

WEEK ONE  
UTAH at BYU

Moss runs for TD, No. 14 Utah beats BYU 30-12 in opener

PROVO, Utah -- Utah's defense picked up where it left off last season. BYU paid a steep price for it. The No. 14 Utes scored three touchdowns off three BYU turnovers to pull away for a 30-12 victory on Thursday night in the opener for both teams. Utah left no doubt about how strong its defense could be this season. Over the final 30 minutes, the Cougars gained just 104 yards on 18 total plays. "We heard all the time about how they had a great offense," safety Julian Blackmon said. "They have a great team for sure, but we know that man-for-man we're the better team. So at the end of the day, we just wanted to come out and prove that."

Utah's defense did its part, and Zack Moss highlighted the offensive effort.

Moss ran for 187 yards and a touchdown to help the Utes (1-0) earn their ninth straight victory in the Holy War rivalry, which was being played for the 100th time.

The senior suffered a hand injury in fall camp and wore a protective splint after the game. It didn't seem to limit it him at all. Moss propelled the offense after halftime by gashing the Cougars for a series of big runs. He averaged 6.2 yards on 29 carries.

The defense took care of the rest.

"It was a big confidence builder for me," Moss said. "I had so many nerves coming into this game. Just getting hit a few times really hurt at first, but I was just able to start to be myself again. It was good to go out like that."

Zach Wilson totaled 208 yards on 21-of-33 passing and added 43 yards on the ground to lead BYU (0-1). Wilson also threw a pair of interceptions that Utah returned for touchdowns.

"It's hard to spot them two touchdowns on pick-sixes," BYU coach Kalani Sitake said. "That's difficult for a defense and we felt we were getting in some good positions. I'd like our guys to respond better, defensively, especially those last nine minutes."

Utah gained just 125 yards in the first half. The Utes totaled only three points on their first two drives after starting on their own 40 and the BYU 33.

With their offense sputtering before halftime, the Utes turned to their defense get some points on the board. Utah took a 9-3 lead in the second quarter when Francis Bernard stepped in front of a wobbly pass from Wilson, as he tried to avoid a sack, and returned it 58 yards, untouched, for a score.

"We just shot ourselves in the foot pretty much every drive in the first half," tight end Matt Bushman said.

Utah's offense sprang to life on the opening drive of the third quarter. Jaylen Dixon capped an 11-play, 75-yard drive with a 2-yard sprint to push the Utes' lead to 16-6. Moss gave Utah a spark with back-to-back 14-yard gains that moved the ball to the BYU 44. The Utes capitalized on two more BYU turnovers and put the Cougars away in the fourth quarter. Moss punched in a 4-yard touchdown after Mika Tafua recovered a fumble by Williams at the BYU 22. Then, Julian Blackmon returned an interception 39 yards to put Utah up 30-6 with 12:25 remaining. A lightning delay with 9:01 left in the fourth quarter suspended play for 54 minutes before the game resumed at just after midnight local time.

SPECIAL TEAMS STRUGGLES

Utah endured a rare off night on special teams. UCLA transfer Andrew Strauch went 1 of 2 on field goal attempts, making his first kick from 41 yards and then missing from 25 yards on the opening play of the fourth quarter.

Strauch also missed his first PAT attempt in the second quarter, snapping a streak of 182 consecutive made PATs by the Utes dating to 2014. It was the third-longest such streak in the nation heading into the game. Jadon Redding took over at placekicker for the remainder of the fourth quarter. "Special teams were a disappointment tonight," Utah coach Kyle Whittingham said. "We've got to be much better on special teams."

CLOUD NINE

Getting defensive scores have become a staple for Utah in rivalry games with BYU during the Utes' nine-game winning streak. Since 2011, the Utes have return six interceptions and three fumbles for touchdowns.

"That's what great defenses do," Whittingham said. "They make big plays and they score."

THE TAKEAWAY

Utah: Just like a year ago, the Utes woke up from a first-half slumber and dominated on both sides of the ball over the final 30 minutes. Utah allowed BYU to gain just 29 yards in nine plays on the Cougars' first three second-half drives. The Utes also forced back-to-back turnovers that allowed them to score 21 unanswered points and put the game out of reach.

