

WEEK THIRTEEN

BYU AT UTAH

No. 17 Utah rallies to top rival BYU 35-27

SALT LAKE CITY -- Dramatic fourth-quarter comebacks are becoming second nature to Utah. Two weeks after rallying against Oregon in the final minutes, the No. 18 Utes did it again against BYU on Saturday, scoring 28 unanswered points in the final 16 minutes and beating the Cougars 35-27. Jason Shelley threw for 141 yards and a touchdown and added 61 yards and another score on the ground to fuel the rally. Armand Shyne also ran for a pair of touchdowns, including the go-ahead score, to bring the Utes back from a 20-point third quarter deficit. "We've always had this kind of team to where we always fight back," Shelley said. "We've been in tough situations through winter conditioning, summer, fall camp, so it was nothing new to us. We just came out and played and good results happened."

Utah (9-3, 6-3 Pac-12) gained only 296 total yards, but beat the Cougars for the eighth straight time dating to 2010. The Utes tallied 131 of those yards during the fourth quarter. Zach Wilson threw for 204 yards and a pair of touchdowns for BYU (6-6). Wilson added 73 yards on the ground. Matt Hadley also ran for 64 yards and a pair of scores before leaving with an ankle injury in the fourth quarter. BYU totaled just 51 yards in the fourth quarter after piling up 306 yards through the first three quarters. That opened the door for Utah to rally.

The Utes imposed their will on offense and defense in the fourth quarter after getting pushed around for three quarters by their rival. "I don't know if I can remember a team that has done a better job of handling slow starts and things not going their way and just continuing fighting through it," Utah coach Kyle Whittingham said. Shyne put the Utes ahead for the first time on a 5-yard run with 3:02 remaining. The junior kept the drive alive after gaining 2 yards on a direct snap on 4th-and-1 at midfield. BYU had a chance to answer, but Riley Burt was thrown for a 1-yard loss on fourth down with 1:53 left. Shelley scored on a 33-yard keeper one play later to finish off the comeback. "We felt really good with our defense and the way we were playing," BYU coach Kalani Sitake said. "I'm not sure if it was all conservative because they stopped us. They made a good defensive stand and stopped us."

BYU seized momentum when it recovered a muffed punt return at the Utah 33 to set up a 10-yard TD pass from Wilson to Neil Pau'u that gave the Cougars a quick 6-0 lead. They extended their lead to 13-0 on Wilson's second touchdown pass, a 26 yarder to Bushman that ended with the tight end dragging Corrian Ballard the final few yards to reach the end zone. Utah's offense went three-and-out on three straight first-quarter drives and gained just 15 total yards in the quarter. It didn't get much better in the second quarter. Utah threatened to score on only one drive, but it ended with Khyiris Tonga blocking Matt Gay's 54-yard field goal attempt. The Utes totaled just 86 yards by halftime. "It didn't look good at halftime," Whittingham said. "We thoroughly got outplayed in that first half." BYU didn't experience the same struggles.

The Cougars extended their lead to 20-0 on a 1-yard run by Matt Hadley with 25 seconds remaining in the first half. BYU tallied 110 rushing yards by halftime against a Utah defense that allowed a Pac-12 best 95.5 rushing yards per contest coming into the game. A potential Utah comeback first appeared to be in the works after Julian Blackmon returned an interception 27 yards to get the Utes on the board in the third quarter. BYU answered with another 1-yard run from Hadley to push its lead to 27-7. The Cougars started the drive at the Utah 44 following a 10-yard punt from Ray Guy Award finalist Mitch Wishnowsky. Utah finally put together a successful drive late in the third quarter. The Utes scored their first offensive touchdown on a 10-yard pass from Shelley to Samson Nacua with 40 seconds remaining in the quarter. After a 15-yard punt by Rhett Almond, Utah narrowed the deficit to 27-21 on a 2-yard run from Shyne. "We let it slip through our hands," Bushman said. "It leaves a bad taste in our mouths."

THE TAKEAWAY

Utah: The Utes came out flat in all three phases of the game and nearly paid for it. A muffed punt return and a bad punt set up two BYU touchdowns. Utah could not stop the run despite leading the Pac-12 in rushing defense. The Utes also had trouble moving the ball until staring down a 20-point third-quarter deficit. Washington could exploit many of these issues in Friday's Pac-12 championship game. BYU: An uneven regular season ended on an equally uneven note for the Cougars. For three quarters, everything went perfectly. Wilson played with a veteran quarterback's poise. BYU's defense played with aggressiveness and swarmed to the ball. Then, Utah stormed to life in the fourth quarter and put the Cougars on their heels the rest of the way.

FLYING HIGH

Utah's offense roared to life starting late in the third quarter behind confident play from Shelley. The redshirt freshman offered a sneak preview of his fearlessness with an incredible second quarter play. On a drive that ultimately ended in blocked 54-yard field-goal attempt from Matt Gay, Shelley moved the ball into BYU territory on an 11 yard run. He ultimately gained the first down after hurdling Cougar cornerback Keenan Ellis in the open field. "I've never hurdled anybody before and I just tell people, 'Don't hurdle. It's dangerous. Not the right thing to do,'" Shelley said. "That was a reflex. I'm not going to lie to you."

STREAKS BROKEN

The loss to Utah broke a couple of notable streaks for BYU. It marked the first time the Cougars lost under Sitake when leading at halftime. Previously, BYU had been 14-0 with a halftime lead during his tenure. Going back to 2005, BYU was 51-0 when leading by 14 or more points at halftime. This marked the largest deficit Utah ever overcame against the Cougars. The previous mark had been a rally from a 16-point deficit for a 23-22 win in 1978.

