

COLLEGE FOOTBALL



**HOUSTON COUGARS 49 | SMU 28**

NEXT: ATTULANE, 8 P.M. OCT. 16  
TV/RADIO: ESPNU, 950 AM



Courtesy photo/University of Houston Athletics via @UHCougarFB

Houston Cougars quarterback Greg Ward Jr. (1) rushed for four of the team's seven touchdowns Thursday against SMU.

UH goes against SMU on the field, Texans off

By ANTHONY OPPERMANN  
The Daily News

» HOUSTON

The Houston Cougars had their work cut out for them both on and off the field Thursday night.

Quarterback Matt Davis led SMU on 10- and 9-play touchdown drives on the Mustangs' first two offensive possessions to give the visitors a quick 14-7 lead at TDECU Stadium.

Meanwhile, less than 10 miles away, the Houston Texans faced the Indianapolis Colts in a key early season matchup between the two AFC South division rivals. In addition to the 71,732 fans at NRG Stadium, the Texans and Colts played in front of a national television audience on both CBS and the NFL Network. "Obviously we wouldn't have wanted to go head-to-head with the Texans," UH athletic director Yurachek said.

National TV was the reason why the Coogs did. The American Athletic Conference has TV partnerships with both ESPN and CBS Sports. According to Yurachek, the networks pick which conference games they want to carry. ESPN selected the Week 6 meeting between former Southwest Conference rivals Houston and SMU.

On almost any other occasion, having a home game televised nationally in prime time on ESPN2 would be considered a good thing.

Because of NFL scheduling, however, it turned out to be less than advantageous for the Cougars, who announced a crowd of 25,204 fans after having more than 35,000 fans at their previous home game against Texas State on Sept. 26.

In addition to UH, four other AAC schools are in NFL markets: the University of Cincinnati, the University of South Florida in Tampa, Fla., Temple University in Philadelphia, and Tulane University in New Orleans.

With college games hardly ever played on Sundays, overlaps seldom happen.

Thursday's instance was and will be the only one this season where an AAC team played or will play at home on the same night in the same city as an NFL team.

For their part, Yurachek said



Courtesy photo/University of Houston Athletics via @UHCougarFB

The University of Houston student section reacts during the Cougars game against the SMU Mustangs on Thursday at TDECU Stadium in Houston.

Ward, Farrow lead Houston past SMU, 49-28

» HOUSTON

Greg Ward Jr. ran for four touchdowns and Kenneth Farrow ran for three as Houston defeated SMU 49-28 on Thursday night.

Ward, who completed 16 of 18 passes for 243 yards, led the Cougars (5-0, 2-0 American Conference) with 82 yards on 14 carries, finding the end zone once in each quarter.

Ward has rushed for 11 touchdowns and passed for eight this season but his 82 yards on the ground is his lowest output of the

season.

Matt Davis completed 21 of 35 passes for 238 yards and three touchdowns for the Mustangs (1-5, 0-2), who led 14-7 after one quarter. Courtland Sutton and Ryheem Malone had the touchdowns.

Farrow scored twice and Ward capped the second quarter with a 2-yard TD run with two seconds left to help the Cougars take a 28-21 lead at the half.

Davis' third TD was a 25-yarder to Darius Joseph with 3:35 to play.

The Associated Press

that when the NFL schedule was announced in late April, UH attempted to switch the game with the UConn-UCF contest. However, Yurachek said travel accommodations had already been made by the two schools with the AAC schedule being set in February.

Faced with the reality of hosting a home game on the same night as the Texans and what also turned out to be a road playoff game for the Houston Astros as well, UH turned to its students.

Cougars head coach Tom Herman and the UH athletic department challenged the student body on social media earlier in the week to top the 10,000 mark in attendance.

The students' responded, packing the Cullen Blvd. end of the stadium in a raucous sea of red. "Our students are great," Yurachek said. "This group of students that's here tonight, they're very energetic, enthusiastic and the crowd, everybody else that's here in the stadium feeds off them."

Yurachek estimated the stu-

dent turnout at approximately 6,000. Student attendance was between 5,000 and 6,000 for UH's first two home games.

Even though the busy sports night Thursday in Houston caused the Cougars' attendance to take a hit, Yurachek feels like the success of all of the sports franchises in the city help add to its profile as a good sports market.

"The best thing, to me, that can happen to this community is for the Rockets to win a championship, the Astros to win a championship and the Dynamo and the Cougars," Yurachek said. "Then, Houston will be a championship city."

After turning a pair of SMU turnovers into touchdowns in the second quarter, UH dominated the second half on its way to a 49-28 win.

With key Saturday home games against Vanderbilt, Cincinnati and Memphis, the Coogs will look to dominate the second half the home schedule off the field, too.