BYU: Mistakes doomed the Cougars yet again against their archrival. BYU's defense held Utah's offense in check during the first half and gained 196 yards on offense. But three turnovers led to 20 points for the Utes and turned a close game into a blowout.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
UTAH	3	6	7	14	30
BYU	0	6	0	6	12

Scoring Summary -----

	UTAH	BYU
<b>FIRST QUARTER</b>		
UTAH FG 8:07 Andrew Strauch 41 Yd Field Goal		
9 plays, 37 yards, 4:34	3	0
<b>SECOND QUARTER</b>		
BYU FG 14:15 Jake Oldroyd 32 Yd Field Goal		
12 plays, 59 yards, 3:54	3	3
UTAH TD 10:17 Francis Bernard 58 Yd Interception Return (Andrew Strauch PAT failed)		
2 plays, 8 yards, 0:46	9	3
BYU FG 5:52 Jake Oldroyd 37 Yd Field Goal		
9 plays, 55 yards, 4:25	9	6
<b>THIRD QUARTER</b>		
UTAH TD 9:47 Jaylen Dixon 2 Yd Run (Andrew Strauch Kick)		
11 plays, 75 yards, 5:13	16	6
<b>FOURTH QUARTER</b>		
UTAH TD 12:56 Zack Moss 4 Yd Run (Jadon Redding Kick)		
3 plays, 22 yards, 1:09	23	6
UTAH TD 12:25 Julian Blackmon 39 Yd Interception Return (Jadon Redding Kick)		
2 plays, 13 yards, 0:31	30	6
BYU TD 9:19 Ty'Son Williams 10 Yd Run		
9 plays, 75 yards, 3:06	30	12

Team Stats	UTAH	BYU
First Downs	21	14
Passes for First	2	9
Rushes for First	16	5
Penalties for First	3	0
Third Down Efficiency	4-12	6-12
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	0-1
Total Yards	362	300
Total Plays	64	55
Avg Gain Per Play	5.7	5.5
Net Yards Rushing	256	92
Rushes	48	22
Yards Per Rush	5.3	4.2
Net Yards Passing	106	208
Comp-Att	13-16	21-33
Yards Per Pass	6.6	6.3
Times Sacked	0	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	0	-3
Interceptions	0	2
Punts	2	3
Punt Average	40.5	49.0
Penalties	7	7
Penalty Yards	58	63
Fumbles	0	1
Fumbles Lost	0	1
Time of Poss	35:58	24:02

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
UTAH	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Zack Moss	29	187	6.4	1	28		
Tyler Huntley	8	39	4.9	0	13		
Jaylen Dixon	2	17	8.5	1	15		
Jordan Wilmore	4	15	3.8	0	11		
Demari Simpkins	2	8	4.0	0	4		
BYU	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Ty'Son Williams	7	45	6.4	1	18		
Zach Wilson	8	43	5.4	0	26		
Aleva Hifo	2	8	4.0	0	10		
Lopini Katoa	3	3	1.0	0	6		
Jaren Hall	2	-7	-3.5	0	5		
PASSING							
UTAH	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Tyler Huntley	13	16	106	6.6	0	0	41.9
BYU	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Zach Wilson	21	33	208	6.3	0	2	22.0
RECEIVING							
UTAH	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Brant Kuithe	3	37	12.3	0	26		
Demari Simpkins	4	35	8.8	0	13		
Solomon Enis	1	12	12.0	0	12		
Jaylen Dixon	1	9	9.0	0	9		
Zack Moss	2	7	3.5	0	5		
Britain Covey	1	4	4.0	0	4		
Samson Nacua	1	2	2.0	0	2		
BYU	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Matt Bushman	6	62	10.3	0	26		
Aleva Hifo	4	40	10.0	0	13		
Micah Simon	3	35	11.7	0	13		
Gunner Romney	3	33	11.0	0	17		
Dax Milne	1	19	19.0	0	19		
Talon Shumway	2	12	6.0	0	8		
Ty'Son Williams	1	4	4.0	0	4		
Lopini Katoa	1	3	3.0	0	3		