10-10-2015

UA12/2/1 Topper Extra

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Senior wide receiver Jared Dangerfield is getting back to the form he saw last year in his first season on the Hill.

After nursing a hamstring injury through the first few games of the season, Dangerfield seems to finally be back in the shape that saw him break the single-season reception record (69) and tie the school record in touchdown receptions (11) in his first season as a Hilltopper.

"Mentally, I think he’s back where he needs to be,” offensive coordinator Tyson Helton said. "He’s feeling really good now, hitting on all cylinders. Even Brandon (Doughty) said the other day ‘Dangerfield’s back’ so I’m fired up for him and he’s ready to roll."

Dangerfield’s injury played a major role in the first few games of the 2015 season.

In the season opener at Vanderbilt, Dangerfield was held catch-less for the first time as a Hilltopper. He started to gain some confidence back after a four catch, 44-yard outing against Conference USA foe Louisiana Tech, but the 6-3, 215 pound senior was still not himself.

“He works hard man and he is going to play through any type of pain, so whether he is 100% or not I really couldn’t tell you because he wouldn’t tell me," wide receiver coach JaMarcus Shephard said. “This year, Jared has taken on quite a bit more of a leadership role with these guys, encouraging them to put forth their best effort everyday. He’s put these guys ahead of his own personal goals and that’s a big testament to the kind of person he is.”

After a six catch, 59-yard outing against Indiana and being held scoreless for a third-consecutive game, Dangerfield finally returned to form, tallying new single-game career highs in receiving yards (148) and receptions (11) against Miami (Ohio) while also adding his first TD of the season.

It was a breakout game for the number one receiver; and after posting a team-high eight catches, 95 yards and a touchdown in the Hilltoppers’ last game at Rice, Dangerfield is confident in his ability to play at a high level once again.

“We are hungry this year,” Dangerfield said. “Our group of receivers is pretty deep and we all come in and contribute, all of us have individual skills to bring to the table. We’ve been clicking on all cylinders.”

Dangerfield noted the change in mentality from last year, where the receiving core contributed to one of the best passing offenses of 2014.

“No disrespect to the group we had last year, but this year I feel we are more experienced, we have a different hunger to this core,” he said.

Dangerfield has worked hard to get to the premiere role he finds himself in today.

Before WKU, he played nine games for Fort Scott Community College where he caught 43 passes for 690 yards and eight touchdowns. It was there where he was rated as the No. 15 JUCO wide receiver and a three-star recruit that caught the attention of the Hilltopper coaching staff.

Now in a place of success, and a possible future awaiting him in professional football, Dangerfield wants people to know what his true intentions are.

“I want fans to know I’m a hard worker and that I’ve done everything I can to make this program, the team and myself successful,” Dangerfield said.

WKU’s impact receiver is back
Most coaches will tell you the most important game you will play is the next one on the schedule. Taking a season game-by-game, most would say, is the simplest way to find results as a team.

But the Hilltoppers have had today's matchup on their minds since a heart-breaking triple-overtime loss to Middle Tennessee last September, and with the “100 Miles of Hate” between these two teams, a lot more is on the line this time around.

Head Coach Jeff Brohm would certainly tell you his team’s main objective is to remain in the top spot of Conference USA’s East Division, but this weekend the Hilltoppers will be playing for pride just as much as they will be playing for the win.

The Hilltoppers will attempt to snap a 26-year home-game losing streak against the Blue Raiders. It has been nearly three decades since WKU had an answer for MTSU when it traveled to Bowling Green. The last time the Hilltoppers beat MTSU at home, sixth-year quarterback Brandon Doughty was two years away from being born.

Three of the last four games in Bowling Green were decided by five points or less, and a total of just 12 points has decided the last four contests both at home and away. The last time WKU won was in 2011 in a contest that took two overtimes to conclude.

Technically speaking, the game presents the most historic rivalry currently in C-USA; this is the 65th match of the two programs. The Blue Raiders lead the all-time series 34-29-1.

