

WEEK TWO
STANFORD at USC

Slovis propels USC past No. 23 Stanford 45-20 in debut start

LOS ANGELES -- Not many freshmen get to climb the stepladder, hold up the sword and lead the Southern California band in a postgame victory party at the Coliseum.

No Trojans freshman quarterback has ever had a debut start like Kedon Slovis, who turned a tough matchup against Stanford into a celebration of his burgeoning talent. Slovis passed for 377 yards and three touchdowns in a commanding performance, and USC rolled to a 45-20 victory over the No. 23 Cardinal on Saturday night. Slovis went 28 of 33 and set the school record for yards passing in a freshman's first start as the Trojans (2-0, 1-0 Pac-12) rallied from an early 14-point deficit to beat the Cardinal (1-1, 1-1) for the third time in the California private schools' last four meetings.

"I don't think it shows how good I am," said Slovis, the unheralded 18-year-old recruit from Arizona. "But it shows how good the team is around me."

Amon-Ra St. Brown had eight catches for 97 yards and two touchdowns, while Tyler Vaughns added another TD grab in the fourth quarter for USC. Vavae Malepeai rushed for two touchdowns and Stephen Carr added a 25-yard TD run in a 492-yard performance by coordinator Graham Harrell's Air Raid offense.

Slovis, whose high school position coach was Kurt Warner, won his duel with fellow first-time starter Davis Mills, who went 22 of 36 for 237 yards for Stanford. The USC student section chanted Slovis' name during the victory, and his teammates praised it afterward.

"I'm not surprised at all," center Brett Neilon said. "I've watched the kid, and he's a special talent. Everyone in the locker room believed in him. He's really poised, and he rallied us all together."

Cameron Scarlett rushed for 82 yards and a touchdown, but the Cardinal were outscored 42-3 in the final 43 minutes.

Despite being forced by injury to switch starting quarterbacks already, the Trojans are off to a dynamic start under embattled coach Clay Helton coming out of the school's first losing season since 2000.

"Give a lot of credit to USC," Stanford coach David Shaw said. "I thought we had them on the ropes in the first half. They showed great resilience, came back and made some plays and got back in the game. And I'll say this: Clay Helton has heard a lot of (stuff) from a lot of people for a lot of things. I think he's one heck of a football coach. I think he's got a really good football team. I thought they were extremely prepared."

Both quarterbacks got into the spotlight because of injuries to the schools' chosen starters last week. USC's J.T. Daniels is out for the season after injuring his knee while being tackled on a blitz, while Stanford's K.J. Costello was ruled out for only this week after a head hit.

Both passers got off to strong starts at the Coliseum, but only Slovis sustained it.

Mills completed his first four passes while the Cardinal opened with two long touchdown drives, capping the opener with his first career TD pass to Connor Wedington. Stanford jumped to a 17-3 lead with a field goal after USC's Velus Jones fumbled a kickoff return, but the Trojans soon got rolling.

Slovis largely handed off last week after he replaced Daniels, but Harrell said he wouldn't simplify his game plan with Slovis as his starter. Harrell proved it immediately against Stanford, and Slovis met the challenge.

"We understood his talent, and we understood the type of players our quarterbacks are," Helton said. "I said, 'Graham, let's cut it loose, and let's go have fun. Let's play fast and play aggressive. Even though he's young, we named him the No. 2 for a reason.' That's not hard for Graham, because he's always looking to cut it loose."

Slovis got his first TD pass early in the second quarter, hitting St. Brown for a 39-yard score. After Carr made a 25-yard TD run, Slovis capped a quick 70-yard drive with a second TD pass to St. Brown 31 seconds before halftime, putting USC ahead for the first time.

"You never, ever want to look back and just realize it was just completely on your execution, that it was really in your control, but it was," Stanford linebacker Casey Toohill said. "We didn't have a good game."

Slovis completed 12 consecutive passes in the second and third quarters, while Mills missed a handful of open receivers at important moments.

"I think this guy is going to be really, really good," Shaw said of Mills. "But (he) missed some opportunities, and some opportunities we didn't give him."

The Trojans went up 31-20 when Malepeai punched it in after Slovis hit Michael Pittman Jr. with a pinpoint 30-yard pass. After USC's Greg Johnson grabbed the game's first interception, Slovis marched the Trojans on another resilient TD drive capped by Malepeai again.

THE TAKEAWAY

Stanford: Mills should give way to Costello next week, but the Cardinal should be much more worried about a defense that struggled mightily with USC's Air Raid offense. Stanford's defense held USC to three points last year, but spent the entire rematch struggling to slow down any part of Harrell's scheme.

