

WEEK THIRTEEN
EAST CAROLINA AT CINCINNATTI

CINCINNATI -- The Bearcats surpassed their win total from the last two years combined and were in the American Athletic Conference race right to the end. By any measure, their young roster surpassed expectations.

Redshirt freshman Desmond Ridder threw a career-high four touchdown passes in the first half, and Cincinnati wrapped up the regular season with 10 victories for the first time since 2012, routing East Carolina 56-6 on Friday.

The Bearcats (10-2, 6-2 American Athletic) put an exclamation point on a resurgent season under second-year coach Luke Fickell, topping it with a display of big plays and dominating defense.

“The thing that’s so gratifying is just to see the growth,” Fickell said.

After winning a combined eight games the last two seasons, the Bearcats opened the season 6-0 and made it back into the Top 25.

“Sometimes it was one of those pinch-me-I’m-dreaming moments,” senior offensive lineman Garrett Campbell said.

Ridder had touchdown passes of 10, 30 and 57 yards in the first quarter. Charles McClelland broke a career-long run of 55 yards for another score, and Kahlil Lewis caught a 28-yard touchdown pass for a 42-6 lead at halftime. Ridder got the rest of the game off after going 20 of 29 for 335 yards in the opening half.

Lewis finished with nine catches for 203 yards and a season-high three touchdowns.

The Bearcats were coming off a 38-13 loss to UCF that knocked them out of the Top 25 and ended their aspirations of an AAC title.

The Pirates (3-8, 1-7) couldn’t maintain any momentum from their 55-21 win over UConn that ended a five-game losing streak. Holton Ahlers was 8 of 22 for 184 yards with one touchdown, one interception and two fumbles. He left after twisting his right leg in the third quarter and limping off.

Ahlers practiced only once during the week because of the sore knee.

“He got in there today and he just didn’t move around the way he normally moves around and he didn’t see the field the way he normally does,” coach Scottie Montgomery said. “He just was sore throughout the first part of the game, and then I couldn’t let him get hit anymore because he was struggling to protect himself.”

Last season, the Pirates rolled to a 48-20 win over the Bearcats in Greenville behind Trevon Brown, who set a school and league record with 270 yards receiving. In the rematch, the Pirates managed only 37 total yards while falling behind 35-0 against the league’s top-ranked defense.

“We had some breakdowns -- a lot of breakdowns -- on offense,” Montgomery said.

NO WARREN

The Bearcats were missing running back Michael Warren II, sidelined by an injured shoulder. Warren set a school record with 18 touchdowns this season, including 17 of them on the ground, tying the school record. He’s rushed for 1,163 yards.

Cincinnati also had to shuffle its offensive line because of injury, giving Fickell concerns heading into the game.

“It was kind of nerve-racking seeing how we’d be without Michael Warren II,” Fickell said. “He’s the catalyst for a lot of what we do offensively.”

THE TAKEAWAY

The Pirates finish their fourth straight losing season next week at NC State. They’re 9-26 in three seasons under Montgomery.

The Bearcats await word of their first bowl appearance since 2015.

BIG STEP UP

Cincinnati was one of 33 teams with four or fewer wins last season. Of those teams, the Bearcats are the only one that has reached double-digits in wins. They also won 10 games in 1951 (10-1), 2007 (10-3), 2008 (11-3), 2009 (12-1), 2011 (10-3) and 2012 (10-3).

SAYING FAREWELL

The Bearcats honored 14 seniors pregame. They have one of the nation’s youngest teams, with 72 percent of the roster consisting of underclassmen.

HOLD `EM TO THREE

The Bearcats came into the game sixth nationally in holding opponents to three-and-out drives. The Pirates went three-and-out on each of their first three possessions, and then fumbled the next two times they got the ball.

EJECTED

Cincinnati safety James Wiggins was ejected for targeting Brown on a sideline catch in the third quarter.

