NO. 10 VIKINGS DEFEAT NO. 4 BENEDICTINE ON SENIOR DAY

Marshall, Mo. (November 9, 2013)- The No. 10 Missouri Valley College football team dominated nearly every aspect of Saturday’s game against No. 4 Benedictine College at Gregg-Mitchell Field on Senior Day. The Vikings led by 28-points at halftime, and eventually came away with a 42-14 victory that puts the team a win away from capturing a third-straight Heart of America Athletic Conference championship.

The Vikings set the tone early, on the Ravens’ first play from scrimmage as Junior Defensive Lineman Ty Phillips (East St. Louis, Ill.) came up with a sack, and the Viking defense forced Benedictine to punt after three plays. The Vikings took over at their own 45-yard line, and drove down the field for the game’s opening score. MVC was able to put together a 12-play 55-yard drive that ended with a two-yard Freshman Running Back Malachi Daniels (Branson, Mo.) touchdown run, and after Freshman Kicker Lucas Guilfoil’s (Lake Lotawana, Mo.) extra point, the Vikings led 7-0 midway through the first quarter.

Benedictine had a little more success moving the ball on its second drive, reaching the MVC 46-yard line, but a fumble forced by Freshman Linebacker Luke Fisher (Wesley Chapel, Fla.) resulted in the Viking defense getting a turnover near midfield. The Viking offense was not able to take advantage of the opportunity as Junior Quarterback Bruce Reyes (Beaumont, Texas) was intercepted at the Benedictine 25-yard line, giving the Ravens the ball.

The Viking defense responded and forced a Ravens punt, and the Vikings took over deep in their own territory to start what became the second scoring drive on the afternoon. Backed up on the 11-yard line Reyes dropped back to pass and found Senior Wide Receiver Travis Thornton (Kentwood, La.) for a 46-yard play that moved the ball into Benedictine territory. From there the Vikings moved the ball down to the one-yard line, and Daniels scored his second rushing touchdown.
of the game to give MVC a 14-0 lead less than two minutes into the second quarter.

Benedictine responded after the Viking drive and thanks to a big pass play and a pass interference penalty, moved the ball to the MVC 28-yard line. However, the Viking defense stood tough and Benedictine failed to complete its next four passing attempts, eventually turning the ball back over to MVC on downs.

After getting the ball on a defensive stop, the Viking offense put together an impressive drive that went 13-plays and 72-yards in over five minutes. MVC converted three third-down attempts on the drive, and eventually capped things off with a Junior Running Back James Tillman (Kansas City, Mo.) four-yard touchdown run to give MVC a 21-0 lead midway through the second quarter.

After the touchdown, the Viking defense came out and forced another Benedictine turnover. This time Phillips came up with a sack that forced a fumble, which was recovered by Senior Linebacker Danny Reyes (Hesperia, Calif.) at midfield. The Vikings eventually drove the ball to the Ravens 21-yard line, but Guilfoil had his 38-yard field goal sail wide to the right, keeping the score at 21-0 in favor of MVC with four minutes remaining in the half.

The following drive for Benedictine nearly ended in a turnover when Senior Linebacker Andrew Huhman (Farmington, Mo.) came up with a sack that forced another fumble, but Benedictine recovered, and was forced to punt. On the punt, Senior Defensive Back Tyler Davis (St. Louis, Mo.) had one of his best returns of the season as he raced 63-yards on the return to the Benedictine 32-yard line. The Viking offense didn’t waste the good field position and Tillman scored his second touchdown of the season from one-yard out to give MVC a 28-0 lead, which was the score at halftime.

MVC got the ball to start the second half, and put together a drive to extend its lead even more. The Vikings took nearly seven minutes off the clock to start the half, going on a 13-play 81 yard drive that featured three third down conversions, the biggest coming on a third-and-13 when Reyes hit Junior Wide Receiver Jonathan Bird (Farmington, Mo.) for a 25-yard gain to the Ravens 19-yard line. The drive was capped with Tillman’s third rushing touchdown, this one from
eight yards out, and MVC led 35-0 with eight minutes remaining in the third quarter.

Neither team could get much going offensively through the rest of the third quarter. Tyler Davis was able to come down with an interception deep in MVC territory late in the third quarter, but Benedictine was able to get its first points of the game early in the fourth quarter.

After taking over on downs from MVC, Benedictine put together its first scoring drive that lasted only four plays, ending with a rushing touchdown by Cameron Fore, shrinking MVC’s lead to 35-7.

After both teams traded punts, the Vikings finished of their scoring on the afternoon with a big play from Reyes to Junior Wide Receiver Jarrell Davis (Merced, Calif.). Facing a third-and-11 at the MVC 33-yard line, Reyes found Davis deep behind the secondary, setting up a 67-yard touchdown play between the two, to cap MVC’s scoring at 42-7 with nine minutes left in the game.

Benedictine tacked on another Fore touchdown run later in the fourth quarter, but MVC came away with the 42-14 victory.

Leading the way for MVC on offense was Reyes who finished 31 of 36 passing for 287 yards with one touchdown and one interception. Tillman led MVC in rushing with 89 yards and three touchdowns, while Daniels finished with 77 yards and two scores, adding 29 receiving yards. Bird led MVC with six receptions for 70 yards, while Davis added five catches for 89 yards. The Vikings finished with 519 total yards in the game.

On defense the Vikings were led by Phillips who had seven tackles, 4.5 tackles for loss, 3.5 sacks and one forced fumble. Huhman had half a sack and Senior Defensive Lineman Leon Jackson (Merced, Calif.) had one sack in the game. Joining Davis with an interception was Senior Defensive Back Sherard Allen (St. Petersburg, Fla.). The Vikings limited Benedictine to 272 total yards, and just seven yards rushing.

On special teams Junior Punter Jason Mayden (Carrollton, Mo.) finished with an average of 41.5 yards per punt on four punts, with one downed inside the 20-yard
line. Guilfoil finished 6 for 6 in extra point attempts, and Tyler Davis had 82 return yards.

The win improves MVC to 7-2 overall and 7-1 in HAAC play. The win also puts MVC into a three-way tie with Benedictine and Baker University for the top spot in the HAAC standings. Benedictine falls to 9-1 overall and 7-1 in conference play.

Next week the Vikings travel to Avila University. Kickoff in Kansas City, Mo. will be 1:00 p.m. A win will give MVC its third-straight HAAC championship.

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Known for its dynamic, richly diverse, and friendly educational environment, Missouri Valley College offers many opportunities to grow in mind, body, and spirit. Grounded in the liberal arts, undergraduate studies empower students to master interdisciplinary skills needed to succeed in a knowledge-based global society. MVC offers over 40 academic programs, study abroad program, honors program, extracurricular activities, and 13 sports. The most popular majors include education and business, and some new majors are ag-business, nursing, graphic design, and health information systems (associate degree). Above all, Valley is committed to student success. For more information, call (660) 831-4000 or visit www.moval.edu.