

USC 57, ARIZONA 48

CATS SO COLD IN SOCAL



PHOTOS BY MARK J. TERRILL / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UA's Chase Jeter, left, tries to get by Onyeka Okongwu during the first half. Without Josh Green and Max Hazzard, UA's offense could never get on track in the 57-48 loss in Los Angeles.

UA, down two players, is 'inept' in ugly loss

By Bruce Pascoe
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

LOS ANGELES — Some of the faces were different, and some of them couldn't show up, but the Arizona Wildcats produced the same result at USC for the second season in a row Thursday.

That is, they couldn't shoot. Not from 3. Not often from 2. A little from the free-throw line (13 of 15), but that only accentuated the fact that Arizona scored just 35 points from the field.

In a dreary 57-48 loss to USC on Thursday at the Galen Center, the shorthanded Wildcats shot just 28.1% overall and 11.5% (3 for 26) from 3-point range, their third sub-30s performance of the season after losses to Baylor and UCLA were marred with similarly bad shooting.

"Our offense is inept," UA coach Sean Miller said.

But Baylor and UCLA prodded the Wildcats into bad shooting by pushing them around physically, more so than USC, which also held UA to 27.8% shooting at the Galen Center in their 80-57 win over Arizona last season.

Mostly, this time, the Wildcats just did it to themselves, with USC essentially playing without center Nick Rakocevic, who remained limited because of a virus that struck him during the team's losses at Colorado and Utah last week.

Arizona was without guards Josh Green (lower back sprain) and Max Hazzard (for personal reasons), forcing it to go often with a bigger lineup featuring Stone Gettings at small forward.

"It clearly hurt us, no doubt about it," Miller said. "You really feel as though we lost every ounce of depth that we have, and I thought guys who played their hearts out, played with really good effort."

"But we clearly wore down and we didn't shoot the ball well."

Green tried to practice earlier this week after sustaining a sprain to his SI joint in his lower back — UA trainer Justin Kokoskie said he

PAC-12 STANDINGS

Team	Conf.	Overall
Oregon	11-5	22-7
UCLA	11-5	18-11
Arizona State	10-5	19-9
Colorado	10-6	21-8
Arizona	9-6	19-9
USC	9-7	20-9
Stanford	8-7	19-9
California	6-9	12-16
Utah	6-10	15-13
Washington State	5-10	14-14
Oregon State	5-11	15-13
Washington	3-12	13-15

guessed it was likely the result of multiple bumps he took against Oregon last Saturday — and he will not play Saturday at UCLA after not making the trip.

"I don't really have a prognosis," Miller said. "We wanted him to stay home just because that's going to be his best bet to recover and rehab."

"There's no reason to be here when he's not going to play. We'll know more we get back to Tucson."

Miller was more vague when asked about Hazzard's status.

"I don't know," he said. "Personal. I can't really say much beyond that."

The guy who had the most relative success for Arizona was no surprise: Zeke Nnaji shot 5 for 13 from the field while fending off constant USC double teams, and he also hit 5 of 6 free throws to total 15 points and 11 rebounds, a double-double on a team that scored only 48 points.

For USC, Onyeka Okongwu had 11 points and 10 rebounds, including a 72-foot bomb just before the halftime buzzer to give the Trojans a 26-21 lead at the break.

USC's Jonah Mathews led the Trojans in scoring 14 points, after suffering a virus that struck him and Rakocevic hard last weekend.

"It was the worst sickness I've ever had," said Mathews, saying he's about 75 percent healthy now. "I'm happy to be back to normal."

Rakocevic remained limited,



USC's Isaiah Mobley, center, reaches for a rebound along with Arizona's Zeke Nnaji, left, and Chase Jeter during the first half. The Wildcats outrebounded the Trojans 36-29, but hit only 16 of 57 shots, including just 3 of 26 from 3-point range. UA is now 1.5 games behind Pac-12 leaders Oregon and UCLA with three games to go.

UP NEXT

- **Who:** Arizona (19-9, 9-6) at UCLA (18-11, 11-5)
- **When:** 8 p.m. Saturday
- **TV:** ESPN
- **Radio:** 1290-AM, 107.5-FM

going scoreless with only one rebound in 11 minutes.

"Nick had no energy," USC coach Andy Enfield said. "He tried to play and gave everything."

The loss dropped Arizona to 19-9 overall and 9-6 in the Pac-12 heading into a game Saturday at UCLA, while USC improved to 20-9 and 9-7.

