

ASU 66, NO. 22 ARIZONA 65

COMEBACK FLOORS CATS



PHOTOS BY KELLY PRESNELL / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Arizona's Josh Green sits on the court after being stuffed on his shot as time expired Saturday night. ASU, down 37-15 at one point, rallied to win 66-65 to drop UA to 13-6 on the season.

ASU erases 22-point deficit to stun Arizona

By Bruce Pascoe

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

TEMPE — The Arizona Wildcats etched themselves another unforgettable memory at ASU on Saturday, kicking away a 22-point lead and losing 66-65 before a rowdy near-capacity crowd at ASU's Desert Financial Arena.

Over just the past two decades alone, the more extreme memories have usually been good for the Wildcats.

They saw Lute Olson gesture to ASU students to look at the scoreboard. They had Salim Stoudamire's game-winner to help UA win the 2005 Pac-10 title. Kevin Parrom's no-easy-buckets hard foul in 2010. And watched while a hysterical ASU coach Bobby Hurley was thrown out four years ago.

But this one was simply disheartening and depressing for the No. 22-ranked Wildcats.

It featured a complete meltdown that ended with breakdowns on the glass, defensively and offensively. UA shot 28% from the field in the second half, was rebounded 25-16 after halftime and allowed ASU to score 12 points on 18 turnovers.

"They were clearly the more aggressive, hungrier team," UA



ASU's Remy Martin, left, and UA's Stone Gettings, back, and Zeke Nnaji, right, converge on top of Sun Devils forward Jalen Graham in the fight for a loose ball. UA was outscored 36-22 in the second half.

coach Sean Miller said. "We had a number of balls go through our hands. We had block-outs that we missed. They got the 50-50 balls... and when you give up 18 turnovers, that's what you have."

At the end, ASU scored even when its primary options failed, with guard Alonzo Verge driving inside for a layup with 10.7 seconds left.

The Sun Devils took their first lead of the second half with 4:31

remaining and, on their final possession, had Verge break through the UA defense for a layup with nine seconds left after Remy Martin and Rob Edwards deferred under pressure.

"Rob didn't force anything or take a bad shot," ASU coach Hurley said. Verge's drive "was wide open. There were driving lanes available and his eyes probably lit up when he saw that. He's a playmaker, and he went out and made

a big play."

Miller said the UA defense's collapse could have been his fault.

"On the last play, we went small and when you go small you have the opportunity to switch pick-and-rolls so you don't get exposed," Miller said. "We kept Zeke in as our lone big. He's pretty mobile... but you know at the end it really didn't matter. They drove us and shot a layup."

Nico Mannion, back in the

UP NEXT

- Who: No. 22 Arizona (13-6, 3-3) at Washington (12-9, 2-6)
- When: 7 p.m. Thursday
- TV: ESPN2
- Radio: 1290-AM, 107.5-FM

game after missing five critical minutes because of foul trouble earlier in the half, couldn't get off an effective play in the final seconds, with Josh Green throwing up a contested shot just before the buzzer.

The loss dropped 22nd-ranked Arizona to 13-6 overall and 4-3 in the Pac-12, entering a game Thursday at Washington. ASU improved to 12-7 and 3-3.

ASU's Martin led all scorers with 24 points while Nnaji had 21 points and 10 rebounds for Arizona, his eighth double-double of the season.

With 10 points, UA guard Dylan Smith reached the 1,000-point plateau for his college career, having scored 460 points for UNC Asheville as a freshman, and 535 for Arizona entering Saturday's game to total 995.

Asked about that accomplish-

See WILDCATS, BC2

How to lose a game in 10 steps: Poor first-half finish dooms UA

TEMPE — Arizona State was so bad for so long Saturday night, missing 10 layups in the first half, that the Sun Devils trailed Arizona 37-15.

