

WEEK TEN
NEVADA at SAN DIEGO ST

Cooks, Lee lead Nevada to 17-13 win vs. No. 24 San Diego St.

SAN DIEGO -- The Nevada Wolf Pack didn't flinch against No. 24 San Diego State and came away with an impressive victory.

Wide receiver Elijah Cooks threw a 50-yard pass on a trick play to set up Devonte Lee's go-ahead, 1-yard run with 10:31 to go and the Wolf Pack beat the Aztecs 17-13 Saturday night.

The Wolf Pack surprised the Aztecs' tough defense with a reverse, with running back Toa Taua flipping the ball to Cooks, who stopped and threw a strike to Brendan O'Leary-Orange at the SDSU 5. Three plays later, Lee burst into the end zone for a 17-10 lead.

Inconsistent this season, the Wolf Pack (6-4, 3-3 Mountain West) became bowl eligible and defeated the Aztecs for the second straight season. SDSU (7-2, 4-2) struggled in its first action since jumping into The Associated Press Top 25 two weeks ago. The Aztecs, whose four-game winning streak was snapped, still lead the West Division.

"It's hard to catch this team. It's hard to get them out of position," Nevada coach Jay Norvell said. "It's hard to get behind them and so we just felt like we needed to make a play like that along the way to help get behind them. Fortunately we did."

Cooks said he was nervous when the play call came in, "but I told O.J., 'Slow down and just go and I'm going to hit you.' He did that and it worked out perfectly.

"I played quarterback growing up. My whole goal coming up when I was a little kid was I wanted to throw at least one pass in college and I did that," Cooks added. "I'm really hyped about that. That was fun."

Redshirt freshman quarterback Carson Strong was impressed with Cooks' pass.

"That was a better pass than people think because he led him to the grass area where the defense wasn't at and it was a beautiful ball. Put a nice touch on it, let O.J. run under it, that was a really great throw."

The Wolf Pack's go-ahead score came after SDSU converted on a daring fourth-down play that was nullified by a holding call. Coach Rocky Long went for it on fourth-and-1 from his 17 and Chase Jasmin converted, but Jacob Capra was called for holding, forcing the Aztecs to punt.

SDSU's Matt Araiza kicked a 44-yard field goal with 3:46 to go. The Aztecs got the ball back but the drive fizzled near midfield and they turned it over on downs with 1:25 to go.

Cooks also caught a 13-yard touchdown pass from Strong to give the Wolf Pack a 10-3 lead midway through the third quarter.

Strong, making his third straight start and seventh overall, led an impressive drive to open the second half. The drive was kept alive when Lee ran the wildcat for two yards on fourth-and-1 from the SDSU 10. After a false start, Strong found Cooks open in the end zone for the score. After a brief end zone celebration, the two ran off the field together.

The Aztecs countered with a long drive of their own to tie it on Chance Bell's 3-yard run.

Strong said the Wolf Pack "just had absolute confidence we were going to win this game. We knew a lot of people had written us off, just basically thrown us in the trash for the rest of our season, but we never believed that."

Long was disappointed with critical penalties.

"Way too many penalties. That's an undisciplined football team and that's my fault. It's amazing, the penalties had a lot to do with us losing the game. They don't always, but obviously they had a huge impact on tonight's game. Most of the penalties put us in bad field position the whole night and we didn't overcome it."

The teams played to a 3-3 halftime tie, with Brandon Talton kicking a 34-yard field goal for Nevada in the first quarter and SDSU's Araiza kicking a 21-yarder early in the second quarter.

THE TAKEAWAY

Nevada: Strong looked impressive at a position where there's been upheaval this season. He started the first three games before coach Jay Norvell tried Malik Henry and Cristian Solano before going back to Strong. Strong was coming off a 305-yard, two-touchdown performance in a 21-10 win against New Mexico.

San Diego State: The Aztecs continued to struggle to score points with their new spread offense. The Aztecs were driving inside the Nevada 15 late in the first half after Chase Jasmin leaped over the pile on fourth-and-1 for the first down. But Ryan Agnew threw an incompletion in the end zone and then was intercepted by Daniel Brown, who leaped for the pick at the 1 and returned it 22 yards.