POLL IMPLICATIONS

A loss would have likely dropped Utah from the AP Top 25. The Utes probably won't move much either way with a comeback win over BYU.

| | | | | | |
|-------|----|---|----|----|----|
| Final | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | T |
| BYU | 13 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 27 |
| UTAH | 0 | 0 | 14 | 21 | 35 |

Scoring Summary -----

| FIRST QUARTER | BYU | UTAH |
|---|-----|------|
| TD 10:55 Neil Pau'u 10 Yd pass from Zach Wilson (Skyler Southam PAT failed) | 6 | 0 |
| TD 3:57 Matt Bushman 26 Yd pass from Zach Wilson (Skyler Southam Kick) | 13 | 0 |
| second Quarter | BYU | UTAH |
| TD 0:25 Matt Hadley 1 Yd Run (Skyler Southam Kick) | 20 | 0 |
| third Quarter | BYU | UTAH |
| TD 11:33 Julian Blackmon 27 Yd Interception Return (Matt Gay Kick) | 20 | 7 |
| TD 5:28 Matt Hadley 1 Yd Run (Skyler Southam Kick) | 27 | 7 |
| TD 0:40 Samson Nacua 10 Yd pass from Jason Shelley (Matt Gay Kick) | 27 | 14 |
| fourth Quarter | BYU | UTAH |
| TD 10:53 Armand Shyne 2 Yd Run (Matt Gay Kick) | 27 | 21 |
| TD 3:02 Armand Shyne 5 Yd Run (Matt Gay Kick) | 27 | 28 |
| TD 1:43 Jason Shelley 33 Yd Run (Matt Gay Kick) | 27 | 35 |
| 1 play, 33 yards, 0:10 | | |

Team Stats

| | BYU | UTAH |
|-------------------|-------|-------|
| First Downs | 17 | 18 |
| Total Yards | 357 | 296 |
| Total Plays | 76 | 65 |
| Avg Gain Per Play | 4.7 | 4.6 |
| Net Yards Rushing | 153 | 155 |
| Rushes | 47 | 37 |
| Yards Per Rush | 3.3 | 4.2 |
| Net Yards Passing | 204 | 141 |
| Comp-Att | 20-29 | 19-28 |
| Yards Per Pass | 7.0 | 5.0 |
| Times Sacked | 3 | 1 |
| Yds Lost To Sacks | -17 | -10 |
| Interceptions | 1 | 0 |
| Punts | 7 | 6 |
| Punt Average | 34.6 | 41.5 |
| Penalties | 3 | 1 |
| Penalty Yards | 22 | 10 |
| Fumbles | 0 | 1 |
| Fumbles Lost | 0 | 1 |
| Possession | 34:18 | 25:42 |

Individual Stats

RUSHING

| BYU | Rush | Yds | Avg | Long | TD |
|------------------|------|-----|-----|------|----|
| 11 Zach Wilson | 14 | 73 | 5.2 | 31 | 0 |
| 2 Matt Hadley | 21 | 64 | 3.0 | 12 | 2 |
| 34 Riley Burt | 8 | 12 | 1.5 | 6 | 0 |
| 15 Aleva Hifo | 2 | 2 | 1.0 | 1 | 0 |
| 13 Micah Simon | 2 | 2 | 1.0 | 4 | 0 |
| UTAH | Rush | Yds | Avg | Long | TD |
| 15 Jason Shelley | 11 | 61 | 5.5 | 33 | 1 |
| 6 Armand Shyne | 15 | 47 | 3.1 | 6 | 2 |
| 4 TJ Green | 8 | 45 | 5.6 | 11 | 0 |
| 18 Britain Covey | 1 | 9 | 9.0 | 9 | 0 |

PASSING

| BYU | Comp | Att | Yds | Y/A | TD | Int | QBRat |
|------------------|------|-----|-----|-----|----|-----|-------|
| 11 Zach Wilson | 20 | 29 | 204 | 7.0 | 2 | 1 | 143.9 |
| UTAH | Comp | Att | Yds | Y/A | TD | Int | QBRat |
| 15 Jason Shelley | 19 | 28 | 141 | 5.0 | 1 | 0 | 121.9 |

RECEIVING

| BYU | Rec | Yds | Avg | Long | TD |
|---------------------|-----|-----|------|------|----|
| 89 Matt Bushman | 6 | 92 | 15.3 | 26 | 1 |
| 84 Neil Pau'u | 4 | 28 | 7.0 | 10 | 1 |
| 32 Dallin Holker | 1 | 24 | 24.0 | 24 | 0 |
| 3 Dylan Collie | 3 | 19 | 6.3 | 8 | 0 |
| 13 Micah Simon | 1 | 13 | 13.0 | 13 | 0 |
| 2 Matt Hadley | 2 | 11 | 5.5 | 8 | 0 |
| 35 Brayden El-Bakri | 2 | 11 | 5.5 | 6 | 0 |
| 21 Talon Shumway | 1 | 6 | 6.0 | 6 | 0 |
| UTAH | Rec | Yds | Avg | Long | TD |
| 8 Siaoosi Mariner | 3 | 50 | 16.7 | 37 | 0 |
| 21 Solomon Enis | 2 | 35 | 17.5 | 25 | 0 |
| 7 Demari Simpkins | 5 | 21 | 4.2 | 7 | 0 |
| Cole Fotheringham | 1 | 10 | 10.0 | 10 | 0 |
| 45 Samson Nacua | 1 | 10 | 10.0 | 10 | 1 |
| 18 Britain Covey | 4 | 9 | 2.3 | 6 | 0 |
| 4 TJ Green | 1 | 6 | 6.0 | 6 | 0 |
| 44 Jake Jackson | 1 | 4 | 4.0 | 4 | 0 |
| 25 Jaylen Dixon | 1 | -4 | -4.0 | 0 | 0 |