During high-pressure contests like this one, emotion can easily make or break the game, so the Hilltoppers feel confident in their offense being led by a sixth-year veteran when their opponent’s quarterback is in his first year of eligibility.

The Blue Raiders’ offense is in the hands of redshirt freshman Brent Stockstill. Stockstill has compiled some impressive stats in his first season at MTSU: an overall quarterback rating of 153.9, a completion percentage of 67.7 and 13 touchdowns to just two interceptions.

But this isn’t your normal game of football.

In a bitter rivalry game, composure can be key. Stockstill has been impressive but generally untested. He may have thrown only two interceptions this season, but one came in his first career start, and the other against No. 8 Alabama.

The Hilltopper defense has seen a solid turnaround from last season, jumping nearly 70 spots from the end of last season to tie for No. 54 in scoring defense nationally. This game is the perfect opportunity for the defense to finally snap the grueling home losing streak associated with this heated rivalry.

Everyone will follow the sixth-year veteran vs. freshman quarterback narrative on Saturday, but other matchups are also statistically interesting.

Hilltopper junior wide receiver Taywan Taylor leads the Hilltoppers in receiving yards with 571 and receiving touchdowns with five. Blue Raider redshirt senior Ed’Marques Batties leads MTSU with 528 yards and eight receiving touchdowns.

A game doesn’t get nicknamed “100 Miles of Hate” from simple rivalry between two competitors. It surpasses even the University of Louisville vs. University of Kentucky game as the bitterest rivalry in the surrounding region.

With a win over MTSU today, the Hilltoppers will have only Marshall — and Florida Atlantic, if things get really ugly — to worry about in securing the East division. But there’s a good chance most WKU players are not thinking that far ahead. They may be thinking instead about 100 miles of hate — about what it would mean to “Hilltopper Nation” to bring a win, finally, back to Bowling Green.

BY JONAH PHILLIPS
HERALD.SPORTS@WKU.EDU

Jonah Phillips

A game doesn’t get nicknamed ‘100 Miles of Hate’ from simple rivalry between two competitors.”
Weekend packed with C-USA games

This weekend is full of Conference USA action, and several top-flight clashes could leave the conference standings looking quite a bit different than they currently stand.

Just five teams in the league have played more than one conference matchup as they go into the weekend, so most of them are striving to establish themselves.

Preseason predictions tapped WKU to win the C-USA's East Division. As of publication time, the Hilltoppers are the only team in the league with two conference wins; so far, they have done everything they can to keep victory predictions alive.

Over in the West Division, preseason favorite Louisiana Tech has dropped to No. 3 with a 1-1 league record to compliment its 3-2 season start.

By the time you read this, though, those standings may have altered slightly. West Division frontrunner Southern Mississippi (3-2, 1-0) traveled to Huntington, West Virginia, to take on East Division's No. 2 Marshall (4-1, 1-0) last night, but the game had not concluded by publication time.

Southern Mississippi has been playing competitive football this season with big wins against Austin Peay (52-6) and divisional rival North Texas (49-14). But Marshall rose to that level of competition when it trumped Purdue in the first week of the season, and Southern Mississippi has struggled this season against powerhouse programs Mississippi State and Nebraska.

A loss from Southern Mississippi and a win for LA Tech over current West Division No. 2 UTSA (1-4, 1-0) would certainly sling LA Tech back into the division's top spot.

In the East Division, WKU has to play through "100 Miles of Hate" in a stadium where it hasn't beaten Middle Tennessee since 1989 if it wants to remain No. 1.

WKU plays division No. 3 Middle Tennessee this weekend in a home game that has haunted Hilltoppers for the better part of three decades. With Marshall, current No. 1, and Florida Atlantic, current No. 4, still to play down the road, every league game could lead to a massive switch-up in standings.

