

COLLEGE WEEK 1
Utah St AT Tennessee

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. (AP) Justin Worley loves playing with Tennessee's talented group of newcomers. They helped Worley to a successful return from thumb surgery on Sunday night.

Worley threw for 273 yards and three touchdowns, and the Volunteers beat Utah State 38-7 in a game matching two quarterbacks returning from injuries.

Worley completed his first 13 passes of the second half in his first appearance since missing Tennessee's final four games last season. He was 27 of 38 overall, connecting with 10 different receivers.

He said he benefited from having more playmakers around him, thanks in part to the arrival of a heralded recruiting class.

'I didn't have the nerves I've had in the past,' Worley said. 'It goes back to my confidence level, the confidence I have in these guys, the confidence I have in the offensive scheme and everything. This being the second year (as a starter), my confidence is a lot higher. I tried to go out there and play like that.'

Worley threw touchdown passes to Brendan Downs, Von Pearson and Jalen Hurd in front of a sellout crowd of 102,455 at Neyland Stadium. His 27 completions were a career high.

'He played winning football at the quarterback position,' Tennessee coach Butch Jones said. 'He managed the offense.'

Worley outperformed Chuckie Keeton, who was playing for the first time since tearing the anterior cruciate and medial collateral ligaments in his left knee last October. Keeton went 18 of 35 for 144 yards with two interceptions and one touchdown pass. He also ran for 12 yards on eight carries.

Tennessee is relying heavily on newcomers as it attempts to end a string of four straight losing seasons, and they wasted no time making an impact. By the midway point of the first quarter, Tennessee already had played 16 true freshmen, the most ever used by the Vols in a season opener. They ended up using 21 true freshmen.

Two of Worley's TD passes went to newcomers; Hurd is a freshman and Pearson a junior-college transfer. Todd Kelly Jr., another freshman, had a fumble recovery that set up a touchdown.

'You can't really focus on one guy,' Worley said. 'There are several guys we can attack you with.'

Utah State, one of only nine Football Bowl Subdivision teams to win at least 20 games combined in the 2012 and 2013 seasons, has a reputation for scaring big-name opponents and playing well away from home. But the Aggies didn't put up much of a fight Sunday.

'There's obviously nothing positive that we can take away from the field,' Utah State offensive tackle Kevin Whimpey said. 'All I can say is that's not the Utah State Aggies that I'm accustomed to, and we'll do everything we can starting as soon as we land in Logan, to right the ship and to play and win the Mountain West championship.'

Tennessee opened the scoring by getting two touchdowns in a span of 14 seconds six minutes into the game.

Alton 'Pig' Howard got things started with an 8-yard run around the right end for the junior's first career rushing touchdown. When Utah State's Kennedy Williams took the ensuing kickoff out of the end zone, A.J. Johnson knocked the ball away and Kelly recovered. On the next play, Worley found tight end Brendan Downs for a 12-yard touchdown.

The turnover on the kickoff return marked just the second career forced fumble for Johnson, a senior all-Southeastern Conference linebacker. He added his first career interception in the fourth quarter, setting up Marlin Lane's 7-yard touchdown run.

Tennessee extended the advantage to 17-0 by halftime. Utah State didn't reach Tennessee territory until the opening series of the second half, a drive that ended with Jake Thompson's 48-yard field-goal attempt going wide left.

The Vols then put the game away by reaching the end zone on each of its first two second-half possessions.

Pearson caught a short pass, made a nifty move around a defender and scored from 18 yards out late in the third. Hurd's 15-yard reception on the first play of the fourth quarter made it 31-0.

Utah State broke up the shutout bid on Keeton's 37-yard touchdown pass from Keeton to Hunter Sharp with 14:16 remaining.

'We had every intention of coming in here and competing,' Utah State coach Matt Wells said. 'I think we did for a while. We're used to competing a heck of a lot longer.'

Final	1	2	3	4	T
Utah State (0-1)	0	0	0	7	7
Tennessee (1-0)	14	3	7	14	38

Scoring Summary

First Quarter	UtahSt	Tenn
Pig Howard 8 yd run (Aaron Medley kick) 9:23		
Drive: 6 Plays, 70 Yards, 2:22	0	7
Brendan Downs 12 yd pass from Justin Worley (Aaron Medley kick) 9:09		
Drive: 1 Plays, 12 Yards, 0:06	0	14
Second Quarter	UtahSt	Tenn
Aaron Medley 36 yd FG 1:00		
Drive: 8 Plays, 73 Yards, 1:19	0	17
Third Quarter	UtahSt	Tenn
Von Pearson 14 yd pass from Justin Worley (Aaron Medley kick) 5:31		
Drive: 13 Plays, 69 Yards, 6:00	0	24
Fourth Quarter	UtahSt	Tenn
Jalen Hurd 15 yd pass from Justin Worley (Aaron Medley kick) 14:51		
Drive: 8 Plays, 73 Yards, 2:58	0	31
Hunter Sharp 37 yd pass from Chuckie Keeton (Nick Diaz kick) 14:16		
Drive: 2 Plays, 75 Yards, 0:30	7	31
Marlin Lane 7 yd run (Aaron Medley kick) 10:36		
Drive: 2 Plays, 11 Yards, 0:51	7	38

Team Stats

	UTAHST	TENN
First Downs	11	24
Plays-Net Yards	59-244	79-383
Rushes-Yds	24-100	39-110
Passing Yds	144	273
Passes	18-35-2	28-40-0
Punts	8-302	8-298
Fumbles-Lost	2-1	0-0
Penalties-Yds	5-42	6-40
Sacks	1-5	2-14
Time of Poss.	25:25	31:1

Individual Stats

RUSHING

UTAHST: JoJo Natson 2-47, Joe Hill 9-22, LaJuan Hunt 4-17, Chuckie Keeton 8-12, Rashad Hall 1-2
 TENN: Marlin Lane 11-41, Jalen Hurd 11-29, Justin Worley 6-14, Justus Pickett 4-11, Pig Howard 2-9, Devrin Young 1-6, Deanthonie Summerhill 3-5, Team 1-5

PASSING

UTAHST: Chuckie Keeton 18-35-144-2
 TENN: Justin Worley 27-38-273-0, Pig Howard 0-1-0-0, Nathan Peterman 1-1-0-0

RECEIVING

UTAHST: Brandon Swindall 5-37, Ronald Butler 3-29, JoJo Natson 3-18, Hunter Sharp 2-37, Wyatt Houston 2-13, Joe Hill 2-1, Devonte Robinson 1-9
 TENN: Pig Howard 6-37, Marquez North 4-38, Josh Smith 3-48, Von Pearson 3-27, Ethan Wolf 3-26, Jason Croom 2-41, Josh Malone 2-26, Jalen Hurd 2-16, Brendan Downs 1-12, Marlin Lane 1-2, Daniel Helm 1-0