UCLA beat Arizona State on a late 3-pointer Thursday and is

See WILDCATS, AB2



Arizona's Nico Mannion, right, shoots as Nick Rakocevic defends during the second half. Mannion hit only 3 of 14 shots and finished with 11 points in 37 minutes as the Wildcats stayed stuck on 19 wins.

USC 57, ARIZONA 48

Arizona	Min	M-A	M-A	Reb	A	PF	PTS
Gettings	33	2-5	0-0	2-5	2	2	4
Lee	20	2-3	2-2	1-1	1	4	6
Nnaji	33	5-13	5-6	5-11	0	1	15
Mannion	37	3-14	4-5	0-1	2	3	11
Smith	36	1-9	0-0	1-7	1	2	3
Baker	26	2-9	0-0	1-4	1	3	5
Jeter	8	1-3	2-2	0-3	0	2	4
Koloko	7	0-1	0-0	3-4	0	2	0
Totals	200	16-57	13-15	13-36	7	19	48

Percentages: FG .281, FT .867, 3-Point Goals: 3-26, .115
(Mannion 1-7, Smith 1-7, Baker 1-8, Gettings 0-1, Nnaji 0-3)
Team Rebounds: 2, Team Turnovers: None, Blocked Shots: None, Turnovers: 15 (Baker 3, Nnaji 3, Smith 3, Lee 2, Mannion 2, Gettings, Jeter), Steals: 10 (Gettings 3, Lee 2, Nnaji 2, Smith 2, Baker), Technical Fouls: None.

USC	Min	M-A	M-A	Reb	A	PF	PTS
Okongwu	34	3-7	4-4	2-10	0	2	11
Rakocevic	11	0-3	0-0	1-1	0	4	0
E.Anderson	29	3-6	1-2	0-0	2	2	7
Mathews	33	4-10	5-6	0-5	2	2	14
Utomi	34	4-9	0-0	0-3	0	1	9
Mobley	27	3-5	0-0	1-3	0	3	8
Weaver	25	3-7	1-5	0-6	3	2	8
Aghonkpolo	5	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0
Totals	200	20-47	11-17	4-29	7	16	57

Percentages: FG .426, FT .647, 3-Point Goals: 6-20, .300
(Mobley 2-2, Okongwu 1-1, Utomi 1-4, Mathews 1-5, Weaver 1-5, E.Anderson 0-3), Team Rebounds: 5, Team Turnovers: 1, Blocked Shots: 5 (Okongwu 3, Rakocevic, Utomi), Turnovers: 14 (E.Anderson 5, Mobley 3, Mathews 2, Okongwu 2, Rakocevic, Utomi), Steals: 10 (E.Anderson 4, Mobley 2, Weaver 2, Okongwu, Utomi), Technical Fouls: None.

Arizona 21 27-28
USC 26 31-57
A: 4,121. Officials: Kelly Pfeifer, John Gaffney, Verne Harris

WILDCATS

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now tied with Oregon atop the conference.

Without two key perimeter players, Miller went with a big lineup out of necessity, starting Ira Lee at power forward and moving Gettings from that spot to the small forward. Backup center Chase Jeter also received eight minutes.

The Wildcats jumped out to an early 9-2 lead with that lineup, possibly in part because that lineup was not what USC expected.

“Definitely,” Lee said. “It’s a bigger lineup — 6-9, 6-8, 6-11, that’s a really big, agile lineup. I think that helped us a lot on the board but it’s a new thing and we’re adjusting to it.”

Arizona never built a lead bigger than that seven point advantage, trailing by 16-14 with eight minutes left in the first half and by five at halftime after Okwongu launched his three-quarter court shot.

“I just saw Nico missed a shot, and I was working on (long) shots with our (graduate assistants) after practice,” Okwongu said. “So I just took a chance. Got fouled. No call, but it still went in anyways.”

In the second half, Arizona fell behind 41-32 when Daniel Utomi hit a 3-pointer with 11:55 left, though Utomi gave it back when he fouled Nico Mannion behind the 3-point line on the other end — and Mannion hit all three ensuing free throws.

Mannion later hit a 3-point-



MARK J. TERRILL / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Arizona’s Zeke Nnaji, center, shoots as USC’s Elijah Weaver, left, and Isaiah Mobley defend during the second half. Nnaji had 15 points and 11 rebounds but UA was outscored 55-39 after taking a quick 9-2 lead.

er to cut USC’s lead to 43-38 with 8:26 left and Nnaji hit a pair of free throws that brought UA within 50-46 but the Wildcats came no closer in the final minutes.

