

ARIZONA 75, WASHINGTON 72

CATS CLAW TO FIRST ROAD WIN



PHOTOS BY TED S. WARREN/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Arizona's Zeke Nnaji shoots ahead of Washington's Hameir Wright, right, and Jaden McDaniels during the second half. Washington hit 14 3-pointers but UA hit the 3s that mattered late.

Baker's late 3 lifts UA past Huskies in Seattle

By Bruce Pascoe

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

SEATTLE — Arizona accumulated another long list of issues on the road again Thursday, but the only thing it cost them this time was a few nervous breaths.

In their 75-72 win over Washington at Hec Edmundson Pavilion, the Wildcats turned the ball over too often early in the game. They blew an early 10-point lead. Gave up 14 3-pointers. Shot less than 40 percent. And couldn't get Zeke Nnaji in double figures of any sort.

But they won. On the road.

Maybe that was all that really mattered.

"It feels good to have that first road win," said UA guard Jemarl Baker, who scored a career-high 17 points with 4-of-7 3-point shooting, including a go-ahead 3 with 44 seconds left. "It was hard-fought. They shot the lights out and it took all of us to come together."

The Huskies hit 14 of 28 3s but did little else offensively while UA smothered Washington big man Isaiah Stewart enough to hold him to just nine points on 3-for-13 shooting.

Arizona also outrebounded Washington 37-36 and held UW to just six offensive rebounds. The Wildcats shot only 38.7% but hit 10 of 26 3-pointers and had just 10 turnovers despite coughing it up four times over the first four minutes.

"We settled down," UA coach Sean Miller said.

More important, the Wildcats stayed settled down even when things started looking rough.

After blowing a 22-point lead in their 66-65 loss at ASU last Saturday, the Wildcats built up a 10-point lead midway through the first half and lost it all before halftime Thursday.

They could have given up then or in the second half, when Washington went on an early 11-0 run thanks to four 3-pointers and a layup from Stewart.

Seven different Washington players hit 3-pointers, seemingly one popping up over the shoulders of just about anyone wearing an Arizona uniform. Some of them were a result of defensive breakdowns, but Miller said he thought the Huskies mostly hit



Arizona guard Jemarl Baker Jr. gets a hug after his late 3 put the Wildcats up for good in their 75-72 win at Washington on Thursday night. Baker finished with a career-high 17 points as UA blew a 10-point lead but then rallied from nine down for their first true road victory of the season.

UP NEXT

- **Who:** Arizona (14-6, 4-3) at Washington State (13-9, 4-5)
- **When:** 6 p.m. Saturday
- **TV:** Pac-12 Arizona
- **Radio:** 1290-AM, 107.5-FM

tough shots.

The potential for frustration was everywhere. But the Wildcats kept cool.

"Man, it's hard to win a game when the team makes 14" 3-pointers, Miller said. "I thought they had a great night from the 3-point line. Some maybe we could have contested better but there were other ones where they just made the shots. But to our guys' credit, we kept playing all the way to the end."

Miller said he was sure that some of UA's recent experiences on the road encouraged them to keep at it, something both Baker and Stone Gettings agreed with after the game.

"The margin of difference on the road in close games is very, very slim," Gettings said. "I think the more of those games that you play, the better equipped you are to handle them."

Some of it, maybe, was that the odds were simply in the Wildcats' favor for a change. After Washington built a 57-48 lead in the second half on a dunk from Jaden McDaniels, refs whistled McDaniels for taunting, and Mannion promptly hit the two resulting technical foul shots.



Arizona's Jemarl Baker Jr., center, and Washington's Jaden McDaniels reach for a loose ball as UA's Dylan Smith, left, watches. The Wildcats improved to 14-6 with the win heading into Saturday's game in the Palouse.

See WILDCATS, BC2

SEEN AND HEARD IN SEATTLE

Mamba forever

Just like he does every season, UA equipment manager Brian Brigger goes through Nike's catalog and speculatively orders shoes he thinks the Wildcats will like.

Little did he know how big a role his order of the Kobe 5 Protro Chaos shoes would become.

"The guys liked the 4s, so I figured we should get them," Brigger said before Arizona's 75-72 win over the Huskies on Thursday night.

The shoes arrived a month ago and Brigger said he had plans to distribute them next week, but then their legendary namesake was killed in a helicopter accident on Sunday.

