

WEEK FOUR  
UTAH at USC

Backup QB Fink shines as USC stuns No. 10 Utah

LOS ANGELES -- Matt Fink decided to stay at Southern California even after finishing third in the Trojans' four-man quarterback competition in training camp last month. A few weeks later, Fink found himself passing for 351 yards, leading a victory over No. 10 Utah at the roaring Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, and sitting between Reggie Bush and Matt Leinart for a postgame interview on national television. Fink didn't give up on his USC dream, and the Trojans are grateful they had such a talented backup to their backup.

EDITOR'S PICKS

Another QB blow for USC as Slovis takes hard hit  
Michael Pittman Jr. caught 10 passes for a career-high 232 yards and a touchdown from Fink in USC's 30-23 victory over the Utes on Friday night.

Fink went 21-of-30 with three touchdown passes for USC (3-1, 2-0 Pac-12) after taking over when freshman Kedon Slovis left with a possible concussion on the second play of the game. Fink mostly looked sharp as the third quarterback to play important snaps in four games for the Trojans, who lost starter JT Daniels to a season-ending knee injury in their opener.

"I don't think this moment was too big for me," Fink said. "I've been in the era of Sam Darnold, and I've seen things that are much crazier. Getting in today and showing what I can do is what I really wanted to do by staying here."

After barely playing the past two seasons, Fink nearly went to Illinois as a graduate transfer last spring. The Los Angeles-area native instead decided to stay home and wait for a chance, however remote.

"In a world where everybody goes different places, this one stayed for his family, waiting for his moment, waiting for his memory," USC coach Clay Helton said. "And what a memory it was tonight. When his number was called, he made the most of it tonight."

Tyler Vaughns, Amon-Ra St. Brown and Pittman all caught TD passes from Fink, while Pittman had the fifth-biggest receiving yardage game in USC history. His remarkable 42-yard catch in the fourth quarter eventually led to a 4-yard TD run by Markese Stepp, who celebrated by handing the ball to Bush, the Trojans great attending the game as a broadcaster despite his NCAA-mandated disassociation from the school.

Devonta'e Henry-Cole rushed for an early touchdown and Cole Fotheringham caught a TD pass for the Utes (3-1, 0-1), who struggled after star running back Zack Moss left in the first half with an apparent shoulder injury. Utah still has never won at the 96-year-old Coliseum.

Tyler Huntley passed for 210 yards and ran for 60 more, but the Utes committed 16 penalties for 120 yards and struggled to get key defensive stops against a green Trojans quarterback and his stellar receivers.

"Mostly we had no answer for their receiving corps," Utah coach Kyle Whittingham said. "Michael Pittman did a number on us. We just didn't do a good enough job on him. We've got to rethink some things coachingwise."

With Bush and Urban Meyer watching at the Coliseum as part of Fox Sports' broadcast crew, USC's roller-coaster season went on the upswing again after last week's embarrassing overtime loss at BYU. Slovis had played two encouraging games as the starter after replacing Daniels, but he couldn't continue after 335-pound Utah defensive tackle Leki Fotu landed on him. Helton said Slovis "got dinged," and the USC medical staff held him out.

Fink jumped into USC's Air Raid offense and completed eight of his first nine throws during two game-opening touchdown drives in which he relied heavily on his receivers' playmaking abilities.

Pittman then scored on a brilliant 77-yard catch early in the third quarter, snatching a long pass away from defenders and fending them off on his run.

UTES UPSET

Utah's mistakes weren't limited to penalties. USC blocked a field goal attempt, and the Utes also fumbled near the USC goal line 16 seconds before halftime, when they trailed 14-10 despite racking up 284 yards and controlling the ball for more than 20 minutes.

"We were supposed to take advantage of our chances in the red zone," said Huntley, who took his first two sacks of the season. "We all know the plays were there. We just had to make them."

BIG D

USC's defense came up big in the second half. Isaiah Pola-Mao's third-down sack from the USC 1 forced Utah to kick a field goal, and Trojans freshman sensation Drake Jackson then got hold of Huntley in the end zone and forced intentional grounding for a safety with 8 minutes, 51 seconds to play.

REGGIE RETURNS

Fans around the Fox Sports broadcast stage let loose several chants of "Reggie! Reggie!" for Bush. The retired tailback is still formally disassociated from USC under terms of the NCAA ruling against the school in 2010, but he remains wildly popular among USC fans and current players whose first Trojans memories include Bush's feats. Meyer is on top of many USC fans' lists of coaches to replace Helton, but the embattled incumbent is off to a fairly strong start.

THE TAKEAWAY

Utah: Losing Moss is an enormous blow to any offense, and his long-term health could determine the Utes' chances for a run at a second consecutive appearance in the Pac-12 title game. Utah's inability to finish drives only gets worse with Moss sidelined, and while Huntley's valiant effort might win future games, it wasn't enough against the Trojans.