BY THE NUMBERS

HOUSTON 49, SMU 28

SMU	14	7	0	7-28
Houston	7	21	14	7-49

First Quarter

SMU—Sutton 8 pass from Davis (Hedlund kick), 10:11.  
Hou—Ward Jr. 10 run (Cummings kick), 8:57.  
SMU—Malone 9 pass from Davis (Hedlund kick), 5:24.

Second Quarter

Hou—Farrow 2 run (Cummings kick), 14:39.  
SMU—Davis 1 run (Hedlund kick), 6:16.  
Hou—Farrow 6 run (Cummings kick), 2:18.  
Hou—Ward Jr. 2 run (Cummings kick), :02.

Third Quarter

Hou—Ward Jr. 10 run (Cummings kick), 9:06.  
Hou—Farrow 1 run (Cummings kick), 3:09.

Fourth Quarter

Hou—Ward Jr. 2 run (Cummings kick), 7:37.  
SMU—Joseph 25 pass from Davis (Hedlund kick), 3:35.  
A—25,204.

	SMU	Hou
First downs	21	23
Rushes-yards	39-151	48-214
Passing	248	243
Comp-Att-Int	21-35-0	16-18-0
Return Yards	3	0
Punts-Avg.	4-34.0	4-42.0
Fumbles-Lost	4-3	2-1
Penalties-Yards	7-51	6-55
Time of Possession	31:21	28:39

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

**RUSHING**—SMU, Jones 10-52, Davis 15-46, West 9-35, Line 5-18. Houston, Ward Jr. 14-82, R.Jackson 10-53, Farrow 11-40, Webb 8-38, Kokuma 3-6, Team 2-(minus 5).

**PASSING**—SMU, Davis 21-35-0-248. Houston, Ward Jr. 16-18-0-243.

**RECEIVING**—SMU, Sutton 6-48, Walker 3-40, Jones 3-36, Joseph 2-63, Castille 2-22, Malone 2-14, Line 1-12, West 1-11, Thomas 1-2. Houston, Ayers 7-91, Allen 3-47, McCloskey 2-42, Dunbar 2-34, Farrow 1-28, R.Jackson 1-1.

PLAYERS OF THE GAME

OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE GAME



Greg Ward Jr.  
QB | #1

Broke Case Keenum's single-season record for most rushing TDs by a quarterback by scoring four times on the ground ... Led the team with 82 yards rushing while completing 16 of 18 passes for 243 yards.

DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE GAME



Steven Taylor  
LB | #41

Recorded eight total tackles among them four tackles for a loss including three sacks to bring his season total to eight in five games ... Forced a fumble and registered three quarterback hurries in the game.

AMERICAN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

	AMERICAN		OVERALL	
	W	L	W	L
Temple	1	0	4	0
East Carolina	1	1	3	2
UConn	0	1	2	3
USF	0	0	1	3
UCF	0	1	0	5
Cincinnati	0	2	3	2

  

	AMERICAN		OVERALL	
	W	L	W	L
Memphis	2	0	5	0
Houston	2	0	5	0
Navy	2	0	4	0
Tulane	1	0	2	2
Tulsa	0	1	2	2
SMU	0	1	2	5

THURSDAY'S GAME

» Houston 49, SMU 28

SATURDAY'S GAMES

- » Tulane at Temple, 11 a.m. (ESPNNews)
- » Navy at Notre Dame, 2:30 p.m. (NBC)
- » Syracuse at USF, 2:30 p.m. (ESPNNews)
- » UConn at UCF, 2:45 p.m. (ESPNU)
- » Louisiana-Monroe at Tulsa, 5 p.m. (ESPNNews)
- » East Carolina at BYU, 6:30 p.m. (ESPNU)

Editor's Pick: Game to Watch

**Navy at No. 15 Notre Dame**  
2:30 p.m. Saturday  
TV: NBC  
Midshipmen QB Keenan Reynolds is four rushing TDs shy of matching Montee Ball's all-time NCAA record of 73. The Fighting Irish are looking to bounce back from their loss at Clemson.

Stew Milne AP photo



Coming to Play

» FBS TOP FIVE: OFFENSIVE PLAYS PER GAME

1. Tulsa - 88.5
2. Cincinnati - 86.6
3. Houston\* - 86.5
4. Bowling Green - 85.4
5. TCU - 84.4

\*Before Thursday's game

Trending Up



Memphis

The Tigers edged USF, 24-17, to extend their winning streak to a school-record 12 games and receive 19 points in the latest AP poll.

Trending Down



UCLA

The Bruins dropped from No. 7 to No. 20 in the AP Top 25 after losing at home to Arizona State, 38-23, last Saturday.