NOT THIS TIME

After his big game against the Bearcats last season, Brown was limited to three catches for 45 yards.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
ECU	0	6	0	0	6
CIN	21	21	7	7	56

Scoring Summary -----

	ECU	CIN
FIRST QUARTER		
CIN TD 10:46		
Jayshon Jackson 10 Yd pass from Desmond Ridder (Cole Smith Kick)		
8 plays, 75 yards, 4:14	0	7
CIN TD 1:21		
Josiah Deguara 30 Yd pass from Desmond Ridder (Cole Smith Kick)		
5 plays, 56 yards, 1:54	0	14
CIN TD 0:00		
Kahlil Lewis 57 Yd pass from Desmond Ridder (Cole Smith Kick)		
2 plays, 62 yards, 0:00	0	21
SECOND QUARTER	ECU	CIN
CIN TD 13:06		
Charles McClelland 55 Yd Run (Cole Smith Kick)		
1 play, 55 yards, 0:10	0	28
CIN TD 9:12		
Tavion Thomas 2 Yd Run (Cole Smith Kick)		
5 plays, 34 yards, 1:54	0	35
ECU TD 8:13		
Mydreon Vines 71 Yd pass from Holton Ahlers (Two-Point Run Conversion Failed)		
3 plays, 75 yards, 0:52	6	35
CIN TD 3:53		
Kahlil Lewis 28 Yd pass from Desmond Ridder (Cole Smith Kick)		
9 plays, 75 yards, 4:20	6	42
THIRD QUARTER	ECU	CIN
CIN TD 7:05		
Kahlil Lewis 7 Yd pass from Hayden Moore (Cole Smith Kick)		
12 plays, 98 yards, 5:04	6	49
FOURTH QUARTER	ECU	CIN
CIN TD 13:32		
Arquon Bush 36 Yd Interception Return (Cole Smith Kick)		
3 plays, 4 yards, 1:15	6	56

Team Stats	ECU	CIN
First Downs	12	25
Total Yards	303	641
Total Plays	61	78
Avg Gain Per Play	5.0	8.2
Net Yards Rushing	83	247
Rushes	33	38
Yards Per Rush	2.5	6.5
Net Yards Passing	220	394
Comp-Att	10-28	25-40
Yards Per Pass	7.9	9.9
Times Sacked	3	0
Yds Lost To Sacks	-31	0
Interceptions	3	0
Punts	5	2
Punt Average	42.0	56.0
Penalties	3	9
Penalty Yards	30	90
Fumbles	2	1
Fumbles Lost	2	1
Possession	24:11	35:49

Individual Stats

RUSHING

ECU	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
32 Trace Christian	6	25	4.2	9	0
6 Hussein Howe	9	23	2.6	8	0
12 Holton Ahlers	9	21	2.3	10	0
3 Anthony Scott	7	20	2.9	9	0
9 Reid Herring	1	-6	-6.0	0	0

CIN	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
10 Charles McClelland	8	114	14.3	55	1
5 Tavion Thomas	26	106	4.1	24	1
8 Hayden Moore	2	20	10.0	20	0
9 Desmond Ridder	2	7	3.5	7	0

PASSING

ECU	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
12 Holton Ahlers	8	22	184	8.4	1	1	112.5
9 Reid Herring	2	6	36	6.0	0	2	17.1

CIN	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
9 Desmond Ridder	20	29	335	11.6	4	0	211.5
8 Hayden Moore	5	11	59	5.4	1	0	120.5

RECEIVING

ECU	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
19 Mydreon Vines	1	71	71.0	71	1
88 Trevon Brown	3	45	15.0	26	0
10 Leroy Henley	2	40	20.0	28	0
15 Terrell Green	1	32	32.0	32	0
37 Xavier Smith	2	16	8.0	13	0
32 Trace Christian	1	16	16.0	16	0

CIN	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
1 Kahlil Lewis	9	203	22.6	57	3
83 Josiah Deguara	5	64	12.8	30	1
21 Jayshon Jackson	3	42	14.0	20	1
10 Charles McClelland	2	30	15.0	20	0
85 Thomas Geddis	2	20	10.0	11	0
11 Leonard Taylor	1	20	20.0	20	0
80 Malick Mbodj	1	17	17.0	17	0
14 Yanez Rogers	1	4	4.0	4	0
8 Hayden Moore	1	-6	-6.0	0	0