

Starkel makes first start, leads Arkansas over Colorado St.

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. -- Nearly two years and one team ago. That was the last time Nick Starkel started a college football game at quarterback. It won't be that long again. Starkel, in his first start in an Arkansas uniform, led the Razorbacks on two fourth-quarter touchdown drives, breaking a 34-all tie and sending Arkansas to a 55-34 win over Colorado State on Saturday.

The Razorbacks (2-1) earned their first victory over an FBS opponent this season and only the second in coach Chad Morris' 15 games dating back to last year. Those 15 games were all more recent than Starkel's last nod to begin a game. The transfer from Texas A&M threw for 499 yards and four touchdowns in the Aggies' 2017 Belk Bowl loss to Wake Forest. That performance was followed by the loss of his starting job to Kellen Mond the next year. He then transferred to Arkansas in spring 2019.

"It felt great to start, finally be out there for the first snap. Definitely helps my confidence," Starkel said after his 305-yard, three-touchdown game against Colorado State.

He was named Arkansas' starter Monday after entering and playing well in the second half of the Razorbacks' loss to Ole Miss last Saturday. Starkel rewarded Morris' faith by going 20 for 35. After the game, though, he deferred praise to his youthful teammates, chiefly his two freshman wide receivers, Trey Knox and Treylon Burks.

Burks had 92 yards receiving on four catches. Knox had 90 yards on six grabs, including an impressive catch on a jump ball for a touchdown in the first quarter.

"I told them before the season, the SEC doesn't care how old you are," Starkel said. "There is no age restriction in the SEC. They're freshmen; they can make plays just like everyone else can."

Starkel was cool in the fourth quarter with the game tied. He completed three straight passes for 12, 17 and 20 yards on the go-ahead drive before Devwah Whaley's 5-yard touchdown run capped it for a 41-34 lead. He then threw a 62-yard touchdown to Cheyenne O'Grady on the ensuing series.

"I thought Nick did a great job. I really did. He had prepared himself very well. I thought his comfort level grew as the game went," Morris said.

Colorado State (1-2) rallied from a 14-point, first half deficit and tied it at 34 when back-up quarterback Patrick O'Brien scrambled and found Dante Wright for a 75-yard touchdown pass near the end of the third quarter. O'Brien entered for starter Collin Hill during the Rams' first drive of the second half when it appeared Hill, who has twice suffered a torn ACL in his left knee, tweaked his leg. "Losing Collin Hill was a big blow," Colorado State coach Mike Bobo said. "We'll get an MRI out on his knee tomorrow. After he went out, we couldn't really function as an offense and we've got to fix that."

Colorado State's best offensive weapon was running back Marvin Kinsey Jr. The senior had a career-high 180 yards on 20 carries. He scored on a 75-yard scamper on the second play of the game. Arkansas scored on its first five drives, including two touchdown passes by Starkel. The Razorbacks capped the scoring when LaDarius Bishop picked up a Kinsey fumble and hauled it 25 yards to the end zone with 3:31 left in the game.

Morris was happy about his team's ability to overcome late, something Arkansas had not done once in his tenure. The Razorbacks squandered an 18-point lead in the second half of a loss against Colorado State in 2018.

"Our guys weren't going to let this happen again," Morris said. "They were certain we were going to go win this thing in the fourth quarter."

THE TAKEAWAY

Colorado State: The Rams' offense continued to prove its worth after scoring 31 and 38 points in its first two games, but the 522 yards allowed were the most given up on the season.

Arkansas: The Razorbacks' 24 first-quarter points were the most it has scored in Chad Morris' tenure as head coach. The 522 yards of total offense were the team's best mark under Morris. Already on his fifth quarterback, he may have finally found his man.

HE SAID IT

More than 50 players on Arkansas' roster are freshmen or sophomores. Morris was glad to see them respond under pressure: "Response was it. We did that several times today. We had to. Our back was against the wall. We responded and we finished. That was the next thing. I thought you saw some youth making some plays out there."

A PERMANENT GIG

Morris had played at least two quarterbacks in a majority of his previous 14 games coaching Arkansas. Saturday marked the first time in 2019 he had not. Starkel responded with the most passing yards and second most completions of any of the previous four quarterbacks Morris had played with regularly.

BACK IN THE FOLD

Whaley has played most of the last two seasons as the No. 2 to Boyd at running back. Ideally, Morris has said, the two would be a 1A and 1B. Whaley's showing Saturday (81 yards and a touchdown on nine carries) was his best since losing the starting job to Boyd after the Colorado State game last year.

THE BEAST IS BACK

O'Grady, a senior tight end, didn't play in the first quarter and missed part of the week's practice battling strep throat. But he shed five Colorado State tacklers, each one with at least a touch and three with a wrap-up, on his fourth-quarter touchdown.

