

Orlando Pirates Win First Game Representing Orlando in 41–38 Comeback Victory

ORLANDO, FL, UNITED STATES, March 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Orlando Pirates](#) secured a 41–38 comeback victory over the New Mexico Chupacabras in their first-ever game representing the City of Orlando, marking an important milestone for the franchise.

Running back Pooka Williams led the Pirates with four rushing touchdowns, while quarterback Paxton DeLaurent made his first professional start, completing 17 of 20 passes for 99 yards and one touchdown at Tingley Coliseum.

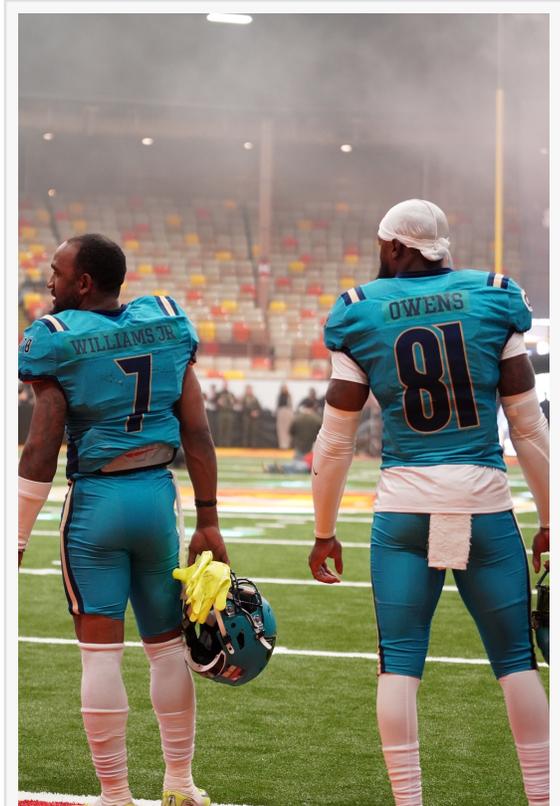
After an early setback, the Pirates responded quickly. DeLaurent led the team on a seven-play, 45-yard drive that culminated with Thomas Owens catching a 14-yard touchdown pass. With the extra point by Ali Mourtada, Orlando took a 7–1 lead.

The game remained tightly contested, with both teams finding their offensive rhythm, particularly in the second half when multiple consecutive possessions resulted in touchdowns.

In the third quarter, New Mexico briefly took the lead, but the Pirates responded immediately. DeLaurent connected with Nywuan Murray and Thomas Owens on a five-play, 39-yard drive that set up Williams' second rushing touchdown of the game, allowing Orlando to regain the lead.

New Mexico answered again, continuing the back-and-forth momentum, but the Pirates maintained composure. Early in the fourth quarter, Williams scored his third rushing touchdown to put Orlando back in front.

In the final moments of the game, DeLaurent led a seven-play drive that resulted in Williams' fourth rushing touchdown, giving the Pirates a 41–38 lead.



Pooka Williams Jr. and Thomas Owens during Orlando Pirates' first game representing Orlando, securing a 41–38 comeback win.

The Pirates' defense held in the closing minutes, as New Mexico missed a late field goal attempt, allowing Orlando to secure the victory.

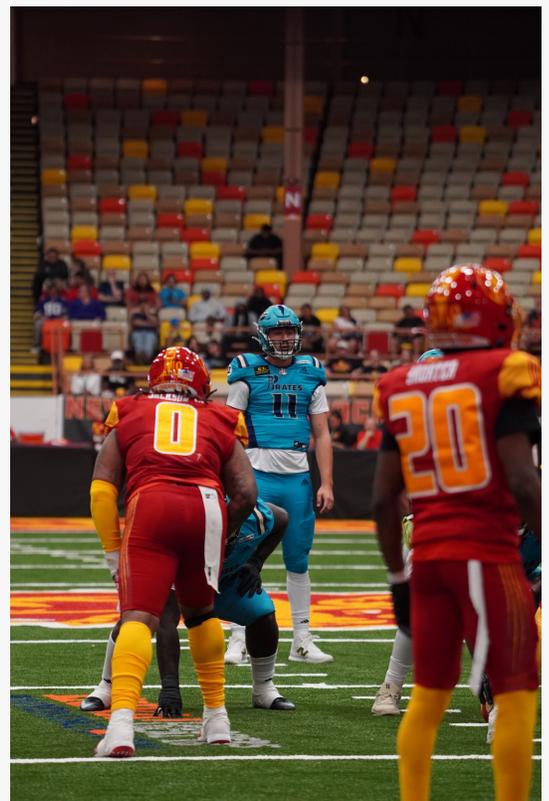
The win marks the team's first official game representing Orlando and builds momentum ahead of their home debut at the Kia Center on April 5.

The Pirates (1-0) will now enter a bye week before returning to Orlando to face the Quad City Steamwheelers.

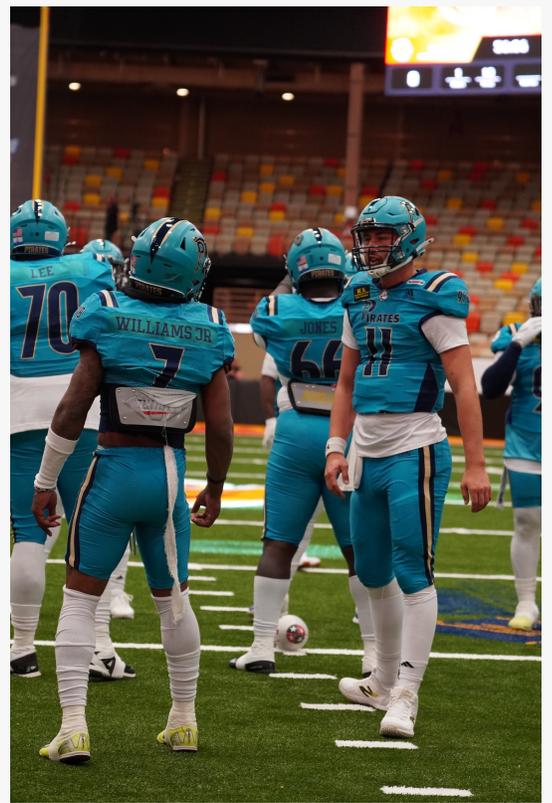
More information about the team and upcoming games can be found at

https://orlandopirates.com/information/ticket_tab/Tickets

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Game action during Orlando Pirates' 41-38 comeback victory in their first game representing the City of Orlando.



Orlando Pirates players in action during their 41–38 victory over the New Mexico Chupacabras.

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