By Herald Sports Staff

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**CONFERENCE STANDING CHART**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EAST DIVISION</th>
<th>W</th>
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<td>Marshall</td>
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<td><strong>WEST DIVISION</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>North Tenn.</td>
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</table>
KEY PLAYERS FOR TODAY'S GAME

6'1" | 195 LBS | JUNIOR | WIDE RECEIVER
YARDS PASSING | 571
RECEPTIONS | 32
TOUCHDOWNS | 5
YARDS PER GAME | 114.2

Taywan Taylor

6'0" | 198 LBS | REDSHIRT SENIOR | WIDE RECEIVER
YARDS | 528
RECEPTIONS | 40
TOUCHDOWNS | 8
YARDS PER GAME | 105.6

Ed Marques Battles

6'3" | 230 LBS | REDSHIRT SOPHOMORE | LINEBACKER
TOTAL TACKLES | 41
SOLO TACKLES | 25
SACKS | 2-3 YARDS
TACKLES FOR LOSS | 4.5-8 YARDS

T.J. McCollum

6'1" | 233 LBS | SENIOR | LINEBACKER
TOTAL TACKLES | 34
SOLO TACKLES | 27
SACKS | 3-26 YARDS
TACKLES FOR LOSS | 5-28 YARDS

T.T. Barber

5'11" | 190 LBS | REDSHIRT SENIOR | DEFENSIVE BACK
INTERCEPTIONS | 2-0 YARDS
TOTAL TACKLES | 19
SOLO TACKLES | 14
PASSES DEFENDED | 5

Prince Charles Iworah

6'2" | 170 LBS | JUNIOR | CORNERBACK
INTERCEPTIONS | 3-113 YARDS
TOTAL TACKLES | 19
SOLO TACKLES | 16
PASSES DEFENDED | 7

Jeremy Cutrer
Hilltoppers ready to renew storied rivalry game

BY BILLY RUTLEDGE
HERALD.SPORTS@WKU.EDU

The most historic rivalry game in Conference USA will be played this weekend, and the Hilltoppers will come out with a point to prove.

The annual football game between WKU and Middle Tennessee State University — known as the “100 Miles of Hate” — will be played at Smith Stadium on Saturday at 11 a.m.

In the two programs’ 65th contest since 1914, the Hilltoppers will look to shorten the Blue Raiders’ lead in the all-time series, which stands at 34-29-1.

In addition to being on the losing end of that record, the Hilltoppers have not defeated MTSU in Bowling Green for almost 26 years. They lost last season in Murfreesboro in a 3-point triple-overtime defeat.

“I know we haven’t won at home since 1989 against Middle Tennessee, so this is an important game for us,” Head Coach Jeff Brohm said. “They’re on our side of the division, and we have to find a way to win, but it’s going to be a tough physical battle. We’re looking forward to Saturday morning.”

Adding to the frustration of not beating the Blue Raiders at home since 1989, three of the last four games in Bowling Green have been decided by five points or less.

The most recent matchup between the two schools last season in Murfreesboro saw the Hilltoppers bested in a 50-47 overtime thriller. During the contest, Brandon Doughty threw for just shy of 600 yards with four touchdowns and three different WKU receivers tallied over 100-yards receiving.

The rivalry has brewed for over a century, and this year, there is even more on the line.

WKU will be looking to move to 3-0 in conference play for the first time since joining the Football Bowl Subdivision in 2005.

The Hilltoppers (4-1, 2-0) are 7-1 at home under Head Coach Brohm. This is their longest winning streak at home since winning 10 between 2003-2005.

“I’m just excited. I can’t wait,” redshirt senior cornerback Prince Charles Iworah said. “I love the thrill. I love the rivalry. I love the 100 Miles of Hate. I love all of it. I’m just truly, truly excited and can’t wait to play this game.”

Iworah is the only Hilltopper with multiple interceptions — two — and leads the team in passes defended with five.

The Blue Raiders (2-3, 1-0) come into the game riding a two-game losing streak. They lost to Big Ten opponent Illinois and Southeastern Conference foe Vanderbilt.

Much of their success comes from redshirt freshman quarterback Brent Stockstill. He currently leads all first-year players nationally in passing yards with 1507 and has thrown 13 passing touchdowns and only two interceptions this season. Stockstill took a gray-shirt for the 2013 season and then a redshirt in 2014. He entered his first year of eligibility three years after graduating from Siegel High School in Murfreesboro.

