stiffened.

"I know when it was down to seven points, there was some real urgency for us to find a way to go kind of finish the thing off," Fuente said.

Stone Smartt scored on runs of 3 and 15 yards for the Monarchs (1-1), but was helped off the field after a 2-yard run with 5:31 to play. He eventually returned and felt like the Monarchs had acquitted themselves well with their rally to make it tense in the second half.

"We got into our tempo a little but," Smartt said. "I thought we did a good job with that."

Willis hit Hezekiah Grimsley with a 9-yard scoring pass in the right corner of the end zone in the second quarter. Grimsley gained control of the ball with his right hand and then pulled it into his body. Willis also hit Phil Patterson from 13 yards out on third-and-6 to restore the Hokies' two-touchdown cushion with 11:56 to play, and he finished a 93-yard drive for a 24-3 lead with a 1-yard run early in the third quarter.

Keshawn King also scored on a 4-yard run for the Hokies, who were stunned 49-35 when they played at Old Dominion a year ago.

THE TAKEAWAY

Old Dominion: Despite its victory last season, Old Dominion is not ready to contend against the Hokies and Power Five schools. The Monarchs came into the game with 47 players that had never seen action for ODU, including 14 junior college transfers. They also had 20 players that redshirted last year, but have to like what they have seen from Smartt. The junior college transfer has been accurate with the ball as a passer and had several clutch runs against the Hokies.

Virginia Tech: The Hokies' attention to getting a running game going seemed to finally pay off in the third quarter when McCleave, who'd gained just 22 yards on nine first-half carries seemingly found a rhythm. McCleave gained 37 yards on six tries in a 93-yard drive to the 24-3 lead, but lost a fourth-quarter fumble. The Hokies finished with 131 rushing yards compared to 202 for the FCS-level Monarchs.

BIG RETURN

Terius Wheatley wasted no time helping the Hokies restore their two-touchdown cushion with a 71-yard kickoff return after the Monarchs closed to 24-17 late in the third quarter. It set the Hokies up at the ODU 17 and, three plays later, Willis hit Patterson.

"All the momentum was in our favor at 24-17," Monarchs coach Bobby Wilder said. "That kickoff got it to 31-17."

Final	1	2	3	4	T
ODU	3	0	7	7	17
VT	10	7	7	7	31

Scoring Summary -----

FIRST QUARTER	ODU	VT
VT TD 11:30 Keshawn King 4 Yd Run (Brian Johnson Kick)		
10 plays, 77 yards, 3:30	0	7
ODU FG 4:47 Nick Rice 34 Yd Field Goal		
12 plays, 48 yards, 6:43	3	7
VT FG 1:12 Brian Johnson 24 Yd Field Goal		
9 plays, 70 yards, 3:30	3	10
SECOND QUARTER	ODU	VT
VT TD 5:17 Hezekiah Grimsley 9 Yd pass from Ryan Willis (Brian Johnson Kick)		
8 plays, 59 yards, 2:48	3	17
THIRD QUARTER	ODU	VT
VT TD 6:40 Ryan Willis 1 Yd Run (Brian Johnson Kick)		
12 plays, 93 yards, 5:21	3	24
ODU TD 1:24 Stone Smartt 3 Yd Run (Nick Rice Kick)		
10 plays, 75 yards, 5:16	10	24
FOURTH QUARTER	ODU	VT
ODU TD 13:15 Stone Smartt 15 Yd Run (Nick Rice Kick)		
5 plays, 78 yards, 1:34	17	24
VT TD 11:56 Phil Patterson 13 Yd pass from Ryan Willis (Brian Johnson Kick)		
3 plays, 17 yards, 1:08	17	31

Team Stats	ODU	VT
First Downs	19	21
Passes for First	5	13
Rushes for First	12	7
Penalties for First	2	1
Third Down Efficiency	4-15	8-13
Fourth Down Efficiency	3-5	0-0
Total Yards	324	403
Total Plays	73	67
Avg Gain Per Play	4.4	6.0
Net Yards Rushing	202	131
Rushes	43	39
Yards Per Rush	4.7	3.4
Net Yards Passing	122	272
Comp-Att	16-30	16-28
Yards Per Pass	4.1	9.7
Times Sacked	1	5
Yds Lost To Sacks	-5	-27
Interceptions	0	0
Punts	5	3
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	6	6
Penalty Yards	66	65
Fumbles	1	2
Fumbles Lost	0	2
Time of Poss	33:20	26:40

Individual Stats

RUSHING					
OLD DOMINION	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Lala Davis	11	81	7.4	0	26
Kesean Strong	8	51	6.4	0	33
Stone Smartt	16	48	3.0	2	26
Messiah deWeaver	2	8	4.0	0	5
Blake Watson	1	7	7.0	0	7
Isaiah Spencer	1	6	6.0	0	6
Chris Cunningham	3	2	0.7	0	8
VIRGINIA TECH	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Deshawn McCleave	20	64	3.2	0	21
Ryan Willis	8	34	4.3	1	13
Keshawn King	6	23	3.8	1	8
Hendon Hooker	3	7	2.3	0	5
Tayvion Robinson	1	3	3.0	0	3
Tyler Matheny	1	0	0.0	0	0

PASSING						
OLD DOMINION	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int
Stone Smartt	16	30	122	4.1	0	0
VIRGINIA TECH	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int
Ryan Willis	16	28	272	9.7	2	0

RECEIVING						
OLD DOMINION	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG	
Steven Williams	3	36	12.0	0	15	
Jake Herslow	3	31	10.3	0	25	
Eric Kumah	3	24	8.0	0	12	
Kesean Strong	3	22	7.3	0	10	
Blake Watson	4	9	2.3	0	8	
VIRGINIA TECH	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG	
Tayvion Robinson	4	62	15.5	0	32	
Tre Turner	3	60	20.0	0	32	
Hezekiah Grimsley	2	45	22.5	1	36	
Phil Patterson	3	44	14.7	1	20	
Kaleb Smith	2	32	16.0	0	19	
James Mitchell	1	20	20.0	0	20	
Deshawn McCleave	1	9	9.0	0	9	