

WEEK NINE
SMU at HOUSTON

Buechele, Jones lead No. 16 SMU past Houston, 34-31

HOUSTON -- SMU coach Sonny Dykes conceded that the Mustangs did not play well and still managed to escape with a win.

Shane Buechele threw for 203 yards and two touchdowns, Xavier Jones ran for 133 yards and two touchdowns and No. 16 SMU held off Houston 34-31 Thursday night.

"It was a struggle for most of the night," Dykes said. "We didn't do a good job running the ball in the second half, didn't really have the ball in the second half. We had a couple short fields and made strange things happen, but again, any time you cannot play well and win on the road, especially on a short week . I got to give our guys a lot of credit."

Buechele was 20 of 38. James Proche caught seven passes for 83 yards and a touchdown, and Kylen Grayson had six receptions for 76 yards and a touchdown for SMU (8-0, 4-0 American).

SMU improved to 8-0 for the first time since starting 10-0 in 1982, and improved to 4-0 in conference play for the first time since 1986.

"It wasn't our best performance really on either side of the ball," Dykes said. "We made some uncharacteristic mistakes. We haven't given up big plays like that on defense. We've executed at a much higher level offensively up to this point than we did tonight."

Jones had a career-long 62-yard rushing touchdown with 10:41 left in the second quarter and added a 2-yard scoring run 47 seconds into the second half after

SMU forced a Houston fumble and Richard McBryde recovered it.

"We've been preaching all week `It might be ugly; it might be pretty, but we wanted to come down here and be 1-0'," Jones said. "We got the job done. It was an ugly game, but I'm proud of my team and how we fought."

Houston's Clayton Tune finished 18 of 35 for a career-high 407 yards and two touchdowns. Mulbah Car rushed for 136 yards on 18 carries. Marquez Stevenson had five catches for 211 yards and two touchdowns, including a 75-yard score.

"We're that close, and we've been that close for a while," Tune said. "We just got to break through and make those plays to win the game. It's very frustrating."

Bryson Smith added a 1-yard TD run to start the second quarter.

Houston (3-5, 1-3) outgained SMU, 510-385 yards.

"We refused to quit," Houston coach Dana Holgorsen said. "We refused to give up. We refused to not play with effort. . It (stinks) we are 3-5 with five close losses to five really good teams."

Houston closed to 34-31 on a 96-yard touchdown pass from Tune to Stevenson and added a 2-point conversion with 4:47 left. After Houston forced an SMU punt, the Mustangs forced a turnover on downs at the Houston 45. Houston forced another SMU punt, but Tune was sacked at midfield to end the game.

POLL IMPLICATIONS

SMU should maintain its position in the poll following the win over Houston.

ROBINSON EJECTED FOR TARGETING

SMU's Delano Robinson was ejected for targeting late in the first quarter after hitting Christian Trahan after Trahan missed Tune's pass. Robinson was called for unnecessary roughness with targeting and the play was confirmed after review.

THE TAKEAWAY

SMU: SMU kept its hopes of playing in a New Years' Six bowl alive. The Mustangs took advantage of Houston's three turnovers, converting them into 14 points. SMU had seven sacks for 51 yards and 13 tackles for loss.

"We just never really got into a rhythm," Dykes said. "We grinded it out. We got the ball in end zone enough. Defensively, they created a ton of turnovers, gave the offense short fields."

Houston: The Cougars played well defensively, but committed three turnovers and 11 penalties for 129 yards. Houston had 22 first downs and had the ball for almost 32 minutes, but also had issues holding on to the ball, with five fumbles, losing the ball twice.

"We lost the turnover battle 3-1," Holgorsen said. "I can deal with that if they weren't bad turnovers. Two of them were bad turnovers. The second thing is that -- what is it three times -- we got into the red zone and had to kick field goals. That's not a winning performance either."

