

Football closes season with win at Mars Hill

Neville Bryce capped off a record-setting career at Brevard College with a pair of touchdown runs in the fourth quarter and Michael Gist sealed the game with an interception in the end zone as time expired as the Tornados closed out the 2010 season with a victory over host Mars Hill College on Saturday afternoon, 35-28.

Kelvin Jeter led Brevard (4-7, 1-6 SAC) with his seventh 100-yard rushing performance of the season, carrying the ball 12 times for 125 yards and a 58 yard touchdown run in the first quarter, while Bryce took over first place in the BC career rushing record books, breaking John Taylor's marks in career rushing yards and rushing touchdowns, with 27 carries for 90 yards and three scores in the game. Bryce finished up his career with 1,254 career rushing yards at Brevard and recorded nine touchdowns in the final four weeks of the season to overtake Taylor's touchdown record, finishing his career with the Tornados with 16 touchdown carries.

Michael Crumbaker also wrapped up his career as BC's most prolific passer, completing two of six pass attempts for 18 yards, while carrying the ball 13 times for 20 yards and a touchdown. Derek Church and Eric Watts were the recipients of Crumbaker's throws, with each hauling in one pass for nine yards.

As a whole, the Tornados defense was around the ball the entire evening, breaking up eight passes, forcing three fumbles and recovering two, while also intercepting a pair of passes. Prince Simunyu led Brevard defensively with nine tackles in the contest, including a forced fumble, while Salonik Amos and Trey Jenkins had eight tackles apiece. Gist added a fumble recovery to his game-ending interception, while Philip Curcio recorded his first interception as a Tornado in the contest.

Both Lions quarterbacks threw for over 100 yards in the contest as Luis Cruz led the way, completing 16 of 28 passes for 156 yards and two touchdowns, while Jon Richt dropped back 16 times, completing eight, for 113 yards and a score. Randolph, Chad Fekany and Patrick Fitzgerald were the recipients of the touchdown scores as nine Lions receivers caught passes in the game.

The Tornados received the opening kickoff and a pair of pitches to Jeter gained seven yards, leaving Brevard facing third-and-three on their own 27 yard line. Crumbaker took the snap and found a gap around the left tackle, making it to the 30 yard line, but as he was going down, the ball was punched out by Baker and recovered by Robinson and the sophomore free safety carried the ball into the end zone, giving the home team the 7-0 lead 1:27 into the contest.

Jeter returned the following kickoff out to the 24 yard line as the Tornados began their next

drive. Crumbaker carried the ball twice, setting up third-and-four before finding Watts for a nine-yard strike for a first down at the Brevard 39 yard line. Two plays later, on third and seven, Jeter took the inside handoff from Crumbaker and found a seam between the safeties, outracing everyone to the goal line for a 58 yard touchdown run and following Chase Henry's successful extra point attempt, the score was tied at 7-7 with 10:24 left in the first quarter.

The Lions put together back-to-back extended drives deep into Brevard territory, but came away with nothing to show for it as four MHC penalties derailed the first drive, forcing a fourth-and-16 the Lions were unable to convert at the Brevard 30 yard line. The second drive, an 11-play 60-yard drive which took 5:12 off the clock started at the MHC 17 yard line and the Lions moved to the Brevard 26 yard line, but Randolph was hit at the Brevard 23 yard line, fumbling the ball where it was recovered by Gist, ending another scoring opportunity.

Following a Brevard punt, the Lions moved the ball to midfield where they faced a third-and-10 at their own 47 yard line, before a personal foul moved the Lions back to their 32. Following an incomplete pass, the snap for the punt was mishandled and Chris Spencer and Rufus Jenkins were able to track down the MHC punter at the Lions 12 yard line, giving the Tornados great field position.

Brevard capitalized on the very next place as Bryce took the handoff up the middle, rumbling 12 yards for the score to put the Tornados up 14-7 with 4:38 remaining in the first half.

The score would remain the same as the teams headed into the locker rooms for halftime.

Mars Hill turned the ball over on their first two possessions of the second half. Richt was intercepted by Curcio at the Brevard 17 yard line to end the first possession, but the Lions defense forced a three-and-out, preventing any damage. The first play after the punt, Randolph put the ball on the ground for the second time in the contest and it was again recovered by the Tornados at the Mars Hill 38 yard line. 10 plays later, Crumbaker found a gap off the right tackle and plunged in from one yard out to put the score at 21-7 in favor of the Tornados with 6:28 left in the third quarter.

The Tornados turned to Bryce on their next possession as the fullback carried the ball five times, picking up a first down along the way. On the fifth consecutive carry, Johnson came through the line and knocked the ball loose where it was recovered by Baker. The Lions capitalized on the turnover, putting points on the board 10 plays later as they marched down the field, using a combination of Randolph runs and Richt passes before Richt found Fekany in the middle of the

end zone 17 yards out to cut the Brevard lead down to 21-14.

After a touchback on the kickoff, Jeter took a pitch to the right on the first play of the drive and turned the corner, carrying the ball 34 yards into Mars Hill territory before being tackled at the 46 yard line by Ray Ray McElrathbey. After eight rushing plays as the Tornados moved the ball down to the Mars Hill 15 yard line, Crumbaker found Church out in the left flat on third-and-seven, and the senior fullback gained nine yards on the completion to keep the chains moving. Bryce carried the ball in two plays later from three yards out to expand the Brevard lead back to 28-14.

The Lions found the end zone again on their next possession, helped in part due to a pass/run combination on third-and-10 at the Brevard 48 yard line. A pair of incomplete passes put the Lions into the third-and-10, and Cruz's pass to Travis Prince was stopped short of the first down line. Three plays later Cruz found Fitzgerald from five yards out, cutting the score to 28-21 with 6:12 left on the clock.

Four timeouts, three by Mars Hill, were called on the next Brevard possession before the Tornados were forced to punt, as Watts' attempt was downed at the Mars Hill 11 yard line.

A holding penalty on the second play from scrimmage moved the Lions back to their own eight-yard line and BC's Christian Lumbu came through the line and dropped Cruz for a sack to set up the Lions with third-and-18 from their three yard line. Cruz's passes attempts to Waters on third down and Prince on fourth down fell incomplete, giving Brevard possession at the Mars Hill three-yard line and Bryce converted on the first play from scrimmage, carrying the ball into the end zone to put the Tornados up 35-21 with 3:35 left in the ball game.

The Tornados took over possession on the Mars Hill 39 yard line as Nerman Imsirovic's inside kick attempt failed to go 10 yards, needing only to run out the clock to clinch their first conference victory of the season, but mental mistakes stalled the drive as the Tornados were called for an illegal formation on third down, followed by a delay of game penalty. On fourth down, need to run out seven seconds, Crumbaker took the snap and ran backwards, trying to run out the clock, but he was chased down and tackled by Johnson and Baker at the Brevard 40 yard line with 1.4 seconds left on the clock.

On the final play of the contest, Cruz threw the ball into the front left corner of the end zone and the ball was batted around several times before settling into the arms of Gist as the Tornados escaped Mars Hill with the 35-28 victory.