

HONOLULU STAR-BULLETIN

WARRIOR REPORT

B4
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UH NOTEBOOK

Rolovich likely ends QB controversy

NICK Rolovich will likely be the man to end the controversy over the future of the Hawaiian football program after he brought Hawaii back from the brink of extinction with a 14-point touchdown pass to Ashley Lelle in the waning seconds of last night's Western Athletic Conference game with Fresno State.

With everyone at Aloha Stadium screaming their lungs out, Rolovich dropped back into the pocket and heaved a perfect pass to Lelle, who caught it over Fresno State cornerback Devon Banks to give Hawaii the 38-24 win.

It was the fourth victory in a row for Hawaii since Rolovich took over for the injured Tim Chang. Unless Rolovich suffers a serious injury — he did have a shoulder injury last night in the fourth quarter — it's unlikely Chang will play again this season.

"I think Chang doesn't belong in the position," Rolovich said before the game. "I'm pretty open-minded, but if he plays one more time this season, then he only has two years of eligibility remaining."

At this point, that's the latest thing from anyone's mind, but if Chang can still have three years remaining in his career, it's likely Hawaii will choose that route.

As for Rolovich, he completed 36 of 52 passes for 347 yards and three touchdowns. He had a pair of costly interceptions in the third quarter, but those were forgotten by game's end. The throw to Lelle was something he'll never forget.

"They didn't want Ashley all day," Rolovich said. "But he hung in there. I had to go away from him for a while, but I never forgot about him. I just put the ball in there and he went up for it. You can't get a guy like him the entire game."

Run defense was special: Early in the year, Nevada and Rice ran the ball up and down the field against a much-maligned UH defense. But that has changed.

You won't get an argument from Fresno State head coach Pat Hill. He was so impressed with UH's effort, he decided to pass the ball in a situation that called for the run. The result was a sack and forced fumble by Nate Jackson that was recovered by defensive lineman Launi Correa at the Fresno State 34 to set up the winning pass from Rolovich to Lelle.

"We're a team and that's what counts the most in games like this," UH linebacker Pius Tinslemann said. "The first half of the game to allow the linebackers to make plays."

Tinslemann and middle linebacker Chris Brown led the Warriors in tackles with nine each. Fresno State finished with only 68 rushing yards.

Season goes south: Two weeks ago, Fresno State was ranked eighth in the nation and was the media darling of college football. But not anymore. Successive losses to WAC teams Boise State and Hawaii by a score-line points have the Bulldogs fighting for their lives.

"I'm going to guarantee you something," Hill said. "We are going to win the next five games. That's all I'm going to say, as you write it out you want to describe it any way you want to."

UH injuries: Hawaii lost UH corner Andrew Etienne in an ankle sprain that may keep him out of next week's game with San Jose State. Robert Grant had a hamstring and a jawbone defensive back Gary Wright had a concussion. Both could play next Saturday.

Paul Amato can be reached at paulamato@starbulletin.com

Kelii Maitakea celebrates after the Warriors beat Fresno State 38-24. It was the first win over a ranked opponent since 1996.

Jackson's play saves the day

By Paul Amato

They call it Sam Lightning. And when senior safety Nate Jackson heard the play come in from the sidelines, with three minutes left in the season for Hawaii, there wasn't anyone more jacked-up in the house.

"I know I could come off the edge, come in, I had a chance to make a big play," Jackson said before the game. "I'm pretty open-minded, but if he plays one more time this season, then he only has two years of eligibility remaining."

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Sidelines: Comeback makes for an unforgettable win for the state

Continued from B1

"I'll never forget this game," Rolovich said. "I'll never forget this game."

Everywhere, hugs. Rolovich tried to sneak off the field, but Rolovich wouldn't let him, changing his coach in those massive arms, and Rolovich smiled some more.

He just couldn't stop it. And then more hugs. He couldn't wait a few steps without stopping. And more hugs.

They were still there, in the stands, everyone standing, nobody moving. They would remember.

"I don't care! I don't care!" shouted defensive back Gary Wright, going into convulsions at the mouth of the house. "I'm not going to stop!" And he did, leaving gloves, armbands, hats, everything. The arms grabbed it all.

They were still there, in the stands, everyone standing, nobody moving. They would remember.

They would remember this night. A win brings this much happiness. A great game brings this much happiness. A win brings this much happiness. A great game brings this much happiness.

"I know he would play," Rolovich said. "I know he would play."

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[EXTRA POINT]

Penalty turned the tide

Had Fresno State safety Launi Correa heard the whistle, he would have been in the fourth quarter, but not anymore. Successive losses to WAC teams Boise State and Hawaii by a score-line points have the Bulldogs fighting for their lives.

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GAME SUMMARY

Hawaii	3	10	3	22	38
Fresno State	10	10	7	7	34

Key stats	Notes
Hawaii's 38-24 win was its first since 1996.	
Nate Jackson's 38-yard touchdown pass to Ashley Lelle in the waning seconds of the game sealed the victory.	
Fresno State's defense held Hawaii to 68 rushing yards.	
Hawaii's defense forced Fresno State to punt four times.	

Team statistics	Hawaii	Fresno State
First downs	20	15
Yards gained	347	224
Passing yards	347	224
Rushing yards	68	68
Turnovers	2	3
Time of possession	32:15	27:45

Individual statistics	Player	Stats
Hawaii's leading passer	Nate Jackson	36/52, 347 yards, 3 TDs
Hawaii's leading rusher	David Carr	15 carries, 68 yards
Fresno State's leading passer	Tim Chang	22/38, 224 yards, 2 TDs
Fresno State's leading rusher	Devon Banks	15 carries, 68 yards

[COMING UP]

Whitaker gets another game at Aloha Stadium

San Jose State will host Hawaii 27 at a wild one last year, as the Aloha Stadium turf for 27th rushing yards, two touchdowns running and one receiving.

At the time, it looked like it might be the last the Warriors would see of Whitaker, who was then a senior in eligibility. But he's back next Saturday when the Spartans visit UH. Whitaker was granted another season for meeting graduation requirements in four years after entering college as a junior.

Whitaker rushed for 1,377 yards last season. In five games this year, he has 320 yards and one TD in three. He did not play last week due to a sprained knee but is expected to be in the lineup today as San Jose State (4-1, 1-1 WAC) hosts Tulsa (1-6, 0-1).

Don Bortolin, Star-Bulletin