

July 6, 2010

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IT’S A LITTLE BIT OF MIDNIGHT MADNESS, BUT NASHVILLE STORM WIN LIFETIME VICTORY #100

**NASHVILLE STORM DEFEAT ST CHARLES
CYCLONES 14-0 IN GAME DELAYED FOR 2
½ HOURS BY LIGHTNING AND
TORRENTIAL RAINS**



STORM S MARCUS HILL (MCGAVOCK/TSU) RETURNS HIS 4TH QUARTER INTERCEPTION OF CYCLONE QB MIKE MCMULLEN'S PASS-PHOTO BY DONNIE BEAUCHAMP



STORM WR KEVIN CARTER (AUSTIN PEAY) HEADS TO PAYDIRT WITH A 57-YARD TD PASS FROM PHELLEPE HALL IN THE FIRST QUARTER- THERE WOULD ONLY BE 3 MORE PLAYS BEFORE A 2 1/2 HOUR WEATHER DELAY- PHOTO BY DONNIE BEAUCHAMP



THIS EXCITING 41-YARD SCAMPER WITH A SCREEN PASS BY STORM RB MARCELLUS TIBBS (HILLSBORO/DODGE CC) WAS CALLED BACK ON A BLOCKING INFRACTION, BUT IT WAS FUN TO WATCH AT THE TIME-PHOTO BY DONNIE BEAUCHAMP



A HOST OF STORM DEFENDERS BURY A ST CHARLES CYCLONE RUNNER- THE STORM DEFENSE HELD THE NORMALLY HIGH-SCORING CYCLONES TO 163 YARDS OF TOTAL OFFENSE- PHOTO BY DONNIE BEAUCHAMP

The game was a long-awaited matchup between 2 of America's best teams (the visiting St Charles Cyclones had won 56 of their last 59 games and 4 consecutive championships in the MLFA and GMFL), and it started like a big game should, with a healthy home crowd wielding several different kinds of noisemakers to cheer on the home team. The game would stay that way for precisely 6 minutes and 37 seconds in the 1st Quarter.

That 6 minutes and 37 seconds was long enough for the Nashville Storm to give the fans something to cheer about on the Storm's 2nd offensive possession, when QB Phellepe Hall hit WR Kevin Carter (Austin Peay) with a 57-yard TD strike to cap a 3-play, 76-yard drive and give the Storm a 7-0 lead.

The Cyclones returned the ensuing kickoff to the Cyclone 40, and ran 1 running play (a 1-yard gain). And then, at the 8:23 mark of the 1st Quarter, it happened.

"It", in this case, was multiple lightning strikes in close proximity to Buster Boguskie Stadium, which caused the refereeing crew to call a 30-minute weather delay and send the teams to their locker rooms. The fans exited the stadium en masse to wait out the weather delay. Almost as soon as the stadium cleared, extremely heavy rainfalls began with intermittent thunder and lightning. The rains would last for nearly 2 hours, finally ending at about 9:30 PM. In the meantime, Nashville Storm Head Coach Charles Hunter, St Charles Cyclone Head Coach Troy Robertson, and Head Referee Jeff Clark had agreed to a formula for finishing the game; the teams would come back to the field and warm up and resume play at approximately 10 PM. The 1st Quarter would be completed as scheduled, but the remaining 3 Quarters would be 12-minute quarters instead of 15-minute quarters. Play resumed on a field with some standing water on the sidelines, but none on the playing field (although the grass was wet from 2 hours of rain).

Neither team mounted a serious offensive drive in the remainder of the 1st Quarter, but the Storm mounted a 13-play 61-yard drive starting from the Storm 9 that occupied 2/3 of the 2nd Quarter that actually threatened to be something more when Phellepe Hall delivered a screen pass to RB Marcellus Tibbs (Hillsboro/Dodge CC) on a play originating from the Cyclone 44 that saw Tibbs break several tackles in an electrifying scamper to the Cyclone 3 yard line. However, the play was called back on a blocking infraction, and the Storm drive ended with a lost fumble at the Cyclone 30 with less than a minute before halftime. The half ended with the Storm leading 7-0.

The Cyclones got the ball to start the 2nd half and drove from their 30 to the Storm 45, needing 3 yards for a first down on a 4th down play. The Cyclones gave the ball to RB Zac Abron (Missouri), who got close to the first down, but was ruled by the referees as having fallen just short of first down yardage, returning possession of the ball to the Storm. In the ensuing protests from the Cyclones, the refereeing crew awarded a double unsportmanlike conduct penalty to the Cyclones (30 yards), which gave the Storm the ball at the Cyclone 28. Phellepe Hall immediately went to work, hitting Storm WR Ivan Burley (TSU) with a 22-yard strike giving the Storm 1st-and-goal at the Cyclone 6. On 1st down, Marcellus Tibbs carried the football 5 yards to the Cyclone 1- but the Cyclones stopped runs by Tibbs and FB Quintin Eskridge (Western Kentucky) on 2nd and 3rd down. On 4th down, though, Marcellus Tibbs cracked the end zone to give the Storm a 14-0 lead with 4:37 left in the 3rd quarter. This would be the last score of the game, but there would be plenty of suspense left.

For 3 quarters, the Storm defense had completely throttled the Cyclone offense (Cyclones had 60 yards of total offense in the first 3 quarters) and the Storm (174 offensive yards) had gotten enough done on offense to establish a 2-touchdown lead. The Cyclones, though, didn't win 56 of their last 59 games by "rolling over", and in the 4th Quarter, a Cyclone offense that earlier in the year actually scored 33 points against a pro arena football team finally came to life.

