

**BOCA RATON BOWL  
SMU VS FAU**

BOCA RATON, Fla. -- Lane Kiffin was watching his now-former Florida Atlantic team play from elsewhere. A bunch of key FAU starters, including the school's only first-team All-American, were missing. The coaching staff the Owls had Saturday faces a very uncertain future starting Sunday.

Adversity was everywhere.  
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The Owls were unfazed.

Chris Robison passed for 305 yards and two touchdowns and FAU scored two touchdowns in a 24-second span late in the first half to take control on the way to beating SMU 52-28 in the CheriBundi Boca Raton Bowl on Saturday night.

"This is just one of those feel-good things that the game of football brings out every now and then," FAU defensive coordinator and interim coach Glenn Spencer said. "It's all about relationships. I was telling those guys in there, no matter what happens tomorrow they've got a friend for life. It's just an emotional night."

Spencer held a game ball -- a gift from the players -- for the entirety of his postgame news conference. Spencer was on Kiffin's staff, and now that Kiffin has taken over at Ole Miss after three seasons with FAU he's among the coaches who probably aren't too sure about where they'll be next season.

Spencer took minimal credit for the victory.

"I got them to the practice field on time," he said.

Clearly, he did more than that.

James Charles ran for two touchdowns for FAU (11-3), which tied a school record for wins in a season and improved to 4-0 in bowl games. The first of Charles' scores came with a minute left in the first half to break a 14-14 tie, Robison found Brandon Robison for another touchdown 24 seconds later after an SMU interception and the Owls were off and running.

Rashad Smith ran a fumble back for a score in the third quarter to help FAU blow the game open. Robison completed 27 of 37 passes for the Owls, who were playing a bowl game on their home field for the second time in three years.

"Adversity always comes during a season," Robison said. And although this might have been a big one in the eyes of a lot of people, we really didn't think it was anything. That's why we didn't let it affect us."

Shane Buechele completed 27 for 47 passes for 303 yards for SMU (10-3). The Mustangs were seeking their first bowl victory since 2012, this game coming a day after they gave coach Sonny Dykes -- who has gone 15-11 in his first two seasons with the team, including the 2017 Frisco Bowl loss -- a contract extension.

Xavier Jones had a pair of rushing touchdowns for SMU. James Proche, who entered as the NCAA's active career leader in receptions and receiving yards, had nine catches -- giving him 301 for his career -- for 86 yards and a score for the Mustangs.

"We've got to give Florida Atlantic credit," Dykes said. "Their guys played really hard. Really fast."

Kiffin tweeted congratulations to his former team near the end of the game. "This was awesome!! 11 wins again so proud of you guys and the coaches!!" he wrote.

Now Spencer cedes control of the Owls to Willie Taggart, most recently the Florida State coach who was fired there midseason and hired at FAU earlier this month as Kiffin's replacement. Taggart was at the game Saturday, evaluating.

"This is a football team that loves to compete and you can tell it's a team that's really close to one another," Taggart said.

**THE TAKEAWAY**

SMU: This was a breakout year for the Mustangs. They were ranked for the first time since 1986, had double-digit wins for the first time since 1984, were 8-0 for the first time since 1982 and set a slew of school records -- including points (544) and points per game (41.8), sacks (50) and rushing touchdowns (35).

Florida Atlantic: The Owls played without All-America tight end Harrison Bryant, who wasn't expected to participate and had been ill in recent days anyway. They were also without three starters -- top receivers Deangelo Antoine and Tavaris Harrison, along with middle linebacker Akileis Leroy, all suspended for academic reasons. Taggart said for the Owls to endure those losses, combined with a coaching change, "says a lot about this football team."

**POLL IMPLICATIONS**

SMU had the 26th-most points in the most recent AP Top 25 poll, so the Mustangs would have had a chance at being in the season's final poll for the first time since 1984. FAU was 29th in the last regular-season poll, and now will see if 11 wins is enough to make its first trip to the Top 25.

