

**WEEK FOURTEEN
AKRON AT SOUTH CAROLINA**

COLUMBIA, S.C. -- Deebo Samuel figured out another way to score a touchdown as he wrapped up his injury-cursed career at South Carolina in a rainy, messy makeup game.

Samuel recovered a bad snap on a punt in the end zone and caught two touchdown passes as the Gamecocks (7-5) beat Akron 28-3 on Saturday.

South Carolina was playing a low-stakes game on a wet, cold December afternoon to make up for one canceled by Hurricane Florence against the Zips (4-8), whose opener at Nebraska was cancelled by thunderstorms.

It was sloppy. South Carolina had four turnovers -- two of them red zone interceptions by Jake Bentley -- and Akron had six fumbles, losing three of them. In 17 second-half drives, 10 ended in punts, four ended on downs, two ended in lost fumbles and the last one ended at the final gun.

"We didn't play well in the second half," Bentley said. "I'm disappointed."

Bentley was 14 of 27 for 199 yards and three touchdowns. Mon Denson ran 17 times for 110 yards and Bryan Edwards caught five passes for 109 yards and a TD for South Carolina.

Samuel put this game away on his own. His fumble recovery on a high snap on an Akron punt put the Gamecocks up 21-3 and his 5-yard TD catch with 1:33 to go in the second quarter put South Carolina ahead 28-3. Samuel has 16 TDs receiving, seven rushing, four on kick returns and one on a fumble recovery in his career. He also has thrown two passes in college -- both for touchdowns.

"I just go out there and do what they ask me to do," the senior said.

Samuel missed games his freshman year with hamstring problems and broke his leg in his third game of 2017 after scoring six touchdowns.

"When he's been on the field, he's been as electric player as you will see in college football," South Carolina coach Will Muschamp said.

When the Gamecocks and Zips originally agreed to play this one Nov. 2, there was a good chance both teams would be playing for bowl eligibility. But South Carolina pulled off a Southeastern Conference win over Ole Miss and Football Championship Subdivision Chattanooga to get to six wins and Akron lost its last three to stay stuck at four victories.

The announced attendance was 53,420 people -- the actual crowd was much smaller -- and it was the lowest attendance for a South Carolina game since 52,400 were counted in October 1991 when Louisiana Tech came to town.

"I appreciate the fans who did come," Bentley said. "We could definitely hear them."

Kato Nelson was 19 for 39 for 178 yards. Kwad Smith caught six passes for 69 yards for the Zips. Nick Gasser's 45-yard field goal gave Akron its only points.

The Zips were going after their second Power Five win. Akron beat Big Ten West Division champion Northwestern 39-34 on Sept. 15.

THE TAKEAWAY

Akron: For the Zips, the biggest one might be a nice \$1.3 million check for filling this hole in South Carolina's schedule. Akron has never beaten a team from the Southeastern Conference in six tries. The Zips failed to win at least five games for the first time since going 1-11 in Terry Bowden's first season in 2012.

South Carolina: The Gamecocks have been haunted by injuries this season -- at least 15 players were out hurt Saturday -- and couldn't get through this one unscathed either. Offensive lineman Zach Bailey was carted off on the last play of the third quarter with a broken leg and will miss the bowl game. The Gamecocks have now beaten three Bowdens -- Bobby at Florida State, Tommy at Clemson and Terry now at Akron. Terry Bowden was 2-0 against South Carolina at Auburn.

VICTORY IN DEFEAT

Akron coach Terry Bowden said he was quite proud his team held South Carolina scoreless in the second half even when they didn't score at all.

"You want to make sure you set the right stage as far as an attitude for next season" Bowden said.

Bowden played a number of young players Saturday, including freshman running back Keyondre White who ran 13 times for 56 yards.

IMPROVING PROGRAM

Muschamp's 22 wins in three seasons is now the best start to a career at South Carolina, eclipsing Steve Spurrier's 21-win start.

And Muschamp said even though this team couldn't replicate the nine wins from last season, he thinks they had bad breaks with injuries and a few bad bounces.

"We're in a much better place. Absolutely," Muschamp said.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
AKRON	3	0	0	0	3
SC	14	14	0	0	28

Scoring Summary -----

	AKRON	SC
FIRST QUARTER		
SC TD 9:29		
Deebo Samuel 15 Yd pass from Jake Bentley (Parker White Kick)		
3 plays, 28 yards, 0:38	0	7
AKRON FG 3:59		
Nick Gasser 45 Yd Field Goal		
12 plays, 47 yards, 5:30	3	7
SC TD 3:01		
Bryan Edwards 70 Yd pass from Jake Bentley (Parker White Kick)		
3 plays, 72 yards, 0:58	3	14
SECOND QUARTER		
SC TD 8:09		
Deebo Samuel 0 Yd Fumble Return (Parker White Kick)		
6 plays, -2 yards, 2:45	3	21
SC TD 1:33		
Deebo Samuel 5 Yd pass from Jake Bentley (Parker White Kick)		
10 plays, 90 yards, 4:00	3	28

	AKRON	SC
Team Stats		
First Downs	18	16
Total Yards	260	384
Total Plays	79	65
Avg Gain Per Play	3.3	5.9
Net Yards Rushing	82	185
Rushes	40	38
Yards Per Rush	2.1	4.9
Net Yards Passing	178	199
Comp-Att	19-39	14-27
Yards Per Pass	4.6	7.4
Times Sacked	5	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	-28	-20
Interceptions	0	2
Punts	7	6
Punt Average	39.4	38.0
Penalties	3	6
Penalty Yards	24	41
Fumbles	6	2
Fumbles Lost	3	2
Possession	36:20	23:40

Individual Stats

RUSHING

	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
AKRON					
11 Keyondre White	13	56	4.3	11	0
28 Jemarulin Suggs	14	40	2.9	14	0
4 Deltron Sands	2	12	6.0	6	0
1 Kato Nelson	10	-2	-0.2	9	0

	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
SC					
34 Mon Denson	17	110	6.5	61	0
5 Rico Dowdle	13	86	6.6	30	0
14 Deshaun Fenwick	4	3	0.8	2	0
19 Jake Bentley	4	-14	-3.5	5	0

PASSING

	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
AKRON							
1 Kato Nelson	19	39	178	4.6	0	0	87.1
SC							
19 Jake Bentley	14	27	199	7.4	3	2	135.6

RECEIVING

	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
AKRON					
3 Kwadarrus Smith	6	69	11.5	17	0
9 Jonah Morris	3	38	12.7	26	0
17 Daishawn Brimage	2	32	16.0	17	0
2 Mykel Traylor-Bennett	2	21	10.5	13	0
82 Jeremiah Knight	2	13	6.5	7	0
80 M.J. McGriff	1	4	4.0	4	0
4 Deltron Sands	1	1	1.0	1	0
28 Jemarulin Suggs	2	0	0.0	7	0
SC					
89 Bryan Edwards	5	109	21.8	70	1
40 Jacob August	2	37	18.5	19	0
1 Deebo Samuel	4	33	8.3	15	2
6 Josh Vann	2	14	7.0	11	0
87 Kiel Pollard	1	6	6.0	4	0