The 4th Quarter started with the Cyclones starting a drive at their 15-yard line- on 3rd and 15, Cyclone QB Mike McMullen hit WR Shannon Lightfoot (TSU) for a 16-yard gain and a first

down, and on the very next play, RB Zac Abron ripped off a 25-yard gain on a running play to put the Cyclones into Storm territory at the Storm 49. After a pass interference penalty gave the Cyclones a first down at the Storm 36, a 16-yard run by Cyclone RB Keenan Miller (Missouri-Rolla) gave the Cyclones first down in the Storm red zone for the first time in the game at the Storm 20. The next 3 plays, however, netted the Cyclones just 1 yard- and on 4th down, Storm S Marcus Hill (McGavock/TSU) intercepted Mike McMullen's heave to the end zone and returned it to the Storm 18 to end the Cyclone threat.

After the Hill interception, each team had 2 possessions that bought no offense of substance, but a Cyclone fumble recovery at the Cyclone 42 on the Storm's 3rd possession of the 4th Quarter put the Cyclones in business one last time. Cyclone QB McMullen hit Shannon Lightfoot (TSU) on a 35-yard strike to the Storm 23, and a penalty against the Storm gave the Cyclones first down at the Storm 11. The Cyclones only gained 2 yards, though on their next 3 plays, and then on 4th down, Storm LB Gary "Mr Jazzy Fly" Peete (AF2 Memphis Xplorers) broke up McMullen's pass with 15 seconds left to preserve the Storm shutout.

The victory was the 100th victory in the Nashville Storm's history, and the Nashville Storm take a 2-0 record into their first road trip of the season (Saturday, July 10, in Louisville, KY against the Louisville Saints). The Cyclones' next game is also on July 10 against the Columbia Falcons. The Nashville Storm and St Charles Cyclones will play for the 2nd time in 2010 on Saturday, July 24, this time in St Charles, MO.

NOTES ON THE GAME:

- The weather conditions of this game almost assured that the game would not be a "track meet", and it wasn't. It was dominated by the defenses, with the Storm gaining only 173 yards of total offense in 46 snaps (3.76 yards per play) and the Cyclones gaining 163 yards in 47 plays (3.51 yards per play). The Storm ran 14 more offensive plays after scoring their 2nd TD with 4 ½ minutes left in the 3rd Quarter and had (-1) yard of total offense on those 14 plays. On the other hand, the Cyclones gained 103 of their 163 yards of total offense in the 4th Quarter.**

- **The Nashville Storm defensive secondary appears much improved over the unit that in November gave up 311 passing yards in the NAFL National Championship Game against the St Paul Pioneers. Cyclone QB Mike McMullen is a nationally-elite QB who entered the game completing exactly 2/3 of his passes and sporting an NFL QB rating of 133.1. The Storm secondary held McMullen to a 6 of 20 night for 73 yards, no TDs and 1 INT for a NFL passer rating for the game of 21.4.**
- **Nashville Storm QB Phellepe Hall deserved a better fate- Hall didn't appear to have a good night, going 8 for 19 for 135 yards and 1 TD (no INTs), but the Storm WR corps dropped almost as many balls (4) as they caught (5- Hall's 3 other completions were to RBs), and one of the drops was a sure TD pass. Former TSU WRs Vonce Henderson and Ivan Burley led the Storm WRs with 2 catches apiece, with the other catch being Kevin Carter's 57-yard TD catch.**
- **Storm Combo Kicker Garrett Morgan (Central Arkansas) averaged 36.4 yards on 5 punts- this would seem like a subpar night for him, but Morgan was "directional punting" to limit the return opportunities of the Cyclones' elite K/P returner Marqueas McLaurin (University of Iowa). It worked- McLaurin had only 3 yards on punt returns for the game. The Storm's other kicking specialist, John Gorecki (Centennial HS) kicked both Storm extra points, and there were no Storm FG attempts in the game.**
- **The Storm defense didn't record a QB sack in the game but had 7 tackles for losses- one each by CB Cromwell Stewart (Father Ryan/UT-Martin), S Jeremy Ware (Centre College), DTs Danny Roberson(TSU) and Desmond Scantling (TSU), DE Walter Fisher (Tennessee), and LBs Gary Peete and Jonath "Cap" Samuels (Pearl-Cohn/Cumberland University).**



A BLACK-CLAD LOUISVILLE PLAYER TRIES TO ASCEND INTO "SAINTHOOD"- THE NASHVILLE STORM WILL SEE A LOT OF BLACK-CLAD SAINTS THIS SATURDAY

NASHVILLE STORM SEEK 25TH STRAIGHT ROAD VICTORY THIS SATURDAY AGAINST THE LOUISVILLE SAINTS

CAN THE STORM ACHIEVE THEIR 2ND MILESTONE IN 2 GAMES THIS SATURDAY IN LOUISVILLE?????

The Nashville Storm will seek their 25th straight road victory and 1st 2010 victory over an NFL member opponent this Saturday afternoon (July 10) as they travel to Louisville, KY to take on the Louisville Saints in a game that kicks off at 5:30 PM EASTERN TIME (4:30 PM CENTRAL TIME) at Evangel High School (5400 Minors Lane, Louisville, KY 40219).

The Nashville Storm enter the game with a 2-0 record, while this game will be the season-opener for the Saints (5-3 in 2009). The Nashville Storm played the Louisville Saints twice

in 2009, defeating the Saints 35-22 in Louisville and 50-16 in Nashville.

The Saints feature one former Nashville Storm player, WR Antonio Dilworth (Lane College), who moved to Louisville in 2008 to play for the then AF2 Louisville Fire.

For the benefit of Storm fans who want to attend the game, here is a link to a google map to Evangel HS:

[Nashville, TN to Wjie R#14F60D3](#)