Mannion finished just 3 of 14 from the field, while he and Dylan Smith were both 1 for 7 from 3-point range. Jemarl Baker was 1

for 8 from 3 and even Nnaji, despite his usual efficiency inside, fired up three 3s and missed them all.

In the end, Lee said he didn’t think the loss of Green and Hazzard disrupted the Wildcats that much, not like last season, at least. Even if something was clearly wrong.

“We have a lot of depth,” Lee said. “It’s not like last year. We’ve got a lot of guys who could play. It was just tonight shots weren’t falling.”

“We were playing great defense. We’re getting stops. We know our scouting report. It’s just shots weren’t falling, especially from 3.”

PAC-12 ROUNDUP

Last-second 3 lifts UCLA into tie for first

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — Jaime Jarquez’s 3-pointer with .6 seconds remaining gave UCLA a 75-72 victory over Arizona State on Thursday night and put the Bruins in a share of the Pac-12 Conference lead.

Jarquez was one of five UCLA players in double figures with 13 points. The Bruins (18-11), who were 8-9 and 1-3 in the conference at one point, have won six straight and eight of their last nine to share the conference lead with Oregon at 11-5.

Jake Kyman tied a career high 21 points, with 19 coming in the first half, and Jalen Hill added 13 for the Bruins.

Tyger Campbell tied it at 72 with a free throw in the final minute but the Bruins were called for a lane violation on the second attempt. Remy Martin — who scored a game-high 30 points — missed a 3-pointer, which set the stage for Jarquez’s game-winner.

Rob Edwards added 23 for the Sun Devils (19-9, 10-5), who had their seven-game winning streak snapped.

Arizona State jumped out to a 24-14 lead before UCLA responded with 11 straight points as part of an 18-2 run. Kyman scored 14 during the rally, including three straight 3-pointers. A 3 by Edwards pulled Arizona State within 36-35 with 1:04 remaining before the Bruins scored the final five points to go up 41-35 at halftime.

UCLA extended its lead to nine with 11:44 remaining on a dunk by Hill but the Sun Devils went on a 14-4 rally to grab a 60-58 advantage three minutes later as Edwards powered the run with eight points.

The lead would change hands four times over the final eight minutes.



RINGO H.W. CHIU / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UCLA guard Jaime Jarquez Jr., second from left, celebrates with teammates after his late 3-pointer knocked ASU out of first place.

NO. 14 OREGON 69, OREGON STATE 54

EUGENE, Ore. — Payton Pritchard scored 15 of his 23 points in the second half and Oregon pulled away to win by 15.

Oregon (22-7, 11-5 Pac-12) had only a four-point halftime lead but started the second half with a 22-4 run to send the Beavers (15-13, 5-11) to their fourth consecutive defeat.

Will Richardson added 15 points for the Ducks, including 13 in the second half as he and Pritchard combined for 28 of Oregon’s 40 points after the break. Anthony Mathis finished with 13.

Ethan Thompson led Oregon State with 15 points and Tres Tinkle had 14 points and 10 rebounds. Zach Reichle scored 11 and Kaylor Kelly added 10.

Oregon led 29-25 at halftime as both teams struggled shooting. The Ducks shot 36% in the first half despite making five of 11 3-pointers, while the Beavers were at 38%.

Thompson paced the Beavers

with 13 points, including a trio of 3s, while Mathis led the Ducks with 11, also hitting three 3-pointers.

Mathis was back in the starting lineup with Chris Duarte out after undergoing a surgical procedure earlier in the day for a broken finger sustained almost a month ago.

Oregon scored the first five points of the second half for its biggest lead of the game to that point at 34-25. The lead was 10 when the Ducks went on a 9-0 spurt, aided by three OSU turnovers in a span of four possessions, for a 45-28 advantage seven minutes into the second half.

Pritchard and Richardson hit 3-pointers on consecutive Oregon possessions as the lead reached 51-29. The Beavers never got closer than the final score.

CALIFORNIA 76, NO. 21 COLORADO 62

BERKELEY, Calif. — Matt Bradley matched his career highs of 26 points and five 3-pointers, and

California pulled away in the second half.

Kareem South had 19 points and Paris Austin added 12 as the Golden Bears (12-16, 6-9 Pac-12) emphatically ended a five-game losing streak against the Buffaloes and gave first-year coach Mark Fox his most significant win of the season while handing Colorado a stinging setback.

McKinley Wright IV scored 18 points and Tyler Bey had 13 for Colorado.

