

WEEK ONE
CENTRAL MICHIGAN AT KENTUCKY

LEXINGTON, Ky. -- Looking ripe for an upset because it kept coughing up the football, Kentucky eventually tightened its grip on it as well as Central Michigan.

The Wildcats' depth on both sides of the ball also helped them avoid a potential disaster.

A.J. Rose and Benny Snell Jr. each rushed for two touchdowns, Gunnar Hoak came off the bench to throw the go-ahead TD pass and Kentucky overcame four first-half turnovers to beat Central Michigan 35-20 in its season opener on Saturday.

For a while the upset-minded Chippewas seemed poised to make the Wildcats their third Power Five victim in as many seasons by building a 17-7, second-quarter lead and scoring all their points off two interceptions and two fumbles. Kentucky rallied with two TDs over the final four minutes of the half, including Hoak's 24-yard scoring pass to David Bouvier for a 21-20 edge with 14 seconds remaining.

Kentucky shut out CMU from there, limiting the Mid-American Conference team to 97 second-half yards while outgaining them 427-255 overall to improve to 7-0 in the series.

"Really proud of the defensive effort," Kentucky coach Mark Stoops said. "To overcome an 0-4 turnover margin and win says a lot about our football team and how good of a team we have to come back and win by 15."

The Wildcats' offense in particular used strength in numbers to overcome those self-inflicted setbacks.

Snell had TD runs of 52 and 11 yards to finish with 125 yards rushing on 20 attempts. Rose, a sophomore, rushed for TDs of 55 and 4 yards on the way to 104 on eight carries and his first career 100-yard game as Kentucky dominated the ground game 299-118.

"I went out there today to show my full ability and I feel like I did a great job of doing that," Rose said.

Hoak meanwhile demonstrated why it's good to have an able backup with a gutsy bailout after starter Terry Wilson left the game with a shoulder injury sustained while throwing his second interception. The sophomore led Kentucky 71 yards in 41 seconds and hit Bouvier down the middle for his first career TD that shifted momentum for good.

"It's a great feeling, obviously," Hoak said after completing 4 of 9 passes for 50 yards. "I didn't even see him (Bouvier) get in the end zone because I got hit, but I still loved getting up and seeing it."

Stoops sidestepped a question about using both QBs next week at Florida but stressed the importance of having them ready after seeing it pay off when Kentucky needed it.

THE TAKEAWAY

Central Michigan: The Chippewas did everything necessary to position themselves for the upset by converting four turnovers into 20 points. Trouble was, that effort came before halftime and their reworked defense couldn't stop Kentucky when it had to.

"I think we came out good," CMU defensive back Xavier Crawford said. "In the second half, we just didn't finish. They did what they did better than we did what we do."

Sophomore Tony Poljan completed 17 of 27 passes for 137 yards and Kumehnnu Gwilly rushed for a 4-yard TD.

Kentucky: The Wildcats' shaky offensive start almost handed another Power Five upset to Central Michigan. Wilson was hurt while throwing his second interception, and his brief absence opened the door for Hoak to lead the go-ahead TD drive. The junior college transfer (11 of 18 passing for 78 yards, two interceptions, one fumble) returned to lead another TD drive that extended the lead in his first FBS start, but Hoak's pinch-hit effort illustrated why the QB competition was so close.

EARLY EXITS

Both teams had players disqualified for targeting penalties, with Central Michigan losing defensive back Tyjuan Swain and linebacker Trevor Apsey just four plays apart late in the third quarter. Apsey's ejection for a hit on Kentucky's Dorian Baker set up a fourth-quarter touchdown that sealed the game.

"I would never dispute anything related to a player's safety," CMU coach John Bonamego said, "and I believe they were called by the letter of the rule. They were accurate, but I think it's also important to point out that those weren't dirty plays."

Kentucky cornerback Chris Westry was ejected in the second quarter after appearing to turn his body and collide with Jonathan Ward on an incomplete right sideline pass.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
CMU	3	17	0	0	20
UK	7	14	7	7	35

Scoring Summary -----

Quarter	Time	Player	Team	Yards	Time	Score
FIRST QUARTER	3:16	Michael Armstrong	CMU	26 Yd Field Goal		3-0
	7:57	Asim Rose	UK	55 Yd Run (Miles Butler Kick)		3-7
	11:49	Devonni Reed	CMU	20 Yd Fumble Return (Michael Armstrong Kick)		3-7
SECOND QUARTER	5:51	Kumehnnu Gwilly	CMU	4 Yd Run (Michael Armstrong Kick)		10-7
	5:33	David Bouvier	UK	24 Yd pass from Gunnar Hoak (Miles Butler Kick)		20-21
	11:16	Benny Snell Jr.	UK	52 Yd Run (Miles Butler Kick)		20-28
THIRD QUARTER	4:01	Benny Snell Jr.	UK	11 Yd Run (Miles Butler Kick)		20-28
	14:53	Asim Rose	UK	4 Yd Run (Miles Butler Kick)		20-35
	14:53	Asim Rose	UK	55 Yd Run (Miles Butler Kick)		20-35

Team Stats	CMU	UK
First Downs	11	27
Total Yards	255	427
Total Plays	66	70
Avg Gain Per Play	3.9	6.1
Net Yards Rushing	118	299
Rushes	39	43
Yards Per Rush	3.0	7.0
Net Yards Passing	137	128
Comp-Att	17-27	15-27
Yards Per Pass	5.1	4.7
Times Sacked	1	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	0	16
Interceptions	2	0
Punts	2	4
Punt Average	0.5	10.3
Penalties	12	3
Penalty Yards	106	40
Fumbles	1	5
Fumbles Lost	0	2
Possession	31:52	28:08

Individual Stats

RUSHING

Player	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
CMU					
Tony Poljan	16	47	2.9	0	7
Jonathan Ward	11	36	3.3	0	17
Kumehnnu Gwilly	10	26	2.6	1	5
Jamil Sabbagh	1	6	6.0	0	6
Kobe Lewis	1	3	3.0	0	3
UK					
Benny Snell Jr.	20	125	6.3	2	52
Asim Rose	8	104	13.0	2	55
Terry Wilson	9	38	4.2	0	13
Sihiem King	6	32	5.3	0	10

PASSING

Player	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
CMU							
Tony Poljan	17	27	137	5.1	0	0	38.1
UK							
Terry Wilson	11	18	78	4.3	0	2	9.3
Gunnar Hoak	4	9	50	5.6	1	0	67.6

RECEIVING

Player	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
CMU					
Cameron Cole	4	51	12.8	0	34
Brandon Childress	2	23	11.5	0	17
Kumehnnu Gwilly	2	16	8.0	0	13
Jamil Sabbagh	2	11	5.5	0	6
Bernhard Raimann	2	11	5.5	0	9
Keegan Cossou	2	10	5.0	0	7
Damon Terry	1	7	7.0	0	7
JaCorey Sullivan	1	5	5.0	0	5
Jonathan Ward	1	3	3.0	0	3
UK					
David Bouvier	3	48	16.0	1	24
Dorian Baker	1	21	21.0	0	21
Lynn Bowden Jr.	5	17	3.4	0	11
Josh Ali	1	14	14.0	0	14
Clevan Thomas Jr.	1	12	12.0	0	12
C.J. Conrad	3	9	3.0	0	5
Benny Snell Jr.	1	7	7.0	0	7