It was name-the-final-score time. I would've guessed 81-58 and that would've been generous, given the Sun Devils can't shoot, right? Or is it "can't shoot right?" Either way, it works. The Sun Devils are ranked No. 10 in the Pac-12 in both field goal percentage and 3-point shooting.

It was Brick City at the Desert Financial Arena on Saturday. At one point, with Arizona leading 34-13, the Sun Devils had missed 11 consecutive shots while Arizona made 10 of 12.

And then a whistle changed everything.

The best player on the court to that point, UA freshman point guard Nico Mannion, was called for what looked to be a harmless



Greg Hansen

reaching foul. It was his second foul. Sean Miller followed the book and put Mannion on the bench.

That's the last place you want to see the Mannion if you are an Arizona fan.

Mannion had already made four 3-pointers. It seemed like twice that. The Sun Devils were probably a possession or two from total surrender, the same way they gave up a month earlier, trailing St. Mary's 41-19, prompting coach Bobby Hurley to tuck his temper in bed for the night, sit on the bench and watch his team lose by 40.

While Mannion became a spectator, Arizona dissolved. It lost 66-65 to the Sun Devils, a spirited second half charge and a comeback unmatched in the modern history of the UA-ASU basketball series.

That's the story if you wear maroon and gold. It worked for Hurley, who exaggerated a bit when he said the crowd of 13,500 was "as loud as anywhere I've been."

But Arizona lost the game in the final 1:40 of the first half more than anything that followed. More than ASU rallied. More than Remy Martin took charge. More than Arizona missed all eight 3-pointers it took in the second half.

The game blew up in Arizona's face in the final 20 minutes, but the fuse was lit with 1:40 remaining in first half.

And it all happened because



KELLY PRESNELL / THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Arizona guard Dylan Smith draws the attention of the ASU defense in the first half Saturday night. Both teams are now 3-3 in Pac-12 play.

Mannion became a spectator, playing it safe, when the Wildcats could've buried ASU and made the second half a celebration.

Here's how it happened, starting with Arizona leading 43-24 with exactly 100 seconds left in the half. It was a 10-step process:

1. Max Hazzard threw the ball out of bounds.
2. Jemarl Baker dribbled 29 seconds off the shot clock and then shot an air ball from 28 feet.
3. Hazzard, who was supposed

to run out the clock and take the last shot of the first half, instead ventured into traffic and missed a contested layup with eight seconds to go; the Sun Devils raced down court and scored. It was 43-30.

"The way we finished the first half was pretty key," said Hurley. We were able to cut to it 13. I was a manageable margin. We had some momentum going into the locker

See HANSEN, BC2

SEEN AND HEARD AT DESERT FINANCIAL ARENA

Looking back at 'no easy buckets'

The first time Sean Miller led Arizona into Desert Financial Arena — formerly Wells Fargo Arena — in 2009-10, former UA wing Kevin Parron pulled off one of the most iconic moments in the rivalry's history.

With just under nine minutes left in the game, former ASU guard Derek Glasser zipped a pass upcourt to a striding Ty Abbott, who attempted to finish strong at the rim for a dunk or layup. With Parron trailing, the Bronx native leapt to block Abbott's shot, but connected with his head instead of the basketball and was called for a foul.

Abbott angrily reacted by exchanging words face-to-face with Parron, but the 6-foot-6-inch wing smiled down on Abbott's 6-3 frame. When asked about the foul, Parron simply replied "No easy buckets."

This season is also the 15-year anniversary of Salim Stoudamire's game-winning jump shot to beat ASU in Tempe.

'Send it in, Jerome!'

Thirty-two years ago Saturday, Sean Miller delivered an assist that broke the backboard. Pitt's Jerome Lane got a pass in transition and went in for a high-flying slam against Providence that was immortalized by broadcaster Bill Raftery, who declared "Send it in, Jerome!"

Miller was the point guard at Pitt. It was hardly the first — or last — time Miller would make national highlights. He appeared on "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson" as a kid, and has been a regular on ESPN, Fox and the Pac-12 Networks as Arizona's coach.