The Buffaloes (21-8, 10-6) were among a handful of teams who began the night a half-game behind conference-leading Arizona State. The Sun Devils played at UCLA later Thursday.

Cal’s win came nearly a year to the day after its previous one over a Top 25 team, a 76-73 victory against No. 25 Washington on Feb. 25, 2019.

The Bears led nearly the entire game and pulled away after the Buffaloes scored the first two buckets of the second half.

Bradley, who appeared to hurt his elbow shortly after the break, spearheaded the surge in nearly every way.

He made a shot just inside the 3-point line, then later had a 16-foot fadeaway. Bradley added a 3-pointer, then stole the ball from Evan Battey and sparked a fast break ending in a 3 by Paris Austin that made it 56-40.

Colorado, coming off a 70-63 loss to UCLA, got within 12 with 3½ minutes remaining before Paris Austin scored on a reverse for California.

Colorado trailed until Siewert made back-to-back 3s midway through the first half. Bradley followed with consecutive 3s for Cal, including one that ended in a four-point play after he was fouled by Bey.

SEEN AND HEARD AT THE GALEN CENTER

Cats go big

Arizona went without two key players Saturday, keeping the news wraps until just before gametime. The team acknowledged an hour before the game that Josh Green (sprained SI joint) would not play against USC — and revealed 10 minutes before tipoff that Max Hazzard (personal reasons) wouldn’t play.

As a result, the Wildcats came out with a starting lineup the Trojans probably didn’t prepare for. Stone Gettings played small forward, with Ira Lee at power forward and Zeke Nnaji at center — and Arizona jumped in front of USC 9-2 in the opening minutes.

Green felt pain in his SI joint earlier in the week.

He did not make the trip to Los Angeles because of it, and is unlikely to play Saturday against UCLA. The UA offered no other details about Hazzard’s status, or when he might return.

They’re back

While the Wildcats were short-handed, the Trojans were close to full strength after a virus zapped starters Nick Rakocevic and Jonah Mathews before, during and after USC’s loss at Utah last Saturday.

Listed at 6 feet 11 inches and 225 pounds, Rakocevic reported losing 16 pounds during the illness. Mathews, meanwhile, missed part of the Utah game when he went to the locker room to throw up.

Both started Thursday. However, guard Kyle Sturdivant missed the game because of the recent death of his father.

Beating the traffic

Just 14 miles separate USC’s Galen Center and UCLA’s Pauley Pavilion, but Arizona has found moving hotels between games saves the Wildcats time.

The Wildcats stayed Wednesday in downtown L.A., just over two miles away from USC. They checked out Thursday, drove to USC to play, and then drove to Santa Monica late Thursday night. They’ll stay there until Saturday’s game at UCLA.

The move minimizes the Wildcats’ time in traffic, while also allowing them to stay in a resort near the beach before the UCLA game. Arizona will practice Friday at a nearby high school, since Pauley Pavilion is being used — the UCLA women’s basketball team is hosting Colorado.

Ryan Reynolds, the UA’s director of basketball operations, said the late-afternoon workout will allow the Wildcats to stay in their between-game routine.

“It’s more about time than location for us anyway,” Reynolds said. “Having a late-afternoon practice allows us to watch the film (before) and lets the guys sleep.”

Mannion’s stock still high

One of the most frequent questions we receive about the Wildcats these days is whether Nico Mannion is actually an NBA lottery pick.

We passed that one over to ESPN draft analyst Mike Schmitz, who was on hand for Thursday’s game.

Schmitz told the Star that NBA scouts aren’t just drawing on Mannion’s Arizona performances, having seen him play well for the Italian national team and in the Hoop Summit, when he outplayed Cole Anthony.

“They have a familiarity with him,” Schmitz said. “Of course, he’s going to need to play better to (keep his draft stock high). He’s got to make more shots, he’s got to defend more and he’s got to play better. Hopefully he can do those things.”

Both Mannion and fellow projected first-rounder Josh Green also have unusual athleticism that few players in the projected 2020 class possess, and Schmitz noted that “it’s hard to find guys with that profile.”

Schmitz, a Scottsdale native and UA grad, spent two segments on air Thursday night with broadcasters Dave Pasch and Bill Walton. Schmitz showed off his floral-lined sportcoat to Walton, and shared a years-old selfie of him and the basketball legend.

The big number

72 Estimated length, in feet, of USC forward Onyeka Okwongu buzzer-beating heave before halftime.

— Bruce Pascoe