

WEEK TEN  
 USC at ARIZONA ST

**USC holds on to beat Arizona State 31-26**

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Christian Rector saw a receiver break free off the edge and slipped into coverage. Realizing the ball was coming his way, he stuck his hand up, tipped it to himself and made a diving interception.

With one nimble play, Southern California's 6-foot-4, 270-pound defensive lineman halted Arizona State's comeback attempt, secured the Trojans' bowl eligibility and gave coach Clay Helton a reprieve for at least one more week.

Kedon Slovis threw for 432 yards and four touchdowns, Rector made his game-clinching interception with 25 seconds left and USC held on to beat Arizona State 31-26 on Saturday.

"I like being in that position at the end of games, having our defense out there," Rector said. "Being able to get stops, we're comfortable doing that."

USC (6-4, 5-2 Pac-12) needed plenty of big stops to become bowl eligible after missing the postseason last year.

The Trojans jumped on the Sun Devils with 28 points in the first quarter behind Slovis' 297 yards and four TDs passing.

As injuries piled up and Arizona State (5-4, 2-4) found a better rhythm on both sides of the ball, USC's lead dwindled from 21 in the first quarter to five by the fourth.

Facing what would have been a disastrous collapse, the Trojans found a way to eke out a win and remain in the thick of the Pac-12 South race, a game behind No. 8 Utah.

USC's Amon-Ra St. Brown caught eight passes for 173 yards and Michael Pittman Jr. had 13 catches for 146 yards.

"I can't tell you how proud I am of our defense because it was put in a lot of bad situations today field-position wise," Helton said. "It was one of those situations where put the ball down coach, we got it and when we needed a stop at the end of the game, we got it."

Joey Yellen almost snatched it from them. Making his first career start with Jayden Daniels injured, Yellen threw two touchdown passes in the first half and hit Brandon Aiyuk on a 2-yard TD pass to open the third quarter.

Yellen then found Frank Darby on a 15-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter after an interception was negated by a USC roughing the passer penalty. Darby dropped the 2-point conversion attempt, putting the Trojans up 31-26.

Arizona State negated Khaylan Kearse-Thomas' interception return for a touchdown with defensive holding and got the ball back at its 10-yard line with 3:29 left. The Sun Devils moved quickly down the field, but Rector came up with the interception at USC's 37.

Yellen threw for 292 yards and four touchdowns with two interceptions.

"The first half we just broke down in the secondary too many times big play after big play and spotted them points," Arizona State coach Herm Edwards said. "Then we decided to rally again and we fell a little short."

Arizona State had a bye week after two ugly losses, but it didn't seem to do much good in the first quarter against USC.

An Arizona State personal foul penalty extend USC's opening drive and Slovis capped it with an 8-yard TD pass to Drake London.

Sun Devils cornerback Jack Jones then made the mistake of trying to strip the ball instead of tackling Kenan Christon, allowing him to run the final 20 yards of a 58-yard catch into the end zone for his second TD.

Arizona State also had three defensive backs collide when Slovis hit St. Brown on a 95-yard TD pass.

"I feel like just it being the start of the game, all the nerves, we come out timid and we don't let loose really until we get the feel of it, but you can't play like that," Sun Devils defensive tackle Evan Fields said.

Arizona State did play better after that, but came up short, leading to the first three-game losing streak in the Edwards' era.

**CHRISTON'S LIFT**

USC's running back corps have been plagued by injuries, which gave Christon a chance to get more touches.

He took advantage against Arizona State, accounting for 144 yards and two touchdowns.

**AIYUK'S RETURNS**

Aiyuk caught a TD pass, but had a bigger impact in the return game. The senior returned three kicks for 169 yards, including a 97-yard return in the first quarter.

USC kicked away from Aiyuk the rest of the game.

**THE TAKEAWAY**

USC dominated early and labored the rest of the way, but came away with a much-needed road win.

