



NO. 23/23 LIBERTY FLAMES 37 (10-1)
VS.
NO. 9/11 COASTAL CAROLINA CANTICLEERS 34 (11-1)
CAMPING WORLD STADIUM | SATURDAY, DEC. 26, 2020

Team Notes

- One of the most highly-anticipated games of this bowl season, the 2020 FBC Mortgage Cure Bowl did not disappoint in front of a national TV audience on ESPN, as Liberty's Elijah James blocked a game-ending field goal attempt to secure a 37-34 overtime win.
- Liberty is now 7-9 all-time in overtime, including 1-2 in overtime against Coastal Carolina.
- This was Liberty's second straight FBC Mortgage Cure Bowl championship, and the Flames became the first team ever to win multiple Cure Bowl titles.
- The Flames join Appalachian State as the only teams transitioning from FCS to FBS football to win a bowl game during each of their first two seasons of full bowl eligibility.
- Liberty is the first team since Appalachian State (2018 and 2019 New Orleans Bowl) to win the same bowl game in back-to-back years.
- Liberty and Coastal Carolina were originally slated to play a nationally-televised matchup on Dec. 5 in Conway, S.C., one which was cancelled due to CoVID-19 concerns for Liberty.
- Liberty is now 6-1 all-time against Sun Belt programs, including 3-1 under Hugh Freeze. Liberty's 2019 FBC Mortgage Cure Bowl victory came in a 23-16 win over Sun Belt foe Georgia Southern.
- Prior to today, Liberty had not played in the last 29 days (since Nov. 27), the longest layoff of any 2020 bowl team.
- Today marked Liberty's first-ever win over an FBS Top 25 opponent, and Coastal Carolina (No. 9 – AP; No. 11 – Amway Coaches) is the highest-ranked opponent Liberty has faced. The Flames are now 1-2 all-time against FBS Top 25 programs.
- Liberty matched its program record for most victories in a season. The 2008 Flames finished 10-2.
- The Flames took an 8-7 edge in their all-time against Coastal Carolina, a rivalry that featured yearly matchups from 2003-16. Four out of the last five Liberty-Coastal meetings have been decided by three points or fewer, and Liberty holds a 470-458 edge in total points scored in the series.
- Today's result snapped Coastal Carolina's 12-game winning streak, dating back to last season.
- Liberty is now 3-9 all-time in the state of Florida and 2-6 all-time at Camping World Stadium. Liberty's only other win in the facility came Oct. 14, 1995, a 7-6 win over the Daunte Culpepper-led UCF Knights.
- This was Liberty's first game at the FBS level where both teams were nationally ranked. The Flames are now 3-1 when playing as a Top 25 team.
- This is the latest in the calendar year that Flames have played a game. Liberty is now 3-1 all-time in December, including 1-0 in the regular season, 2-0 in bowl games and 0-1 in the FCS Playoffs.
- Tonight's game was the first 2020 bowl game to feature two Top 25 teams, and Liberty and Coastal Carolina had the second-best combined record of any matchup during this bowl season.
- Liberty scored on its first drive of the game for the sixth time this season and the 14th time in two years under Coach Freeze. By contrast, opponents have scored on their first possession only six total times against Freeze's Flames.
- The Flames held a 17-13 lead at halftime. Liberty is now 8-0 this season and 16-0 under Coach Freeze when leading at halftime.
- Liberty outgained Coastal Carolina on the ground, 255-165. The Flames went 9-0 this season and are 14-0 under Coach Freeze when outrushing opponents.
- Liberty turned the ball over three times, but Coastal scored just six points off of turnovers, while the Flames scored seven points off of their one takeaway. For the season, Liberty scored 80 points off of 16 takeaways.
- The Flames finished the season with 2,776 rushing yards, breaking the previous program single-season rushing record of 2,614 yards, set in 2003.
- For the fourth time this season, Liberty had two 100-yard rushers, in Malik Willis (137) and Joshua Mack (105).
- Coastal Carolina's 318 passing yards were an opponent season high, with the previous high being 217 by Virginia Tech. Liberty went 4-0 this season when the opponent outgained the Flames through the air.

Liberty Player Notes

QB Malik Willis – 2020 Cure Bowl MVP

- Completed 19-of-29 passes for 220 yards and two interceptions. Also rushed for 137 yards on 21 carries with a Cure Bowl-record and Liberty quarterback-record four rushing touchdowns.
- Passed for 20 touchdowns and rushed for 14 touchdowns this season. He has scored more rushing touchdowns than any FBS quarterback so far this season, with Cincinnati's Desmond Ridder second with 12.
- Broke Mike Brown's (854 in 2010) single-season record for rushing yards, finishing the season with a team-leading 944 yards. He was the first Liberty quarterback to lead the team in rushing since Brown in 2010.
- His four rushing touchdowns tonight are tied for the second most in a single game in program history. Frankie Hickson was the last Liberty player with four rushing touchdowns, doing so on Nov. 30, 2019 against New Mexico State.
- His 14 rushing touchdowns this season are the most rushing touchdowns in a single season by a Liberty quarterback, breaking Glenn Inverso's single-season record for a Flames quarterback of 13, set in 1979.
- His 34 touchdowns responsible for break Mike Brown's single-season program record of 32, set in 2010.

RB Joshua Mack

- Rushed for 105 yards on 14 carries, his fifth 100-yard game this season and eighth of his Liberty career. He posted 10 100-yard games while at Maine. He is tied for seventh in program history with eight career 100-yard rushing games.
- Finished the season with 797 rushing yards and four touchdowns.

WR DJ Stubbs

- Led Liberty with 68 receiving yards on five catches, giving him a team-leading 38 catches and 523 receiving yards on the season.

K Alex Barbir

- Scored a career-high 13 points on 3-for-3 field goals and four PATs. His previous best was 12 points against FIU.
- Kicked what proved to be the game-winning field goal, a 44-yarder in overtime.
- His second three-field goal game, as he also made three field goals against FIU.

DB Javon Scruggs

- Finished with eight tackles, an interception and one forced fumble. Led Liberty with 69 tackles this year.
- Recorded his second interception of the season and fourth of his career, as his 59-yard interception return set up Liberty's early touchdown in the second half. It was the second-longest interception return of his career, as he returned an interception 72 yards at New Mexico State on Oct. 5, 2019.
- It was his second straight season with an interception in the Cure Bowl.

LB Anthony Butler

- Recorded a team-high nine tackles, placing him second to Scruggs with 67 tackles this season.

DL Elijah James

- Made two tackles and blocked a game-ending field goal try that sealed Liberty's win.