Final	1	2	3	4	T
SMU	7	14	10	3	34
HOU	0	13	7	11	31

Scoring Summary -----

	SMU	HOU
FIRST QUARTER		
SMU TD 1:33 James Proche 15 Yd pass from Shane Buechele (Kevin Robledo Kick)		
7 plays, 85 yards, 2:03	7	0
SECOND QUARTER		
HOU TD 14:28 Bryson Smith 1 Yd Run (Dalton Witherspoon Kick)		
5 plays, 88 yards, 2:05	7	7
SMU TD 10:41 Xavier Jones 62 Yd Run (Kevin Robledo Kick)		
2 plays, 83 yards, 0:29	14	7
SMU TD 8:14 Kylen Granson 11 Yd pass from Shane Buechele (Kevin Robledo Kick)		
5 plays, 32 yards, 1:03	21	7
HOU FG 1:56 Dalton Witherspoon 25 Yd Field Goal		
14 plays, 67 yards, 6:18	21	10
HOU FG 0:00 Dalton Witherspoon 34 Yd Field Goal		
5 plays, 29 yards, 1:46	21	13
THIRD QUARTER		
SMU TD 14:13 Xavier Jones 2 Yd Run (Kevin Robledo Kick)		
1 play, 2 yards, 0:04	28	13
HOU TD 14:01 Marquez Stevenson 75 Yd pass from Clayton Tune (Dalton Witherspoon Kick)		
1 play, 75 yards, 0:12	28	20
SMU FG 10:56 Kevin Robledo 23 Yd Field Goal		
7 plays, 53 yards, 3:05	31	20
FOURTH QUARTER		
HOU FG 14:10 Dalton Witherspoon 40 Yd Field Goal		
9 plays, 71 yards, 3:36	31	23
SMU FG 8:56 Kevin Robledo 33 Yd Field Goal		
6 plays, 65 yards, 2:00	34	23
HOU TD 4:47 Marquez Stevenson 96 Yd pass from Clayton Tune (Clayton Tune Pass to Christian Trahan for Two-Point Conversion)		
1 play, 96 yards, 0:12	34	31

Team Stats	SMU	HOU
First Downs	22	22
Passes for First	9	14
Rushes for First	5	5
Penalties for First	8	3
Third Down Efficiency	5-15	5-15
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	1-2
Total Yards	385	510
Total Plays	72	75
Avg Gain Per Play	5.3	6.8
Net Yards Rushing	182	103
Rushes	34	40
Yards Per Rush	5.4	2.6
Net Yards Passing	203	407
Comp-Att	20-38	18-35
Yards Per Pass	5.3	11.6
Times Sacked	2	7
Yds Lost To Sacks	-12	-51
Interceptions	1	1
Punts	7	5
Punt Average	40.1	46.4
Penalties	9	11
Penalty Yards	86	129
Fumbles	0	5
Fumbles Lost	0	2
Time of Poss	28:17	31:43

Individual Stats

RUSHING

SMU	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Xavier Jones	22	133	6.0	2	62
Ke'Mon Freeman	6	47	7.8	0	46
Reggie Roberson Jr.	1	6	6.0	0	6
James Proche	1	2	2.0	0	2
Shane Buechele	4	-6	-1.5	0	4
HOUSTON	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Mulbah Car	18	136	7.6	0	44
Kyle Porter	8	31	3.9	0	8
Donavan Mutin	1	12	12.0	0	12
Bryson Smith	3	-7	-2.3	1	1
Marquez Stevenson	1	-10	-10.0	0	0
Clayton Tune	9	-59	-6.6	0	2

PASSING

SMU	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Shane Buechele	20	38	203	5.3	2	1	40.1
HOUSTON	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Clayton Tune	18	33	407	12.3	2	1	32.3

RECEIVING

SMU	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
James Proche	7	83	11.9	1	52
Kylen Granson	6	76	12.7	1	33
Rashee Rice	3	16	5.3	0	10
Ke'Mon Freeman	1	14	14.0	0	14
Reggie Roberson Jr.	1	8	8.0	0	8
Myron Gailliard	1	4	4.0	0	4
Xavier Jones	1	2	2.0	0	2
HOUSTON	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Marquez Stevenson	5	211	42.2	2	96
Christian Trahan	3	71	23.7	0	31
Jeremy Singleton	4	54	13.5	0	37
Courtney Lark	3	39	13.0	0	15
Tre'von Bradley	2	37	18.5	0	22
Mulbah Car	1	-5	-5.0	0	0