Playing for grandma

ASU games in Tempe are always special for UA forward Ira Lee. The ASU game in Tempe his freshman year marked the last time his grandmother saw him play in person. Lee honored his grandmother on Twitter before the game.

The big number

1,000 Dylan Smith's career points after the UA wing scored eight in the first half.

Ew of A

Arizona's MVD is supposed to have standards when it comes to this kind of stuff. USA Today's Sarah Kezele posted a photo on Twitter of an ASU fan driving around the Valley with a Sun Devil version of the state license plate. It EW OF A — because, apparently, EWARIZONA has too many characters.

Zeke double-double watch

Arizona freshman Zeke Nnaji posted his eighth double-double of the season on Saturday, scoring 17 points and grabbing 11 rebounds in the Wildcats' losing effort. He's already posted as many double-doubles as Aaron Gordon had in his one season with the Wildcats. Deandre Ayton holds the record with a whopping 24 two years ago.

Conductor Bill

If Bill Walton's calling a game, he's bound to do something ridiculous. With 30 minutes until tip-off, the always-happy Walton climbed into the sold-out ASU student section and began directing the band for a full minute. Never change.

Another big number

4 Number of 3-pointers Nico Mannion sunk in the first half, which is the most he made in a game all season. Mannion hit three 3-pointers in the games against Utah, Long Beach State and Omaha. He finished with 16 points and seven assists on a night when he was slowed by foul trouble.

A big(ger) number

10 Arizona State missed 10 first-half layups, a main reason why the Sun Devils trailed 43-30 at the break. ASU finished shooting 38.9% from the field, just slightly below Arizona's 40.4% clip.

Hurley's hype music

ASU head coach Bobby Hurley is notorious for plugging in headphones during pregame warmups and listening to some jams on the bench. Usually, Hurley plops himself where there's no one around, but Saturday he took a different approach. While the Wildcats warmed up, the Sun Devils coach decided to sit right next to Nnaji, Jake Desjardins and Chase Jeter — a choice which drew a few puzzled looks from the Arizona players.

He said it

"We knew we were going to kick their butts, so we were just trying to hang out in Phoenix and go to parties. It was funny, because they were insulted and we were like, 'Ya'll didn't think you were gonna win, did you? The game is over, where's the party at?' ... Playing ASU in our era was never really that big of a deal."

"We had the kind of recruits that were five-star recruits; they didn't. They were definitely little brothers. Coach (Lute) Olson had more class and style than (Bill) Frieder. All of our recruits were bigger names than their recruits. We knew there was a rivalry, but we didn't feel it, because we were a pretty arrogant bunch ourselves."

"We knew what that game meant in terms of bragging rights so that would always put our best foot forward." — Former Wildcat Corey Williams on the UA-ASU rivalry. Williams appeared on ESPN Tucson last week to talk about his experiences with the Sun Devils.

— Justin Spears and Alec White



PHOTOS BY KELLY PRESNELL / ARIZONA DAILY STAR
Arizona guard Nico Mannion, right, wraps up Arizona State guard Remy Martin in the first half. Mannion finished with 16 points in UA's loss.

WILDCATS

Continued from Page BC1

ment, Smith predictably said he was thinking only about the loss.

It would be hard to think of anything else.

The Wildcats had it rolling early in the game, going on a 19-1 run and keeping ASU without a field goal for over six minutes, while the Sun Devils took several shots that were well off the mark.

Then things changed, with ASU going on a 25-6 run between the end of the first half and beginning of the second half.

Smith and Miller said the Sun Devils sped them up and forced turnovers, but whatever it was, the Wildcats clearly had their momentum knocked out of them.

"We were not a confident group," Miller said.

It hurt Arizona and, likely, its confidence, that freshman guard Nico Mannion sat out over five critical minutes in the second half with four fouls.

