

WEEK NINE
USC at COLORADO

USC roars to a 35-31 comeback win over Colorado

BOULDER, Colo. -- USC's fabulous freshman kept the Trojans unbeaten against Colorado.

Freshman Kedon Slovis threw for 406 yards and four TD passes, including scores of 44 and 37 yards to Michael Pittman Jr. in the fourth quarter, and Southern California escaped Folsom Field with a 35-31 win Friday night over the hard-luck Buffaloes, who fell to 0-14 against the Trojans. The difference-maker was the 37-yarder with 2:15 left that gave USC its first lead since early in the second quarter.

"Honestly the line just held up and Kedon threw me a great ball in stride and I just kind of ran around the defense," said Pittman, whose 44-yard TD cut Colorado's lead to 31-28 with about 11 minutes left.

Also coming up huge for the Trojans were fellow freshmen Amon-Ra St. Brown (37-yard TD run), Kenan Christon (85 rushing yards, TD reception), Drake London (seven catches for 85 yards).

Christon and London also recovered fumbles by Kedon that kept alive two touchdown drives.

"That was a great college football game tonight," Trojans coach Clay Helton said. "We knew walking in here that Colorado plays great ball at their place. I couldn't be any more proud of every man in that room."

The Trojans (5-3, 4-1 Pac-12) improved to 14-0 all-time against Colorado with their first win in four road games this season and they handed the Buffaloes (3-5, 1-4) their fourth straight loss.

"This is our opportunity at a championship," Helton said. "We needed this game to be able to still control our own destiny. On the road, in a tough environment, tonight with a team that was playing really good football. To walk out of here still on top of the Pac-12 South is special." Just like his group of freshmen.

BIG BREAKS

USC caught a couple of big breaks on the winning touchdown drive. The first came when Slovis was strip-sacked by outside linebacker Jamar Montgomery for a 10-yard loss but Christon recovered for the Trojans. Slovis then hit London for 19 yards and on third-and-1 from the 50, Quincy Jountti looked like he was stuffed, but the officials spotted the ball for a first down, and four plays later Pittman took a short pass and weaved his way through the Colorado secondary for the go-ahead score.

Colorado coach Mel Tucker said he told his team they could look at the loss two different ways: "You can sit here and feel sorry for yourself. Or you can look at yourself and say, 'Look at the type of team we can have.'"

MONTEZ BOUNCE-BACK

Steven Montez, who had zero TDs and six interceptions in his last two games, threw three TD passes, including a 71-yarder to Laviska Shenault Jr. on the second play of the second half. But he wasn't the same after taking a hard hit from safety Hunter Echols late in the third quarter. "He seemed fine," Tucker said. "If he wasn't, he wouldn't have been back in there."

Montez said as soon as he passed concussion protocol, "I was just like I've got to get back out there. This is crunch time, I can't be sitting in the training room."

Montez's backup, Blake Stenstrom came in with 4 seconds left in the third quarter and gained 27 yards on a keeper but was replaced by Montez to start the fourth quarter. Montez completed just 4 of 11 passes for 40 yards after that, and one of those was a 3-yarder to Alex Fontenot on fourth-and-4 with 90 seconds left.

"I think we did some positive things, some things we can definitely build on in the future," Montez said. "But we just got to do a little bit more."

QUICK STRIKE

After St. Brown's 37-yard TD run just 59 seconds into the game, Colorado responded with 17 consecutive points on a 22-yard field goal by James Stefanou and a pair of 7-yard touchdown passes from Montez to K.D. Nixon as Colorado took a 17-14 halftime lead.

Montez's first TD throw in three games followed an interception by freshman cornerback K.J. Trujillo, who also had a sack and a key pass breakup on third-and-1 in the first half.

FLAG FOOTBALL

Colorado was whistled 13 times for 109 yards to the Trojans' five flags for 50.

"It's just really hard to win like that," Tucker said. "I mean, every 100 yards is a touchdown and when we don't turn the ball over and we get takeaways then we will always have a chance to win, and that was the case. But we just have to be more disciplined."

THE TAKEAWAY

USC: The Trojans caught a ton of breaks but improved to 4-1 in the Pac-12 South behind more stellar play from their freshmen and left Colorado with more swagger than ever.

