

No. 10 UCF rally for 31-30 comeback victory over Memphis

MEMPHIS, Tenn. -- With No. 10 Central Florida struggling and the nation's longest winning streak in jeopardy, first-year coach Josh Heupel decided to take a gamble.

Facing fourth-and-1 in Memphis territory late in the third quarter and down 13 points, Heupel sent his offense back on the field and gave the ball to Taj McGowan. With the Tigers' defense bunched at the line of scrimmage, McGowan burst through the line and went 71 yards for a touchdown.

It was just what the Knights needed and they went on to beat Memphis 31-30 on Saturday, running their winning streak to 19 games.

"Huge momentum play in the game and changed the way the end of the third quarter and the fourth quarter was played," Heupel said, adding: "I just felt like it was an opportunity for us to extend the drive and get to the next play. Little did I know he was going to take it the distance."

McKenzie Milton threw for 296 yards to help the Knights to their 12th straight win over the Tigers. Milton's 7-yard touchdown with 12:14 left gave UCF (6-0, 3-0 American Athletic Conference) its first lead. The Knights trailed 30-14 with 2:04 left in the first half. The victory was by far the toughest game of the season for the Knights, who defeated their first five opponents by double-digits.

Even in the closing seconds, Memphis (4-3, 1-3) seemed on the way to at least have a chance for a game-winning field goal as the Tigers moved to the UCF 31. Memphis botched clock management in the final 30 seconds, getting hit with a motion penalty that required a clock runoff. Then Brady White completed a 9-yard pass to Tony Pollard and the seconds slipped away.

"Everybody was prepared and ready to go for this game," White said. "It was just a matter of not finishing."

Darrell Henderson, who leads the nation in rushing, had 199 yards and a touchdown on the ground on a career-best 31 carries for Memphis.

It was the first meeting since last year's American Athletic Conference championship game, which UCF won 62-55 in double overtime.

McGowan's scoring run in the third set the stage for Milton's winning score, capping a 74-yard drive. Rainy conditions stalled the offenses in the second half. Memphis managed 151 yards in the second half, 54 on the futile game-ending drive.

"We got off to a fast start, which we knew was necessary," Memphis coach Mike Norvell said. "We really did a great job in the first half. Unfortunately, in the second half, we did things that cost you against a great football team."

As for Heupel, he knew his team was challenged.

"I learned we're going to operate as a team," Heupel said. "We're going to come together when adversity strikes. We're going to continue to compete with everything we've got. We've got enough playmakers that you've just got to keep fighting when it's not going your way, and eventually you turn it in the right direction."

**THE TAKEAWAY**

UCF: Milton, a Heisman Trophy candidate, led the Knights in a game where they struggled at time defensively. The go-ahead touchdown came as he was hit hurtling toward the goal line, barely making it to the end zone.

Memphis: The Tigers looked like the team that many thought would return to the AAC championship game most of the way, but now have three conference losses and are in rough shape in the West Division. Henderson, though, showed why he should be getting at least a little Heisman hype.

**POLL IMPLICATIONS**

The Knights moved into the top 10 after last week's win over SMU, and could be moving up with some other highly ranked teams losing.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
UCF	7	10	7	7	31
MEM	17	13	0	0	30

**Scoring Summary -----**

	UCF	MEM
<b>first Quarter</b>		
MEM FG 9:39 Riley Patterson 43 Yd Field Goal		
11 plays, 46 yards, 3:22	0	3
UCF TD 7:52 Taj McGowan 2 Yd Run (Matthew Wright Kick)		
6 plays, 75 yards, 1:47	7	3
MEM TD 3:53 Brady White 11 Yd Run (Riley Patterson Kick)		
11 plays, 83 yards, 3:59	7	10
MEM TD 0:00 Darrell Henderson 25 Yd Run (Riley Patterson Kick)		
6 plays, 61 yards, 2:16	7	17
<b>second Quarter</b>		
MEM FG 10:58 Riley Patterson 45 Yd Field Goal		
7 plays, 28 yards, 2:17	7	20
UCF TD 10:45 Gabriel Davis 75 Yd pass from McKenzie Milton (Matthew Wright Kick) 1 play, 75 yards, 0:13	14	20
MEM FG 5:09 Riley Patterson 21 Yd Field Goal		
11 plays, 70 yards, 5:36	14	23
MEM TD 2:04 Tony Pollard 19 Yd Run (Riley Patterson Kick)		
4 plays, 66 yards, 1:50	14	30
UCF FG 0:00 Matthew Wright 44 Yd Field Goal		
8 plays, 48 yards, 2:04	17	30
<b>third Quarter</b>		
UCF TD 2:41 Taj McGowan 71 Yd Run (Matthew Wright Kick)		
4 plays, 80 yards, 1:32	24	30
<b>fourth Quarter</b>		
UCF TD 12:14 McKenzie Milton 7 Yd Run (Matthew Wright Kick)		
8 plays, 74 yards, 2:41	31	30

**Team Stats**

	UCF	MEM
First Downs	18	27
Total Yards	461	490
Total Plays	66	81
Avg Gain Per Play	7.0	6.0
Net Yards Rushing	165	281
Rushes	37	52
Yards Per Rush	4.5	5.4
Net Yards Passing	296	209
Comp-Att	17-29	17-29
Yards Per Pass	10.2	7.2
Times Sacked	4	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	-29	-7
Interceptions	0	0
Punts	7	5
Punt Average	42.1	43.2
Penalties	12	7
Penalty Yards	103	43
Fumbles	3	3
Fumbles Lost	1	2
Possession	24:41	35:19

**Individual Stats**

**RUSHING**

UCF	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
4 Taj McGowan	4	81	20.3	71	2
30 Greg McCrae	7	57	8.1	23	0
9 Adrian Killins Jr.	11	39	3.5	16	0
2 Otis Anderson	3	3	1.0	5	0
8 Darriel Mack Jr.	1	-4	-4.0	0	0
10 McKenzie Milton	11	-11	-1.0	8	1
MEM	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
8 Darrell Henderson	31	199	6.4	43	1
6 Patrick Taylor Jr.	11	47	4.3	17	0
1 Tony Pollard	5	29	5.8	19	1
3 Brady White	4	9	2.3	11	1
13 Kedarian Jones	1	-3	-3.0	0	0

**PASSING**

UCF	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
McKenzie Milton	17	29	296	10.2	1	0	155.7
MEM	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
3 Brady White	17	29	209	7.2	0	0	119.2

**RECEIVING**

UCF	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
13 Gabriel Davis	6	128	21.3	75	1
17 Marlon Williams	4	56	14.0	32	0
5 Dredrick Snelson	2	34	17.0	22	0
16 Tre Nixon	3	31	10.3	17	0
86 Michael Colubiale	1	24	24.0	24	0
2 Otis Anderson	1	23	23.0	23	0
MEM	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
10 Damonte Coxie	4	86	21.5	39	0
1 Tony Pollard	6	45	7.5	13	0
9 Pop Williams	2	23	11.5	13	0
5 Sean Dykes	1	19	19.0	19	0
8 Darrell Henderson	2	13	6.5	9	0
86 Joey Magnifico	1	12	12.0	12	0
13 Kedarian Jones	1	11	11.0	11	0