The next day, Brigger gave them out. Most of the Wildcats broke them in during practices all week, then wore them for Thursday's game. Even though they are accented in light green, Brigger didn't have a problem with them.

"The way I look at it, that's the color of a saguaro," Brigger said.

Several of Arizona's big men did not wear the low-cut shoes because they prefer the additional support of higher-cut shoes, though forward Ira Lee modified his.

On the heel of his red-and-blue shoes, Lee wrote the words "Mamba Forever."

Before the game, Washington also held a moment of silence for Bryant and the other eight people who died in the helicopter crash.

Carlesimo reunion

ESPN Radio picked up Thursday's game, with a familiar face to UA coach Sean Miller on the color commentary: P.J. Carlesimo, who coached Miller on USA Basketball's 1991 World Championship Games team.

Miller, then playing for Pittsburgh, was joined on that gold-medal-winning team by ASU coach Bobby Hurley, then playing for Duke.

That other familiar face

That would be television commentator Bill Walton, who not only did Thursday's game with Dave Pasch but is also scheduled to work UA's next two home games: Against USC on Feb. 6 and against UCLA on Feb. 8.

According to Tubac-based ESPN researcher Joe Sullivan, among the research Walton was digging into before the game supported the theme of "cats and dogs" — including the fact that nine of the past 20 teams to play in the NCAA championship game have been nicknamed either for a cat or a dog (UConn Huskies, Butler Bulldogs, Gonzaga Bulldogs, Kentucky Wildcats, etc.)

Along for the ride

Although UA's big annual booster trip on Dec. 21 to San Francisco was dampened by the Wildcats' loss to St. John's, some 16 donors made the trip with the Wildcats this weekend.

"Hopefully two wins this time," said Judi Kessler, who accompanied the group as UA's associate AD for major gifts.

Arizona athletic director Dave Heeke also flew from meetings in Chicago to Seattle to join the team and boosters on Thursday.

"Went out to dinner and had a great time," Heeke said.

While the boosters were scheduled to accompany the Wildcats all weekend — flying with them to Spokane on Thursday night and then home from Pullman after Saturday's UA-WSU game — Heeke headed home: For Friday's UCLA-UA women's basketball game and the UA-Texas swim meet on Saturday, which will be senior day for the men's and women's swim/dive teams.

Sweaty Sean's guys

The "Dawg Pack Dirt" tip sheet distributed throughout Washington's student section took the usual shots at UA coach Sean Miller, showing him infamously wearing his sweaty white shirt during the 2016 NCAA Tournament.

But it also ran down the entire UA roster, especially Nico Mannion.

"With his red hair and fair skin, living in Arizona is a bold move but have no fear as we're sure Zona compensates this redhead with at least SPF 50 in return for staying in the desert," it said. "A freshman from 'Italy' has been able to make Arizona and 'Sweaty Sean' relevant again. We feel bad (Mannion) has such a heavy load to carry."

Among other things the "dirt" also said "all three" of Stone Gettings' fans call themselves "stoners" and wondered why Jemari Baker's name is spelled as it is considering it is pronounced "Jamal" ("Dude, why is there an 'r' in your name?")

Hop's Honeymoon over?

After winning two Pac-12 Coach of the Year awards during his first two seasons at Washington, Mike Hopkins' honeymoon may be over. The Huskies won just two of their previous nine games entering Thursday's game.

The Seattle Times' Percy Allen wrote that Hopkins said he's learned more about himself in UW's past nine games than he did during his first two seasons.

"Sometimes it's so easy to take a look at that (the score) rather than looking at the process and focusing on the process everyday," Hopkins said. "For me, I've always felt that way, but sometimes you can get lost in a different direction. So for me, it's the process of why did I get into coaching? I got into coaching because I love making guys better. I love putting together a group of guys that they say can't do it, but you can do it."

"In perspective, you go through this thing and sometimes you get tested. But it's really a sign of your true character of what's going to come out when you're tested. Winning is not going to teach you anything, but I've learned a whole hell of a lot and hopefully we can turn it and that's what we're focused on doing."

Quotable

"All young players go through that stretch where you know they can maybe lose confidence in shooting and then it can lead to other areas. If you're a versatile player, your shot may not be going in, but there's so many other things you can do to help your team win. I think that's really our message to Josh. But I have to give him confidence. That falls on me."