Colorado: The Buffs continue to slide despite playing their best game in a month. Shenault showed he's back after a core muscle injury slowed him for several weeks. He had 172 yards on nine catches.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
USC	7	7	7	14	35
COLO	3	14	14	0	31

Scoring Summary -----

	USC	COLO
FIRST QUARTER		
USC TD 14:01 Amon-Ra St. Brown 37 Yd Run (Chase McGrath Kick)	7	0
3 plays, 75 yards, 0:59		
COLO FG 9:04 James Stefanou 22 Yd Field Goal		3
13 plays, 70 yards, 4:57	7	3
SECOND QUARTER		
COLO TD 14:55 K.D. Nixon 7 Yd pass from Steven Montez (James Stefanou Kick)		10
12 plays, 77 yards, 6:18	7	10
COLO TD 5:52 K.D. Nixon 7 Yd pass from Steven Montez (James Stefanou Kick)		17
8 plays, 65 yards, 3:51	7	17
USC TD 2:48 Kenan Christon 3 Yd pass from Kedon Slovis (Chase McGrath Kick)	14	17
9 plays, 75 yards, 3:04	14	17
THIRD QUARTER		
COLO TD 14:15 Laviska Shenault Jr. 71 Yd pass from Steven Montez (James Stefanou Kick)		24
2 plays, 75 yards, 0:45	14	24
USC TD 12:15 Tyler Vaughns 21 Yd pass from Kedon Slovis (Chase McGrath Kick)	21	24
5 plays, 75 yards, 2:00	21	24
COLO TD 9:16 Steven Montez 17 Yd Run (James Stefanou Kick)		31
8 plays, 66 yards, 2:59	21	31
FOURTH QUARTER		
USC TD 11:25 Michael Pittman Jr. 44 Yd pass from Kedon Slovis (Chase McGrath Kick)	28	31
5 plays, 66 yards, 1:24	28	31
USC TD 2:15 Michael Pittman Jr. 37 Yd pass from Kedon Slovis (Chase McGrath Kick)	35	31
12 plays, 90 yards, 4:01	35	31

Team Stats	USC	COLO
First Downs	30	25
Passes for First	19	13
Rushes for First	8	11
Penalties for First	3	1
Third Down Efficiency	6-12	5-14
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	1-2
Total Yards	518	520
Total Plays	70	77
Avg Gain Per Play	7.4	6.8
Net Yards Rushing	112	196
Rushes	26	34
Yards Per Rush	4.3	5.8
Net Yards Passing	406	324
Comp-Att	30-44	27-43
Yards Per Pass	9.2	7.5
Times Sacked	2	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	-17	-12
Interceptions	1	0
Punts	4	6
Punt Average	46.0	42.3
Penalties	5	13
Penalty Yards	50	109
Fumbles	2	0
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Time of Poss	25:53	34:07

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
USC							
Kenan Christon	14	76	5.4	0	24		
Amon-Ra St. Brown	3	50	16.7	1	37		
Quincy Jountti	2	5	2.5	0	4		
Kedon Slovis	4	-6	-1.5	0	8		
Team	3	-13	-4.3	0	0		
COLORADO							
Alex Fontenot	16	57	3.6	0	11		
Steven Montez	7	45	6.4	1	17		
Jaren Mangham	7	38	5.4	0	9		
Blake Stenstrom	1	27	27.0	0	27		
Laviska Shenault Jr.	1	17	17.0	0	17		
Tony Brown	1	8	8.0	0	8		
K.D. Nixon	1	4	4.0	0	4		
PASSING							
USC	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Kedon Slovis	30	44	406	9.2	4	1	66.9
COLORADO	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Steven Montez	27	43	324	7.5	3	0	74.9
RECEIVING							
USC	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Michael Pittman Jr.	7	156	22.3	2	44		
Tyler Vaughns	8	104	13.0	1	21		
Drake London	7	85	12.1	0	26		
Amon-Ra St. Brown	5	55	11.0	0	22		
Velus Jones Jr.	1	5	5.0	0	5		
Kenan Christon	2	1	0.5	1	3		
COLORADO	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Laviska Shenault Jr.	9	172	19.1	1	71		
Tony Brown	5	67	13.4	0	19		
K.D. Nixon	3	30	10.0	2	12		
Alex Fontenot	5	29	5.8	0	9		
Jaren Mangham	2	19	9.5	0	17		
Brady Russell	1	6	6.0	0	6		
Dimitri Stanley	2	1	0.5	0	11		