

#1 UMHB falls to #6 UW Whitewater

By Victor Bradley Melchor, Sports Editor, The Bells | University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

September 10,2022

As the old saying goes, nothing lasts forever.

After winning their last 21 outings, including their 2021 National Championship, the UMHB Crusaders suffered their first loss of the 2022 campaign away to the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater by a score of 28-24. Considering this was the Cru's first loss since losing to UW-Whitewater in the 3rd round of the national tournament all the way back in 2019, and many of the Cru players' first collegiate loss, fans were wondering just how this group would react to this setback.

The Cru immediately rebounded and thumped Southwestern University at home the following week by a score of 68-14. Senior wideout and returner K.J Miller earned ASC Special Teams Player of the Week for his efforts, racking up 97 yards on 3 returns on the day.

The Crusaders carried their restored momentum into Abilene, TX when they took on nationally ranked arch-rivals Hardin-Simmons, walking away with their seventh straight victory over the Cowboys by a score of 50-20. The Cru have continued to ride this wave of momentum through the month of October, picking up wins over Austin College, East Texas Baptist University, Texas Lutheran University, and Sul Ross State University.

The Crusader offense has been buoyed by its veteran leaders with Senior Quarterback Kyle King connected on 68% of his throws and accumulating 2,111 passing yards and 27 touchdowns through the first 8 games. K.J Miller has racked up 43 receptions for 593 yards and 7 touchdowns, while fellow senior wideout Brandon Jordan has accumulated 30 receptions for 400 yards and 8 touchdowns. Senior Runningback Aphonso Thomas has also been dominant in the running game, racking up 671 rushing yards and 6 touchdowns on 108 carries this season.

The defense however has seen the emergence of two young stars in the wake of losing 6 key starters in the offseason. Sophomore Linebacker Durand Hill has been leading the team with 65 total tackles, and Sophomore Linebacker Johnny Smith-Rider tallying up a team leading 13 tackles for loss in addition to 48 total tackles, earning an ASC Defensive player of the week and two ASC team of the week awards.

The Cru will hope to see this winning streak extend into November as they head on the road to take on Howard Payne University on Saturday, November 5th at 1:00 P.M before closing conference play against McMurry University here at home on Saturday, November 12th at 1:00 P.M.