— UA coach Sean Miller, discussing guard Josh Green, who was 0 for 8 at ASU and 1 for 6 in the first half Thursday.

The big number

10 UA's lead in the first half Thursday. It vanished shortly before the half.

Another big number

9 Washington's second-half lead on Thursday. The Huskies went on to lose by three points.

— Bruce Pascoe



PHOTOS BY TED S. WARREN/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Washington's Jaden McDaniels (0) looks to pass the ball as Arizona guard Josh Green defends during the first half Thursday.

WILDCATS

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From there, Gettings hit two free throws and Baker hit his second 3-pointer. Then the Wildcats received another major break and took advantage of that, too: Hamer Wright tried to block a 3-pointer by Baker but was called for a foul, with 4:41 left and Washington leading 69-64.

Baker went to the line and hit all three free throws and then, after Nnaji rebounded Wright's miss underneath the basket, Baker went down and hit another 3 to give UA a 70-69 lead with 4:17 left.

Less than three minutes later, Baker hit his final 3 from about 23 feet to make it 74-72, this time the go-ahead shot.

Baker's four 3-pointers also tied his career high set earlier this season against New Mexico State, though Thursday's production was undoubtedly more critical. The Wildcats beat the Aggies by 30 and Baker was just 2 for 8 combined from 3-point range over his previous four games.

But Miller had said before the game that it was up to him to instill more confidence in his players, after



"I really give our team a lot of credit for playing all the way to the end," said Sean Miller, whose team was coming off a game where it let a 22-point lead slip away against ASU.

they fell apart at ASU, and it appeared to have worked with Baker.

"Coach told me to continue to stay confident in myself and continue to shoot," Baker said.

"I knew (against the Huskies') zone, I would be able to get good looks, and it was just a matter of me hitting them."

After Baker's final 3, Washington's RaeQuan Battle was in position to match it with a 3 of his own, and the momentum suggested he would: Battle was 4 for 7 from 3 at that point.

But Battle missed this time and, after Dylan Smith rebounded it, he was fouled.

Smith then hit the front end of a one-and-one with 19.6 seconds left to put UA up by 3.

Washington failed to score from there, with Jaden McDaniels turning the ball over near midcourt and Marcus Tsohonis missing a final 3-point attempt with two seconds left before Mannion ran out the clock.

Mannion finished with 16 points and five assists, while Gettings had 13 points and Nnaji nine points and eight rebounds.

The win moved Arizona to 14-6 overall and 4-3 in the Pac-12 while Washington dropped to 12-10 and 2-7. The Wildcats will face Wash-

ARIZONA 75, WASHINGTON 72

Arizona	Min	M-A	M-A	OT	A	PF	PTS
Mannion	33	4-8	5-6	1-5	5	1	16
Smith	27	1-9	1-3	0-1	5	0	4
Nnaji	26	4-11	1-1	1-8	0	2	9
Baker	25	5-8	3-3	1-2	4	0	17
Gettings	23	5-9	3-5	2-3	0	4	13
J.Green	22	2-7	1-1	2-2	3	3	5
Hazzard	17	2-5	2-2	1-3	0	0	8
Lee	14	1-3	1-2	2-7	0	3	3
Koloko	11	0-1	0-0	0-2	0	1	0
Jeter	2	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals	200	24-62	17-23	10-33	17	14	75

Percentages: FG .387, FT .739, 3-Point .424
Goals: 10-26, .385 (Baker 4-7, Mannion 3-7, Hazzard 2-4, Smith 1-7, Gettings 0-1)
Team Rebounds: 4, Team Turnovers: None
Blocked Shots: 1 (Smith), Turnovers: 10 (Gettings 2, J.Green 2, Mannion 2, Smith 2, Hazzard, Lee), Steals: 8 (J.Green 3, Baker, Hazzard, Lee, Mannion, Smith), Technical Fouls: None.