Mannion was a hero in the first half, hitting 4 of 5 3s while leading Arizona to a 43-30 halftime lead, and finished with 16 points.

But he picked up his fourth foul with 10 minutes left and, while he was sitting out, ASU took its first lead of the second



Arizona coach Sean Miller and his bench think the out-of-bounds call should go their way, but the game official disagrees Saturday.

half, 60-59, with 4:31 left.

ASU went ahead 63-61 on a 3-pointer from Edwards. But Smith missed two free throws with 3:23 left and UA carried just a 65-64 lead into the final minute, losing the ball on a travel turnover from Mannion but getting it back when Stone Gettings stole the ball inside.

Gettings then missed a 3 on UA's ensuing possession before Verge drove inside for the game-winner.

After halftime, Martin single-handedly pushed ASU back into relevance, with a jumper, layup and 3-pointer to cut UA's 43-30 halftime lead to 43-37.

Rob Edwards then sank a 3

to cut it to 43-40, and the Sun Devils tied it at 49 when Jalen Graham hit 1 of 2 free throws with 11:37 left.

"This shows our will, our determination and our grit," Hurley said. "I'm just super proud."

After Verge tied it at 12 with a 17-footer from the left baseline, the Wildcats went on their 19-1 run, first scoring six straight points to take an 18-12 lead: Gettings scored inside, Jemarl Baker hit a 15-footer and, after Ira Lee blocked Verge, Smith went coast-to-coast for a layup.

Mannion then hit three 3-pointers during the rest of UA's run, while the Sun Devils missed nine straight shots,

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Arizona	Min	M-A	M-A	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Nnaji	34	6-9	9-12	3-10	1	1	21
Smith	31	4-11	0-2	1-6	1	0	10
Green	30	0-7	2-2	0-3	3	2	2
Baker	26	1-5	0-0	1-4	4	1	2
Mannion	25	5-11	2-2	0-5	0	4	16
Gettings	24	4-7	0-0	1-5	0	1	8
Lee	18	3-5	0-0	1-2	0	2	6
Hazzard	7	0-1	0-0	0-1	2	1	0
Koloko	4	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	1	0
Totals	200	23-56	13-18	7-37	11	13	65

Percentages: FG .411, FT .722, 3-Point Goals: 6-20, .300 (Mannion 4-7, Smith 2-5, Gettings 0-1, Hazzard 0-1, Baker 0-3, Green 0-3). **Team Rebounds:** 6.
Team Turnovers: None. **Blocked Shots:** 5 (Nnaji 2, Koloko, Lee, Smith). **Turnovers:** 18 (Nnaji 4, Smith 4, Green 3, Mannion 3, Lee 2, Gettings, Hazzard). **Steals:** 7 (Gettings 2, Nnaji 2, Baker, Lee, Mannion). **Technical Fouls:** None.

Arizona State	Min	M-A	M-A	O-T	A	PF	PTS
Martin	36	10-17	2-4	1-3	4	1	24
Edwards	35	6-16	0-0	0-7	1	1	15
Verge	28	6-15	0-1	1-4	2	1	13
Cherry	27	2-8	0-0	3-5	1	4	4
White	24	3-7	0-0	0-4	2	5	6
Lawrence	20	0-2	0-0	0-1	1	3	0
Graham	16	1-3	2-4	5-7	2	0	4
Mitchell	8	0-3	0-0	1-2	0	0	0
House	5	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Totals	200	28-72	4-9	11-33	13	15	66

Percentages: FG .389, FT .444, 3-Point Goals: 6-29, .207 (Edwards 3-12, Martin 2-8, Verge 1-3, Lawrence 0-1, Mitchell 0-1, Cherry 0-4). **Team Rebounds:** 7.
Team Turnovers: None. **Blocked Shots:** 4 (White 2, Cherry, Mitchell). **Turnovers:** 12 (Martin 4, Edwards 3, Lawrence 2, White 2, Verge). **Steals:** 8 (Edwards 2, Martin 2, Verge 2, Cherry, House). **Technical Fouls:** None.

