

WEEK TWO
SACRAMENTO ST at ARIZONA ST

Arizona State labors to 19-7 win over Sacramento State

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Arizona State's Eno Benjamin slipped into an open area across the middle, sprinted past a defender and into the end zone for a long fourth-quarter touchdown.

Until that big play, the Sun Devils seemed bogged down in the desert sand, unable to get out of their own way.

Struggling against an FCS opponent wasn't exactly what they had in mind for a Top 25 tuneup.

Benjamin caught a 72-yard touchdown pass in the fourth quarter, Cristian Zendejas kicked four field goals and Arizona State labored to a 19-7 win over Sacramento State on Friday night.

"We can't play offense on our heels," Arizona State coach Herm Edwards said. "That's what it looked like a lot of tonight."

Arizona State (2-0) overcame inexperience -- 25 freshmen saw action -- with a convincing 30-7 opening win against Kent State.

The Sun Devils saw Friday night's game as a chance to clean up a few things with a road game against No. 19 Michigan State next.

Instead, they had a few growing pains against the Hornets (1-1) after beating them 55-0 in the teams' only other meeting.

Arizona State's offense sputtered, plagued by off-target passes, drops and an ineffective running game against a team ranked 115th in total defense last season -- in the FCS.

"As an offense, I really didn't feel like we played to the standard we set as an offense," said Arizona State's Jayden Daniels, who threw for 304 yards and a touchdown on 17-of-27 passing.

Arizona State's defense was solid until the Hornets seemed to find something in the fourth quarter. Kevin Thomson hit Pierre Williams on a 40-yard pass, then found Tao McClinton on a 9-yard TD that pulled the Hornets within 12-7, giving themselves at least a shot at the upset.

"Our guys played hard," Sac State coach Troy Taylor said. "They hung in the game and had a chance to win it at the end. I am proud of how our guys prepared and how they competed."

Arizona State struggled before finally getting a spark early in the second quarter, when Brandon Aiyuk returned a punt 38 yards to Sac State's 9. A touchdown seemed imminent when A.J. Carter caught a pass from Daniels, but he fumbled just before crossing into the end zone and the Hornets recovered.

The Sun Devils had another good opportunity when their defense stopped Sac State on a fourth-and-1 from its own 33-yard line.

They botched that, too.

An airmailed snap on a third down forced Ethan Long to fall on the ball and Arizona State to settle for Zendejas' 36-yard field goal.

The Sun Devils led 3-0, were out-gained 131-78 and heard a few boos from the home crowd at halftime.

"I get it," Edwards said. "When you aren't playing well, they boo."

Zendejas kicked two more field goals in the third quarter, one after Frank Darby's 68-yard TD catch was wiped out Aiyuk's blindside block well away from the ball.

Aiyuk next caught a 52-yard pass to the Hornets' 5 and the Sun Devils lost a yard on three successive plays, leading to another Zendejas field goal to open the fourth quarter.

Sac State cut the lead to five before Benjamin broke off his long touchdown, giving the Sun Devils the cushion they needed.

"I've been on some games like that as a player and a coach, on the bad side of it," Edwards said. "We were on the good side of it, we won."

THE TAKEAWAY

Holding a Pac-12 team in check on the road should be a huge boost of confidence for Sac State headed into Big Sky play.

"I think what we have seen is that our team is pretty resilient," Taylor said. "If we execute, we have a chance to beat anybody."

Arizona State regressed from its opener and will need to get a lot better with a road game against 19th-ranked Michigan State up next.

THOMSON'S NIGHT

Thomson held his own against the bigger, stronger Sun Devils, throwing for 263 yards and a touchdown on 32-of-50 passing. He also had a few throws he probably would like to have back and his receivers dropped a few balls.

"He will come back from it and learn from it," Taylor said. "He has a lot of ability. It is a big stage and he will play better."

Final	1	2	3	4	T
SAC	0	0	0	7	7
ASU	0	3	6	10	19

Scoring Summary -----

SECOND QUARTER		SAC	ASU
ASU FG 1:57 Christian Zendejas 36 Yd Field Goal			
9 plays, 15 yards, 3:42	0	3	
THIRD QUARTER		SAC	ASU
ASU FG 9:15 Christian Zendejas 26 Yd Field Goal			
9 plays, 53 yards, 3:43	0	6	
ASU FG 4:57 Christian Zendejas 35 Yd Field Goal			
8 plays, 64 yards, 2:51	0	9	
FOURTH QUARTER		SAC	ASU
ASU FG 14:55 Christian Zendejas 26 Yd Field Goal			
7 plays, 60 yards, 3:02	0	12	
SAC TD 6:20 Tao McClinton 9 Yd pass from Kevin Thomson (Devon Me-deiros Kick)			12
7 plays, 72 yards, 2:42	7	12	
ASU TD 4:42 Eno Benjamin 72 Yd pass from Jayden Daniels (Christian Zendejas Kick)			19
3 plays, 75 yards, 1:38	7	19	

Team Stats	SAC	ASU
First Downs	16	15
Passes for First	9	10
Rushes for First	5	4
Penalties for First	2	1
Third Down Efficiency	4-14	5-17
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-3	1-2
Total Yards	305	395
Total Plays	73	66
Avg Gain Per Play	4.2	6.0
Net Yards Rushing	42	91
Rushes	23	39
Yards Per Rush	1.8	2.3
Net Yards Passing	263	304
Comp-Att	32-50	17-27
Yards Per Pass	5.3	11.3
Times Sacked	3	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	-19	-4
Interceptions	1	0
Punts	7	5
Punt Average	41.7	47.6
Penalties	8	4
Penalty Yards	64	60
Fumbles	4	1
Fumbles Lost	1	1
Time of Poss	30:53	29:07

Individual Stats

RUSHING

SACRAMENTO ST	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Elijah Dotson	11	32	2.9	0	8
BJ Perkinson	2	12	6.0	0	12
Team	1	0	0.0	0	0
Kevin Thomson	9	-2	-0.2	0	9
ARIZONA ST	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Eno Benjamin	24	69	2.9	0	33
Jayden Daniels	7	25	3.6	0	11
Isaiah Floyd	5	13	2.6	0	8
Ethan Long	1	1	1.0	0	1

PASSING

SACRAMENTO ST	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Kevin Thomson	32	50	263	5.3	1	1	--
ARIZONA ST	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Jayden Daniels	17	27	304	11.3	1	0	80.6

RECEIVING

SACRAMENTO ST	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Pierre Williams	6	72	12.0	0	40
Elijah Dotson	10	63	6.3	0	14
Marshel Martin	5	59	11.8	0	22
Tao McClinton	2	28	14.0	1	19
BJ Perkinson	3	13	4.3	0	8
Parker Clayton	1	10	10.0	0	10
Dewey Cotton	2	7	3.5	0	4
Isaiah Gable	2	7	3.5	0	6
Jarrell Anderson	1	4	4.0	0	4
ARIZONA ST	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Brandon Aiyuk	4	98	24.5	0	52
Eno Benjamin	4	94	23.5	1	72
Frank Darby	1	45	45.0	0	45
Kyle Williams	4	29	7.3	0	13
Nolan Matthews	1	13	13.0	0	13
A.J. Carter	1	9	9.0	0	9
Ryan Newsome	1	8	8.0	0	8
Jordan Kerley	1	8	8.0	0	8