<b>Final</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>SMU</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>FAU</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>52</b>

**Scoring Summary -----**

	SMU	FAU
<b>FIRST QUARTER</b>		
FAU TD 3:11		
BJ Emmons 1 Yd Run (Vladimir Rivas Kick)	0	7
13 plays, 74 yards, 3:17		
<b>SECOND QUARTER</b>		
SMU TD 14:05		
Xavier Jones 1 Yd Run (Kevin Robledo Kick)	7	7
6 plays, 29 yards, 1:04		
FAU TD 7:48		
James Charles 1 Yd Run (Vladimir Rivas Kick)	7	14
7 plays, 57 yards, 2:07		
SMU TD 2:12		
Xavier Jones 1 Yd Run (Kevin Robledo Kick)	14	14
14 plays, 55 yards, 5:36		
FAU TD 1:00		
James Charles 15 Yd Run (Vladimir Rivas Kick)	14	21
7 plays, 75 yards, 1:12		
FAU TD 0:36		
Brandon Robison 13 Yd pass from Chris Robison (Vladimir Rivas Kick)	14	28
1 play, 13 yards, 0:06		
<b>THIRD QUARTER</b>		
FAU TD 6:23		
John Raine 18 Yd pass from Chris Robison (Vladimir Rivas Kick)	14	35
6 plays, 71 yards, 2:09		
FAU TD 4:05		
Rashad Smith 34 Yd Fumble Return (Vladimir Rivas Kick)	14	42
6 plays, 12 yards, 2:18		
<b>FOURTH QUARTER</b>		
FAU FG 13:09		
Vladimir Rivas 38 Yd Field Goal	14	45
8 plays, 41 yards, 3:02		
SMU TD 10:08		
Ryan Becker 2 Yd pass from Ke'Mon Freeman (Kevin Robledo Kick)	21	45
7 plays, 75 yards, 3:01		
FAU TD 3:17		
Javion Posey 23 Yd pass from Nick Tronti (Vladimir Rivas Kick)	21	52
11 plays, 75 yards, 6:51		
SMU TD 1:07		
James Proche 22 Yd pass from Shane Buechele (Kevin Robledo Kick)	28	52
7 plays, 77 yards, 2:10		

Team Stats	SMU	FAU
First Downs	24	30
Passes for First	16	17
Rushes for First	5	10
Penalties for First	3	3
Third Down Efficiency	6-16	5-15
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-1	2-2
Total Yards	425	521
Total Plays	84	83
Avg Gain Per Play	5.1	6.3
Net Yards Rushing	120	188
Rushes	34	44
Yards Per Rush	3.5	4.3
Stat Name		
Net Yards Passing	305	333
Comp-Att	28-50	29-39
Yards Per Pass	6.1	8.5
Times Sacked	0	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	0	-3
Interceptions	1	0
Punts	8	5
Punt Average	38.0	48.0
Penalties	9	5
Penalty Yards	55	39
Fumbles	2	1
Fumbles Lost	1	1
Possession	28:56	31:04

**Individual Stats**

**RUSHING**

	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
<b>SMU</b>					
Ke'Mon Freeman	15	52	3.5	0	14
Xavier Jones	12	27	2.3	2	7
Tyler Lavine	3	26	8.7	0	16
Ulysses Bentley IV	2	17	8.5	0	12
Shane Buechele	1	0	0.0	0	0
TJ McDaniel	1	-2	-2.0	0	0
<b>FAU</b>					
BJ Emmons	17	72	4.2	1	14
James Charles	9	54	6.0	2	18
Chris Robison	8	28	3.5	0	11
Kelvin Dean Jr.	4	16	4.0	0	17
Nick Tronti	4	14	3.5	0	6
Daniel Leconte	2	4	2.0	0	2

**PASSING**

	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
<b>SMU</b>							
Shane Buechele	27	47	303	6.4	1	1	52.6
Ke'Mon Freeman	1	1	2	2.0	1	0	99.2
Team	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	--
James Proche	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	1.9
<b>FAU</b>							
Chris Robison	27	37	305	8.2	2	0	85.3
Nick Tronti	2	2	28	14.0	1	0	94.9

**RECEIVING**

	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
<b>SMU</b>					
Kylen Granson	7	93	13.3	0	28
James Proche	9	86	9.6	1	22
Rashee Rice	1	42	42.0	0	42
Myron Gailliard	4	40	10.0	0	16
CJ Sanders	4	36	9.0	0	15
Xavier Jones	1	5	5.0	0	5
Ryan Becker	1	2	2.0	1	2
Tyler Lavine	1	1	1.0	0	1
<b>FAU</b>					
Brandon Robison	5	78	15.6	1	26
John Raine	7	73	10.4	1	18
James Brunson	3	60	20.0	0	29
Willie Wright	8	59	7.4	0	20
John Mitchell	3	27	9.0	0	12
Javion Posey	1	23	23.0	1	23
BJ Emmons	2	13	6.5	0	11