Other players to watch include senior running back Jordan Parker, who has six rushing touchdowns, and redshirt senior receiver Ed Batties, who leads the team with 528 receiving yards and eight touchdowns.

“This is a very important game for our team because it’s such a tough divisional match up, and luckily we get them at home,” Brohm said. “We’re looking forward to getting our crowd out there and them helping propel us to a victory.”

Kickoff at Smith Stadium will be at 11 a.m. The game will also be broadcast on Fox Sports Network.

The last home game for the Hilltoppers, a 56-14 win against Miami (Ohio), saw an attendance of 20,320 – the most for a Hilltoppers game under Head Coach Jeff Brohm and the most since the 2013 home opener against Morgan State.

Hilltopper players said this week they need the fans to show up.

“Like Prince said, we know 11 a.m. is early, but we need everyone there,” redshirt junior Forrest Lamp said. “We need the student section to be screaming. We need the whole berm to be packed. It’s really hard when it’s not a good atmosphere, so shout out to all our fans and come pack the [stadium] at 11 a.m.”
## Quarterback Draw

**Brandon Doughty**
- 6'3" | 200 LBS | Graduate Student | Quarterback
- Yards Passing | 2000
- Completion/Attempts | 143-192
- Touchdowns | 15
- Interceptions | 2

**Brent Stockstill**
- 6'0" | 200 LBS | Redshirt Freshman | Quarterback
- Yards Passing | 1507
- Completion/Attempts | 130-192
- Touchdowns | 13
- Interceptions | 2

### WKU's Full Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Opponent ('15 REC.)</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>TV</th>
<th>Time (CT)</th>
<th>Series/Result</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 3</td>
<td>VANDERBILT (2-3) Commodores</td>
<td>Nashville, Tenn. Vanderbilt Stadium</td>
<td>SECN</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>W, 14-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 10</td>
<td>LA TECH (3-2) Bulldogs</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky. Houchens-Smith</td>
<td>FS1</td>
<td>7 p.m.</td>
<td>W, 41-38</td>
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<td>Sept. 19</td>
<td>INDIANA (4-1) Hoosiers</td>
<td>Bloomington, Ind. Memorial Stadium</td>
<td>ESPNews</td>
<td>3 p.m.</td>
<td>L, 35-38</td>
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<td>Sept. 26</td>
<td>MIAMI (1-4) Redhawks</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky. Houchens-Smith</td>
<td>CBS SN</td>
<td>2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>W, 56-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 3</td>
<td>RICE (2-3) Owls</td>
<td>Houston, Texas Rice Stadium</td>
<td>FSN</td>
<td>2:30 p.m.</td>
<td>W, 49-10</td>
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<td>Oct. 10</td>
<td>MIDDLE TENNESSEE (2-3) Blue Raiders</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky. Houchens-Smith</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>11 a.m.</td>
<td>MT, 34-29-1</td>
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<td>Oct. 15</td>
<td>NORTH TEXAS (0-4) Mean Green</td>
<td>Denton, Texas Apogee Stadium</td>
<td>CBS SN</td>
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<td>North Texas, 4-2</td>
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<td>Oct. 24</td>
<td>LSU (4-0) Tigers</td>
<td>Baton Rouge, La. Tiger Stadium</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>LSU, 1-0</td>
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<td>Oct. 31</td>
<td>OLD DOMINION (2-3) Monarchs</td>
<td>Norfolk, Va. Ballard Stadium</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>WKU, 1-0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 7</td>
<td>FLORIDA ATLANTIC (1-3) Owls</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky. Houchens-Smith</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>11 a.m.</td>
<td>FAU, 5-1</td>
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<td>FIU (2-3) Panthers</td>
<td>Miami, Fla. FIU Stadium</td>
<td>Fox</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Tied, 4-4</td>
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<td>Nov. 27</td>
<td>MARSHALL (4-1) Thundering Herd</td>
<td>Bowling Green, Ky. Houchens-Smith</td>
<td>FS1</td>
<td>11 a.m.</td>
<td>Marshall, 4-2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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