Arizona	43	22-65
Arizona State	30	36-66

many of them badly, before they pushed through.

"They just kept playing hard and made plays they needed to win," Smith said. "I've gotta commend them for that."

Arizona center Chase Jeter was available to play Saturday but Miller said afterward he wasn't ready and did not play him. Jeter has now missed the past three games since Miller said he reported back pain in practice on Jan. 14.

HANSEN

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room."

4-10. Arizona opened the second half with Dylan Smith missing two shots and committing a turnover; Josh Green missed an off-balance 3-pointer and committed a turnover; and well, you get the idea.

Arizona began the half shooting 0 for 7 with three turnovers. Suddenly the lead was trimmed to 43-40.

Look, lots of team blow big leads. Washington wasted a 16-point lead a home a week earlier and lost to Oregon. Utah State let a 19-point lead dissolve last weekend and lost at Boise State.

But you might notice that while ASU fought back in the second half, Mannion couldn't recapture his touch, and neither could Arizona. On the UA's final two possessions, emergency center Stone Gettings missed a 3-pointer and Green completed his 0-for-8 night with a miss in the heavily-trafficked rim area. The loss is a reflection on

PAC-12 STANDINGS

Team	Conf.	Overall
Stanford	4-1	15-3
Colorado	5-2	16-4
Oregon	5-2	16-4
USC	5-2	16-4
Arizona	3-3	13-6
Arizona State	3-3	12-7
UCLA	3-3	10-9
Utah	3-4	12-7
California	2-3	8-10
Washington St.	3-5	12-9
Oregon St.	2-6	12-8
Washington	2-6	12-9

what happens when you task three freshmen to lead your operation. It's almost inevitable. Consistency? What's that? The game was won when Martin, a spitfire junior point guard, took the game into his own hands.

He plays big. He talks big. "Our expectations are so high," he said. "This is Arizona State now. This is not back in the day when Arizona would just come in and win."

The Sun Devils became an afterthought in the Pac-12 upon losing the league opener in Tucson, 75-47, missing their

first six foul shots and bricking 18 of 21 3-point attempts.

If there is anyone more competitive in college basketball than Hurley, who is it? He's got the same fire he had at Duke 30 years ago. That loss in Tucson burned him deep.

"A lot of teams got the shovels out and were shoveling the dirt on us," he said with a tone of defiance. "The last 25 minutes of that game, Remy dominated."

It doesn't take a math expert to look at the box score and see the Arizona guards who took the shots Mannion couldn't get while spending 14 1/2 minutes on the bench in foul trouble. Baker and Hazzard were 0 for 4 on 3-pointers and 1 for 7 for the game.

Make one of those shots and ASU's comeback is shrugged off.

A lot of time this crazy world of college basketball doesn't make much sense. What goes around comes around. Saturday was the 17th anniversary of the 2003 afternoon that Arizona went to No. 3 Kansas and fell behind the Jayhawks by 16

points in the first half.

Then, when you least expected it — especially at legendary Phog Allen Fieldhouse — Arizona outscored Kansas to win 91-74, essentially a 33-point turn-around.

That was Jan. 25. It didn't matter much in the bigger picture. Kansas beat Arizona in the Elite Eight two months later and that miracle comeback at the Phog was reduced to a trivia question.

The reality this time is that Arizona is 3-3 a third of the way through the league schedule.

It was unable to bury a team that shot 39 percent, missed 23 of 29 3-point shots and was again ridiculously bad from the foul line, hitting just 4 of 9 shots.

When you lose a game like Arizona lost Saturday, you don't just blow it off as a bad night at the office. You worry. Your fans freak out. This ain't 2003, with Luke Walton and Salim Stoudamire in the lineup and Andre Iguodala on the bench.

Dorothy, this is 2020. We're not in Kansas any more.