Washington	Min	M-A	M-A	OT	A	PF	PTS
Stewart	37	3-13	2-2	1-11	1	1	9
McDaniels	34	5-13	1-2	2-5	5	4	12
Wright	32	3-7	4-5	0-6	1	5	12
Carter	31	5-9	0-0	0-5	2	4	13
Tsohonis	25	2-5	0-0	0-1	3	0	6
Bey	16	1-2	1-2	1-3	1	3	4
Battle	15	5-9	0-0	0-1	0	0	14
Timmins	7	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	2
Hardy	3	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals	200	25-59	8-11	5-33	17	18	72

Percentages: FG .424, FT .727, 3-Point .424
Goals: 14-28, .500 (Battle 4-8, Carter 3-6, Tsohonis 2-4, Wright 2-4, Bey 1-1, Stewart 1-1, McDaniels 1-4), Team Rebounds: 3, Team Turnovers: 1, Blocked Shots: 4 (McDaniels 3, Stewart), Turnovers: 16 (Carter 4, McDaniels 4, Wright 4, Stewart 2, Battle, Tsohonis), Steals: 4 (Carter, McDaniels, Stewart, Tsohonis), Technical Fouls: McDaniels, 12:49 second.

Arizona		36	39-75
Washington		33	39-72
A: 9,123.			

ington State (13-9, 4-5) on Saturday in Pullman, Wash.

"You gotta win on the road, I understand that," Miller said. "But you get in these games and eventually you're going to be able to punch one out. I really give our team a lot of credit for playing all the way to the end."

THURSDAY'S PAC-12 GAMES

Bruins beat Buffs, move to .500 in Pac

LOS ANGELES — Chris Smith scored a career-high 30 points and UCLA defeated No. 20 Colorado 72-68 on Thursday night to get back to .500 in Pac-12 play.

Jaime Jaquez Jr. added 13 points and seven rebounds, and Prince Ali had 11 points for the Bruins (11-10, 4-4). They led by 15 points early in the second half and held off Colorado's repeated runs that cut the Bruins' lead to two points.

McKinley Wright IV scored 11 of his 14 points in the second half and Evan Battey added 14 points for the Buffaloes (16-5, 5-3), whose two-game winning streak ended. Wright scored seven of their final 11 points. Colorado ran off 12 straight points early in the second half to close to 42-39. Smith came up with crucial baskets when the Buffs twice got within three points.

No. 11 Oregon 77, California 72: In Berkeley, Calif., Payton Pritchard scored 21 points and broke Oregon's all-time assists record (615) in leading the Ducks.

Chris Duarte added 19 points as Oregon (18-4, 7-2 Pac-12) remained on top of the conference standings



MICHAEL OWEN BAKER / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Colorado's Evan Battey, center, and UCLA's Jaime Jaquez Jr., left, and David Singleton battle for a rebound Thursday.

with the victory.

Matt Bradley scored a season-high 27 points to lead Cal (9-11, 3-4).

Pritchard was held to just two points in the first half and scored 19 in the second. The senior guard immediately made his presence felt when he returned from the intermission.

With the score tied at 32 at the half, Pritchard made a 3-pointer and followed up by converting a three-point play with a reverse layup.

Cal (9-11, 3-4) took a 54-47 lead midway through the second half, but the Ducks went ahead for good on An-

thony Mathis' 3-pointer that snapped a 58-58 tie with 6:53 remaining.

USC 56, Utah 52: In Los Angeles, Nick Rakocevic scored 16 points with 15 rebounds, Elijah Weaver added 14 points and Southern California rallied to win for the fourth time in the past five games.

Yeneka Okongwu added 11 points and 11 rebounds, while Jonah Trojans had 13 points, as the Trojans (17-4, 6-2) used a 12-0 run midway through the second half to erase a nine-point deficit.

USC trailed by as many as 10 points in the first half and

PAC-12 STANDINGS

Team	Conf.	Overall
Oregon	7-2	18-4
USC	6-2	17-4
Colorado	5-3	16-5
Stanford	4-3	15-5
Arizona	4-3	14-6
UCLA	4-4	11-10
Washington St.	4-5	13-9
Arizona St.	3-4	12-8
California	3-4	9-11
Utah	3-5	12-8
Oregon St.	3-6	13-8
Washington	2-7	12-10

rallied from a double-digit deficit for a victory in consecutive home games. They erased a 21-point second-half deficit on Jan. 18 to earn an overtime victory over Stanford.

Oregon State 68, Stanford 63: In Stanford, Calif., Jarod Lucas scored a season-high 21 points, Kaylor Kelly matched his season-high with seven blocks and Oregon State ended a four-game losing streak.

Tres Tinkle added 15 points and Ethan Thompson had 14 for the Beavers (13-8, 3-6 Pac-12), who also ended a four-game slide.

Oscar da Silva scored 22 points and had eight rebounds to lead Stanford.