PLAY OF THE GAME

O'Grady's score was the back-breaker. Colorado State was only down a touchdown when it happened with 5:32 left. The dejected feeling carried over into the next drive when the Rams fumbled and the Razorbacks scored on the recovery.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
CSU	14	10	10	0	34
ARK	24	3	7	21	55

Scoring Summary

	CSU	ARK					
FIRST QUARTER							
CSU TD 14:42 Marvin Kinsey Jr. 75 Yd Run (Cayden Camper Kick)		7					
2 plays, 75 yards, 0:18	7	0					
ARK TD 13:00 Trey Knox 24 Yd pass from Nick Starkel (Connor Limpert Kick)		7					
5 plays, 75 yards, 1:42	7	7					
ARK TD 7:54 Chase Harrell 14 Yd pass from Nick Starkel (Connor Limpert Kick)		7					
11 plays, 82 yards, 3:34	7	14					
ARK TD 5:59 Rakeem Boyd 59 Yd Run (Connor Limpert Kick)		7					
2 plays, 75 yards, 0:20	7	21					
CSU TD 3:27 Warren Jackson 14 Yd pass from Collin Hill (Cayden Camper Kick)		7					
5 plays, 75 yards, 2:32	14	21					
ARK FG 1:02 Connor Limpert 54 Yd Field Goal		24					
6 plays, 28 yards, 2:25	14	24					
SECOND QUARTER							
ARK FG 11:41 Connor Limpert 22 Yd Field Goal		14					
9 plays, 34 yards, 3:13	14	27					
CSU TD 7:31 Collin Hill 1 Yd Run (Cayden Camper Kick)		27					
5 plays, 40 yards, 1:55	21	27					
CSU FG 0:04 Cayden Camper 46 Yd Field Goal		24					
10 plays, 52 yards, 2:37	24	27					
THIRD QUARTER							
ARK TD 13:07 Rakeem Boyd 4 Yd Run (Connor Limpert Kick)		24					
8 plays, 75 yards, 1:53	24	34					
CSU FG 5:45 Cayden Camper 21 Yd Field Goal		27					
15 plays, 72 yards, 7:22	27	34					
CSU TD 2:26 Dante Wright 75 Yd pass from Patrick O'Brien (Cayden Camper Kick)		34					
3 plays, 72 yards, 1:44	34	34					
FOURTH QUARTER							
ARK TD 8:52 Devwah Whaley 5 Yd Run (Connor Limpert Kick)		34					
9 plays, 68 yards, 2:43	34	41					
ARK TD 5:32 Cheyenne O'Grady 62 Yd pass from Nick Starkel (Connor Limpert Kick)		34					
4 plays, 74 yards, 2:10	34	48					
ARK TD 3:31 LaDarius Bishop 25 Yd Fumble Return (Connor Limpert Kick)		34					
5 plays, 0 yards, 2:01	34	55					
Team Stats							
CSU	ARK						
First Downs	18	23					
Passes for First	6	13					
Rushes for First	10	8					
Penalties for First	2	2					
Third Down Efficiency	4-14	6-12					
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	0-0					
Total Yards	425	520					
Total Plays	71	70					
Avg Gain Per Play	6.0	7.4					
Net Yards Rushing	220	215					
Rushes	38	35					
Yards Per Rush	5.8	6.1					
Net Yards Passing	205	305					
Comp-Att	20-33	20-35					
Yards Per Pass	6.2	8.7					
Times Sacked	1	3					
Yds Lost To Sacks	-4	-25					
Interceptions	0	0					
Punts	6	4					
Punt Average	0.0	0.0					
Penalties	4	5					
Penalty Yards	51	49					
Fumbles	2	2					
Fumbles Lost	2	1					
Time of Poss	33:56	26:04					
Individual Stats							
RUSHING							
COLORADO ST	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Marvin Kinsey Jr.	20	180	9.0	1	75		
Marcus McElroy	6	48	8.0	0	34		
Dante Wright	2	5	2.5	0	4		
Jaylen Thomas	2	2	1.0	0	2		
Collin Hill	2	-7	-3.5	1	1		
Patrick O'Brien	6	-8	-1.3	0	4		
ARKANSAS	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Rakeem Boyd	20	122	6.1	2	59		
Devwah Whaley	9	81	9.0	1	25		
Chase Hayden	2	17	8.5	0	15		
De'Vion Warren	1	2	2.0	0	2		
Team	2	-3	-1.5	0	0		
Nick Starkel	1	-4	-4.0	0	0		
PASSING							
COLORADO ST	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Patrick O'Brien	7	10	106	10.6	1	0	57.0
Collin Hill	13	23	99	4.3	1	0	59.9
ARKANSAS	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Nick Starkel	20	35	305	8.7	3	0	78.6
RECEIVING							
COLORADO ST	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Dante Wright	4	97	24.3	1	75		
Warren Jackson	4	53	13.3	1	19		
Trey McBride	3	22	7.3	0	10		
EJ Scott	1	8	8.0	0	8		
Cameron Butler	2	8	4.0	0	7		
Marcus McElroy	1	7	7.0	0	7		
Adam Prentice	2	7	3.5	0	5		
Marvin Kinsey Jr.	3	3	1.0	0	7		
ARKANSAS	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Treylon Burks	4	92	23.0	0	38		
Trey Knox	6	90	15.0	1	24		
Cheyenne O'Grady	3	74	24.7	1	62		
Chase Harrell	1	14	14.0	1	14		
Chase Hayden	2	12	6.0	0	6		
Mike Woods	2	10	5.0	0	6		
Tyson Morris	1	9	9.0	0	9		
De'Vion Warren	1	4	4.0	0	4		