USC: Slovis answered every question about the faith invested in him by Helton and Harrell when they named him their backup quarterback. Slovis will face stiff defensive challenges weekly, but the Trojans move forward knowing they've got a budding star behind center.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
STAN	7	13	0	0	20
USC	3	21	7	14	45

Scoring Summary -----

	STAN	USC
FIRST QUARTER		
USC FG 10:03 Chase McGrath 23 Yd Field Goal		3
12 plays, 72 yards, 4:57	0	
STAN TD 5:39 Connor Wedington 15 Yd pass from Davis Mills (Jet Toner Kick)	7	3
7 plays, 35 yards, 4:24		
SECOND QUARTER		
STAN TD 14:56 Cameron Scarlett 3 Yd Run (Jet Toner Kick)	14	3
8 plays, 80 yards, 3:14		
STAN FG 13:47 Jet Toner 32 Yd Field Goal		3
4 plays, 7 yards, 1:09	17	
USC TD 11:29 Amon-Ra St. Brown 39 Yd pass from Kedon Slovis (Chase McGrath Kick)		10
6 plays, 75 yards, 2:18	17	
STAN FG 8:00 Jet Toner 37 Yd Field Goal		10
7 plays, 57 yards, 3:29	20	
USC TD 4:54 Stephen Carr 25 Yd Run (Chase McGrath Kick)		17
7 plays, 75 yards, 3:06	20	
USC TD 0:31 Amon-Ra St. Brown 7 Yd pass from Kedon Slovis (Chase McGrath Kick)		24
7 plays, 70 yards, 1:50	20	
THIRD QUARTER		
USC TD 0:44 Vavae Malepeai 4 Yd Run (Chase McGrath Kick)		31
7 plays, 70 yards, 2:37	20	
FOURTH QUARTER		
USC TD 10:19 Vavae Malepeai 6 Yd Run (Chase McGrath Kick)		38
7 plays, 39 yards, 3:02	20	
USC TD 6:01 Tyler Vaughns 16 Yd pass from Kedon Slovis (Chase McGrath Kick)		45
4 plays, 34 yards, 2:20	20	

Team Stats	STAN	USC
First Downs	23	23
Passes for First	13	15
Rushes for First	4	7
Penalties for First	6	1
Third Down Efficiency	4-11	5-9
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-2	1-1
Total Yards	335	492
Total Plays	66	61
Avg Gain Per Play	5.1	8.1
Net Yards Rushing	98	115
Rushes	30	28
Yards Per Rush	3.3	4.1
Stat Name		
Net Yards Passing	237	377
Comp-Att	22-36	28-33
Yards Per Pass	6.6	11.4
Times Sacked	3	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	-15	-4
Interceptions	1	0
Punts	1	2
Punt Average	46.0	42.0
Penalties	7	8
Penalty Yards	60	93
Fumbles	0	1
Fumbles Lost	0	1
Time of Poss	33:29	26:31

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
STANFORD							
Cameron Scarlett	17	82	4.8	1	44		
Connor Wedington	1	17	17.0	0	17		
Dorian Maddox	5	8	1.6	0	7		
Austin Jones	1	-2	-2.0	0	0		
Davis Mills	6	-7	-1.2	0	4		
USC							
Vavae Malepeai	12	42	3.5	2	11		
Stephen Carr	6	33	5.5	1	25		
Markese Stepp	3	33	11.0	0	20		
Kedon Slovis	6	12	2.0	0	8		
PASSING							
	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
STANFORD							
Davis Mills	22	36	237	6.6	1	1	47.6
USC							
Kedon Slovis	28	33	377	11.4	3	0	91.8
RECEIVING							
	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
STANFORD							
Colby Parkinson	7	89	12.7	0	21		
Connor Wedington	5	67	13.4	1	25		
Cameron Scarlett	2	27	13.5	0	16		
Osiris St. Brown	2	19	9.5	0	10		
Austin Jones	2	19	9.5	0	11		
Nathaniel Peat	1	11	11.0	0	11		
Scotter Harrington	1	5	5.0	0	5		
Houston Heimuli	1	2	2.0	0	2		
Dorian Maddox	1	-2	-2.0	0	0		
USC							
Tyler Vaughns	5	106	21.2	1	31		
Amon-Ra St. Brown	8	97	12.1	2	39		
Michael Pittman Jr.	6	82	13.7	0	31		
Drake London	3	62	20.7	0	45		
Devon Williams	1	11	11.0	0	11		
Munir McClain	2	10	5.0	0	6		
Vavae Malepeai	2	6	3.0	0	4		
Stephen Carr	1	3	3.0	0	3		