USC: Another quarterback injury wasn't enough to slow down the Trojans, even against a solid Utah defense that essentially wiped out their running game. Fink did enough to win, and USC's defense made several big plays. USC is somehow 3-1 after four games of an extremely difficult six-game start to the season, with Helton finding yet another way to fend off the doubters for another week.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
UTAH	7	3	7	6	23
USC	14	0	7	9	30

Scoring Summary -----

	UTAH	USC
<b>FIRST QUARTER</b>		
USC TD 12:57 Tyler Vaughns 29 Yd pass from Matt Fink (Chase McGrath Kick)		7
7 plays, 81 yards, 2:03	0	7
UTAH TD 10:39 Devonta'e Henry-Cole 17 Yd Run (Jadon Redding Kick)	7	
5 plays, 75 yards, 2:18	7	7
USC TD 8:11 Amon-Ra St. Brown 31 Yd pass from Matt Fink (Chase McGrath Kick)		14
5 plays, 74 yards, 2:28	7	14
<b>SECOND QUARTER</b>		
UTAH FG 6:44 Jadon Redding 38 Yd Field Goal		14
8 plays, 60 yards, 3:59	10	14
<b>THIRD QUARTER</b>		
USC TD 9:54 Michael Pittman Jr. 77 Yd pass from Matt Fink (Chase McGrath Kick)		21
6 plays, 90 yards, 2:01	10	21
UTAH TD 3:47 Cole Fotheringham 2 Yd pass from Tyler Huntley (Jadon Redding Kick)		21
3 plays, 7 yards, 1:25	17	21
<b>FOURTH QUARTER</b>		
UTAH FG 11:57 Jadon Redding 24 Yd Field Goal		21
10 plays, 62 yards, 5:09	20	21
USC SF 8:51 Team Safety		23
2 plays, -6 yards, 1:03	20	23
USC TD 6:58 Markese Stepp 4 Yd Run (Chase McGrath Kick)		30
5 plays, 69 yards, 1:53	20	30
UTAH FG 4:01 Jadon Redding 38 Yd Field Goal		30
9 plays, 51 yards, 2:57	23	30

Team Stats	UTAH	USC
First Downs	27	16
Passes for First	9	12
Rushes for First	12	2
Penalties for First	6	2
Third Down Efficiency	5-13	5-10
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	0-0
Total Yards	457	381
Total Plays	79	54
Avg Gain Per Play	5.8	7.1
Net Yards Rushing	247	13
Rushes	49	22
Yards Per Rush	5.0	0.6
Net Yards Passing	210	368
Comp-Att	22-30	23-32
Yards Per Pass	7.0	11.5
Times Sacked	2	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	-13	-7
Interceptions	0	1
Punts	2	4
Punt Average	35.0	42.3
Penalties	16	11
Penalty Yards	120	117
Fumbles	1	1
Fumbles Lost	1	1
Time of Poss	38:12	21:48

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
UTAH	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Devin Brumfield	10	63	6.3	0	30		
Tyler Huntley	18	60	3.3	0	14		
Devonta'e Henry-Cole	4	31	7.8	1	17		
Jaylen Dixon	4	30	7.5	0	14		
Derrick Vickers	4	26	6.5	0	9		
Zack Moss	6	20	3.3	0	8		
Britain Covey	2	13	6.5	0	9		
Jordan Wilmore	1	4	4.0	0	4		
USC	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Vavae Malepeai	11	39	3.5	0	10		
Markese Stepp	3	11	3.7	1	4		
Matt Fink	2	-6	-3.0	0	1		
Team	3	-15	-5.0	0	0		
Stephen Carr	3	-16	-5.3	0	3		
PASSING							
UTAH	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Tyler Huntley	22	30	210	7.0	1	0	47.9
USC	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Matt Fink	21	30	351	11.7	3	1	87.4
Kedon Slovis	2	2	17	8.5	0	0	76.6
RECEIVING							
UTAH	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Jaylen Dixon	1	38	38.0	0	38		
Derrick Vickers	3	38	12.7	0	26		
Bryan Thompson	3	28	9.3	0	16		
Devin Brumfield	4	28	7.0	0	13		
Cole Fotheringham	3	23	7.7	1	16		
Demari Simpkins	2	20	10.0	0	10		
Brant Kuithe	2	20	10.0	0	12		
Devonta'e Henry-Cole	1	8	8.0	0	8		
Britain Covey	3	7	2.3	0	5		
USC	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Michael Pittman Jr.	10	232	23.2	1	77		
Amon-Ra St. Brown	5	68	13.6	1	31		
Tyler Vaughns	4	49	12.3	1	29		
Josh Faló	1	12	12.0	0	12		
Stephen Carr	2	7	3.5	0	4		
Vavae Malepeai	1	0	0.0	0	0		