

**NO. 23/23 LIBERTY FLAMES 37 (10-1)**

VS.

NO. 9/11 COASTAL CAROLINA CHANTICLEERS 34 (11-1) (OT)

FBC MORTGAGE CURE BOWL | CAMPING WORLD STADIUM | SATURDAY, DEC. 26, 2020

Liberty Head Coach Hugh Freeze*Overall thoughts on the win...*

“What a year. It’s one of the more memorable years that I have had in coaching. I really can’t wait to reflect. Obviously, there were a lot of obstacles that our program had to handle along with the many others that played college football. I’m thankful. I’m thankful for our administration. I’m thankful for all of the staff, nutritionists and medical team and equipment staff, everybody that worked so many extra jobs to make this happen. Most of all, I’m thankful for our kids and our staff that I get to work with. We had a tremendous year, and what a way to end it. Heck of a game tonight, and I’m thankful that our kids found a way to win it.”

On the block field goal to win the Cure Bowl...

“Elation. We tried to give the game away a couple of different times. To know that you still found a way to win it, it was pretty good. All year, that’s the first time we’ve gone max block. Elijah (James) got his hand on it. There were some other guys who got good push, Ralfs (Rusins) and those guys up front. I’m just thrilled to beat a top-15 team tonight and excited about the way we finished. That was our whole theme. Our program needs to be about finishing. We felt like it was our duty for our program to finish in a bowl game. We like to win them when we get there. We’ve had pretty good success in the times I’ve taken teams to bowl games. I’m glad that our kids were able to finish.”

On the fumble late in regulation prior to overtime...

“They used all of their timeouts, and we wanted to run one more play and go down around the two or the one. I’ve got my two timeouts, and we’d use all of the clock and either decide to run it on third down and score with either no time or around 10 seconds left, then kick the field goal if you need. We’ve got to take care of the ball. The game was close because of their competitive spirit and their quarterback and because we turned the ball over. That certainly was a critical time to do that.”

On QB Malik Willis’ play...

“Malik is a tremendous athlete. He’s had 30-plus days off now. We don’t win that game without him. We’re going to take some time off, and then let’s get ready to do it again. You certainly don’t win a lot of games if you don’t have a great trigger guy. Malik gave us that big play ability and had a solid year for year number one. We won 10 games. That’s pretty phenomenal. You just don’t do that without solid play at quarterback.”

On what it does for recruiting...

“Any time you’re on national TV, you’re going to expose your program to a lot of different homes. It’s going to help in recruiting. It makes it better when you win a bowl game tonight. I’m sure it was well-viewed in a primetime slot on ESPN. It should help us in recruiting.”

Liberty Head Coach Hugh Freeze (Cont.)

On the defense...

"I didn't think we played particularly well on defense. We did get stops when we needed to. We did early in the game. Some of that has to do with Coastal's play. Their quarterback McCall is a heck of a competitor. They've got good receivers. I thought we did pretty well against the run game except for their quarterback scrambling. I'm sure they feel the same way about our quarterback scrambling around. We made plays when we needed to. In overtime, they rose to the occasion there."

On the challenges over the last month...

"When you go through difficult times that strain you physically and mentally, and you do it with a group of people together, and you find your way. Whether you have to dig, claw, scratch, fight, battle to get through the other side of that, and you get through the other side of it victorious, it's what living is all about. It's memories that we've made that certainly will last."

Liberty Quarterback and Cure Bowl MVP Malik Willis

Overall thoughts on the win and on the season...

"It's just a big blessing. We can't do anything but thank Him. A lot of teams cancelled games. We only had game cancelled at the end that end up getting remade in the bowl game. You can't do anything but just thank God and show love. I'm really happy, really excited. I was just trying to take what they would give me using my God-given abilities, moving the sticks."

Liberty Safety Javon Scruggs

Overall thoughts on the win...

"It's surreal. Obviously, 2020 was a crazy year. We did what we could do and controlled what we could control. We just want to keep building this great tradition that's going on here at Liberty University, and hopefully all the people will see it and they'll want to join. This one right here is very special. Coastal is a rival of our and a top-15 opponent. Going and knocking them off is an unbelievable moment filled with emotion and joy."

Liberty Defensive Tackle Elijah James

On his blocked field goal in overtime to win the Cure Bowl...

"It feels great. The last play of the game, all I did was put everything I had into it because we had to. It was the last play. We had to stop them. We just knew we had to. It was my right hand (that I blocked it with). It was very satisfying. We came into this game knowing it was going to be a dog fight, and it turned out to be even more of a dog fight than we expected. That block at the end is a blessing. It's actually my first time (blocking a field goal). We practice it all of the time. I've never been able to get one. Today, it worked out. It means a lot. It means we get to come back and work harder next season."