Yellen was solid in his debut, but the Sun Devils dug too big of a hole and made too many mistakes to complete the comeback.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
USC	28	0	3	0	31
ASU	7	6	7	6	26

**Scoring Summary -----**

	USC	ASU
<b>FIRST QUARTER</b>		
USC TD 9:56 Drake London 8 Yd pass from Kedon Slovis (Chase McGrath Kick)	7	0
11 plays, 75 yards, 5:04		
USC TD 6:14 Kenan Christon 8 Yd pass from Kedon Slovis (Chase McGrath Kick)	14	0
6 plays, 82 yards, 2:35		
ASU TD 5:12 Kyle Williams 5 Yd pass from Joey Yellen (Christian Zendejas Kick)	14	7
3 plays, 3 yards, 0:47		
USC TD 2:36 Kenan Christon 58 Yd pass from Kedon Slovis (Chase McGrath Kick)	21	7
6 plays, 75 yards, 2:36		
USC TD 0:03 Amon-Ra St. Brown 95 Yd pass from Kedon Slovis (Chase McGrath Kick)	28	7
3 plays, 98 yards, 0:51		
<b>SECOND QUARTER</b>		
ASU TD 6:47 Frank Darby 62 Yd pass from Joey Yellen (Christian Zendejas PAT failed)	28	13
3 plays, 71 yards, 1:00		
<b>THIRD QUARTER</b>		
ASU TD 11:32 Brandon Aiyuk 2 Yd pass from Joey Yellen (Christian Zendejas Kick)	28	20
7 plays, 57 yards, 3:24		
USC FG 1:18 Chase McGrath 41 Yd Field Goal	31	20
12 plays, 71 yards, 5:52		
<b>FOURTH QUARTER</b>		
ASU TD 8:54 Frank Darby 15 Yd pass from Joey Yellen (Two-Point Pass Conversion Failed)	31	26
6 plays, 40 yards, 3:05		

Team Stats	USC	ASU
First Downs	23	18
Passes for First	17	12
Rushes for First	4	3
Penalties for First	2	3
Third Down Efficiency	6-14	7-14
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	1-1
Total Yards	547	339
Total Plays	73	65
Avg Gain Per Play	7.5	5.2
Net Yards Rushing	70	47
Rushes	28	21
Yards Per Rush	2.5	2.2
Net Yards Passing	477	292
Comp-Att	33-45	28-44
Yards Per Pass	10.6	6.6
Times Sacked	1	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	-5	-5
Interceptions	1	2
Punts	5	6
Punt Average	36.2	48.7
Penalties	11	9
Penalty Yards	93	82
Fumbles	1	2
Fumbles Lost	1	1
Time of Poss	31:34	28:26

**Individual Stats**

**RUSHING**

USC	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Kenan Christon	20	62	3.1	0	11
Amon-Ra St. Brown	3	8	2.7	0	8
Kedon Slovis	3	3	1.0	0	6
Quincy Jountti	1	1	1.0	0	1
Team	1	-4	-4.0	0	0
<b>ARIZONA ST</b>					
Eno Benjamin	20	52	2.6	0	9
Joey Yellen	1	-5	-5.0	0	0

**PASSING**

USC	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Kedon Slovis	29	39	432	11.1	4	1	90.9
Matt Fink	4	6	45	7.5	0	0	56.5
<b>ARIZONA ST</b>							
Joey Yellen	28	44	292	6.6	4	2	65.4

**RECEIVING**

USC	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Amon-Ra St. Brown	8	173	21.6	1	95
Michael Pittman Jr.	13	146	11.2	0	28
Kenan Christon	4	82	20.5	2	58
Tyler Vaughns	4	39	9.8	0	23
Drake London	3	30	10.0	1	14
Erik Krommenhoek	1	7	7.0	0	7
<b>ARIZONA ST</b>					
Amon-Ra St. Brown	8	173	21.6	1	95
Michael Pittman Jr.	13	146	11.2	0	28
Kenan Christon	4	82	20.5	2	58
Tyler Vaughns	4	39	9.8	0	23
Drake London	3	30	10.0	1	14
Erik Krommenhoek	1	7	7.0	0	7