

Rice victorious over UTEP Miners

Written by Yolande Y. Lezine
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Rice Owls senior quarterback Nick Fanuzzi produced 671 yards of total offense in route to a 41-37 win over UTEP in a C-USA matchup at Rice Stadium.

The Owls (3-6,2-4 in Conference USA), put together their most complete offensive performance in nearly a year. Rice has won its last eight November home games dating back to 2007. The win snapped a season-high, three-game losing streak.



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS
Rice quarterback Nick Fanuzzi holding to throw another touchdown against UTEP's defense on Saturday's game at Rice Stadium.

Fanuzzi, who was making his first start of the season, was 30-of-43 for a career-high 405 yards. He capped the performance with a pair of fourth-quarter touchdown passes for the go-ahead score. He became only the third Rice quarterback to pass for at least 400 yards in a game,

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joining the ranks of Chase Clement and Tommy Kramer.

“I left a dressing room where guys are full of hope,” Rice Owls head coach David Bailiff said. “This win has kept our slim bowl chances alive with just three games remaining on the regular season.”

The Owls amassed 671 yards of offense, third-most in school history. The Owls had a record 733 yards at Louisiana Tech in 2003 and 700 yards against Tulsa in 2007. The Owls had 475 yards of total offense last week against Houston. Rice’s 449 passing yards is a season high. They established a season standard for rushing yards against the Cougars with 359.

Fanuzzi established new career-yard mark with a 51-yard pass to Taylor Cook that put him at 316 yards for the game. He also tied a career mark with three touchdown passes.

The Miners kept things close thanks to excellent field position however; UTEP’s Dakota Warren missed the extra point attempt after scoring a touchdown, then Rice’s Vance McDonald recovered the onside kick to seal the win.

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