"Obviously it's hard to win football games if we don't score, and our offense is having unbelievable struggles scoring," Long said. "I don't have the answer or I'd fix it."

POLL IMPLICATIONS

SDSU's stay in The Top 25 is likely to be short. The Aztecs jumped into the rankings at No. 25 after a close victory at UNLV two weeks ago and then moved up a spot despite being off last week.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
NEV	3	0	7	7	17
SDSU	0	3	7	3	13

Scoring Summary -----

FIRST QUARTER	NEV	SDSU
NEV FG 3:22 Brandon Talton 34 Yd Field Goal		
4 plays, 5 yards, 1:13	3	0
SECOND QUARTER	NEV	SDSU
SDSU FG 13:15 Matt Araiza 21 Yd Field Goal		
13 plays, 71 yards, 5:07	3	3
THIRD QUARTER	NEV	SDSU
NEV TD 7:12 Elijah Cooks 13 Yd pass from Carson Strong (Brandon Talton Kick)		
16 plays, 75 yards, 7:48	10	3
SDSU TD 1:24 Chance Bell 3 Yd Run (Matt Araiza Kick)		
14 plays, 71 yards, 5:40	10	10
FOURTH QUARTER	NEV	SDSU
NEV TD 10:31 Devonte Lee 1 Yd Run (Brandon Talton Kick)		
5 plays, 55 yards, 2:02	17	10
SDSU FG 3:46 Matt Araiza 44 Yd Field Goal		
11 plays, 42 yards, 4:00	17	13

Team Stats	NEV	SDSU
First Downs	12	18
Passes for First	6	9
Rushes for First	4	8
Penalties for First	2	1
Third Down Efficiency	2-12	7-18
Fourth Down Efficiency	2-2	2-3
Total Yards	226	309
Total Plays	55	74
Avg Gain Per Play	4.1	4.2
Net Yards Rushing	29	113
Rushes	28	39
Yards Per Rush	1.0	2.9
Net Yards Passing	197	196
Comp-Att	20-27	18-35
Yards Per Pass	7.3	5.6
Times Sacked	2	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	-14	-15
Interceptions	1	1
Punts	6	6
Punt Average	40.7	51.2
Penalties	4	9
Penalty Yards	28	79
Fumbles	0	0
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Time of Poss	27:41	32:19

Individual Stats

RUSHING

NEVADA	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Toa Taua	12	19	1.6	0	6
Devonte Lee	10	13	1.3	1	11
Carson Strong	4	0	0.0	0	11
Team	2	-3	-1.5	0	0
SAN DIEGO ST	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Chance Bell	11	40	3.6	1	10
Chase Jasmin	9	34	3.8	0	10
Ryan Agnew	6	18	3.0	0	19
Juwan Washington	12	18	1.5	0	7
Kaegun Williams	1	3	3.0	0	3

PASSING

NEVADA	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Carson Strong	19	26	147	5.7	1	1	44.2
Elijah Cooks	1	1	50	50.0	0	0	100.0
SAN DIEGO ST	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Ryan Agnew	18	35	196	5.6	0	1	25.8

RECEIVING

NEVADA	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Brendan O'Leary-Orange	1	50	50.0	0	50
Romeo Doubs	3	42	14.0	0	19
Kaleb Fossum	1	30	30.0	0	30
Ben Putman	4	23	5.8	0	9
Elijah Cooks	3	20	6.7	1	13
Toa Taua	4	18	4.5	0	9
Dominic Christian	2	8	4.0	0	6
Henry Ikahihifo	1	6	6.0	0	6
Reagan Roberson	1	0	0.0	0	0
SAN DIEGO ST	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Kobe Smith	5	40	8.0	0	12
Parker Houston	3	38	12.7	0	17
Jesse Matthews	3	32	10.7	0	18
Daniel Bellingner	1	28	28.0	0	28
Ethan Dedeaux	1	23	23.0	0	23
BJ Busbee	1	14	14.0	0	14
Isaiah Richardson	1	11	11.0	0	11
Chase Jasmin	1	8	8.0	0	8
Jordan Byrd	1	2	2.0	0	2
Juwan Washington	1	0	0.0	0	0