

ARIZONA FOOTBALL

ARIZONA DAILY STAR | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2019 | PAGE AB1

Editor: Ryan Finley | 520-573-4312 | sportsed@tucson.com

ARIZONA STATE 24, ARIZONA 14

CATS STUMBLE IN FINALE



PHOTOS BY JOSH GALEMORE / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Wildcats wide receiver Brian Casteel can't come up with the catch as Arizona State's Aashari Crosswell defends during Saturday's game. UA lost 24-14 to finish the season 4-8.

Arizona ends season with seventh straight loss

By Michael Lev

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

TEMPE — For the fourth year in a row, the Arizona Wildcats had a halftime lead over rival Arizona State.

For the third year in a row, the Cats squandered it.

It wasn't nearly as dramatic or heartbreaking as the previous two. But the net effect was the same.

Arizona lost to ASU 24-14 in front of an announced crowd of 54,074 Saturday night at Sun Devil Stadium.

Not only was it the Wildcats' third consecutive loss in the series, it was their seventh straight defeat to end the 2019 season.

Arizona was 4-1 after defeating Colorado on Oct. 5. The Wildcats were 2-0 in the Pac-12. Who would have thought Arizona wouldn't win another game?

That afternoon in Boulder was also the last time Khalil Tate played like the Heisman Trophy candidate he once was purported to be. Tate passed for a career-high 404 yards that day.

Since then, it's been a rollercoaster ride. Tate started but didn't finish the next three games. Freshman Grant Gunnell started the next two, with Tate coming off the bench. Arizona scored only 13 points against Oregon and Utah as its losing streak grew and grew.



JOSH GALEMORE / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Arizona State safety Cam Phillips tackles Arizona running back J.J. Taylor in the Sun Devils' win Saturday night.

Kevin Sumlin handed the keys to Tate for the final game of his up-and-down UA career. It started promisingly, with Tate throwing a first-half touchdown pass to put the Wildcats on top. Then it went the other way.

Tate threw three interceptions,

a career high, on three consecutive possessions bridging the second and third quarters. Two appeared to be miscommunications between him and his receivers. The other came on a deflection of a pass tailback Bam Smith should have caught.

Did Sumlin's QB rotation hinder the passing attack? It's impossible to say. But he opened himself up to second-guessing during a second season that didn't go according to plan.

Arizona's 4-8 record is a game worse than last year's 5-7 finish.

PAC-12 STANDINGS

South	Conf.	Overall
Utah	8-1	11-1
USC	7-2	8-4
Arizona St.	4-5	7-5
UCLA	4-5	4-8
Colorado	3-6	5-7
Arizona	2-7	4-8
North	Conf.	Overall
Oregon	8-1	10-2
California	4-5	7-5
Washington	4-5	7-5
Oregon St.	4-5	5-7
Washington St.	3-6	6-6
Stanford	3-6	4-8

Pac-12 Championship: No. 6 Utah vs. No. 14 Oregon, 6 p.m. Friday in Santa Clara, Calif., Ch. 9

ASU completed its second consecutive 7-5 regular-season finish under Herm Edwards.

The Sun Devils secured a bowl berth by upsetting Oregon last week.

ASU tailback Eno Benjamin earned his second straight Bob Moran Most Outstanding Player Award, rushing 34 times for 168 yards and two touchdowns.

Tate finished 22 of 38 for 228 yards. He also rushed for a team-high 78 yards.

The UA defense played one of

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Heeke: Sumlin will return in 2020

ARIZONA DAILY STAR

TEMPE — Kevin Sumlin's second season as Arizona's head football coach ended Saturday night with a loss to Arizona State.

Shortly after the game, athletic director Dave Heeke announced that Sumlin will return for a third.

"I want to make it real clear that as we embark into Year 3 of this rebuild program, Coach Sumlin is our head football coach," Heeke said around midnight in the hallway outside one of the Sun Devil Stadium media rooms. "We're not where we want to be. This is not the spot we wanted to be in this point. But we're committed ... to the process moving this thing forward, moving into Year 3."

Sumlin is 9-15 since taking over for Rich Rodriguez in January 2018, and is a combined 3-7 against

UA'S 2019 SEASON

Overall record: 4-8; Pac-12 record: 2-7

Date	Opponent	Result
Aug. 24	at Hawaii	L, 38-45
Sept. 7	N. Arizona	W, 65-41
Sept. 14	Texas Tech	W, 28-14
Sept. 28	UCLA*	W, 20-17
Oct. 5	at Colorado*	W, 35-30
Oct. 12	Washington*	L, 27-51
Oct. 19	at USC*	L, 14-41
Oct. 26	at Stanford*	L, 31-41
Nov. 2	Oregon State*	L, 38-56
Nov. 16	at Oregon*	L, 6-34
Nov. 23	Utah*	L, 7-35
Nov. 30	at Arizona State*	L, 14-24

* — Pac-12 game. Home games in bold

Pac-12 South opponents and 0-2 against ASU.

Sumlin's second season in Tucson has been a chaotic one. He

fired defensive coordinator Marcel Yates and linebackers coach John Rushing midway through the season, a first in program history. And nine days ago, Sumlin decided to part ways with another assistant, defensive line coach Iona Uigalelei.

Arizona's quarterbacks, thought to be a strength, struggled under Sumlin.

Senior Khalil Tate and true freshman Grant Gunnell shared snaps for most of the final month, though it was Tate — the record-breaking onetime Sports Illustrated cover boy — who played extensively against the Sun Devils. The Wildcats fell 24-14, ending their season with a 4-8 record.

Sumlin preached patience in the moments following Saturday's

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JOSH GALEMORE / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Arizona coach Kevin Sumlin will be back next season, UA athletic director Dave Heeke said after Saturday night's game. The Wildcats finished 4-8 this year and are 9-15 in Sumlin's two seasons.

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SEEN AND HEARD AT SUN DEVIL STADIUM

Ice Bowl

The temperature at Saturday's kickoff was 51 degrees, marking the coldest game at Sun Devil Stadium since ASU began keeping track in 2000.

ASU's 2013 game against Stanford was 54 degrees at kickoff, while the 2007 Territorial Cup game against the UA was 58 degrees.

The 1992 Territorial Cup game, played in Tucson, was the coldest game on record before Saturday. That game was 53 degrees at kickoff.

The Sun Devils' Aug. 29 opener against Kent State was 102 degrees at kickoff — exactly twice as hot as Saturday's game.

Drought ends

Midway through the second quarter, Arizona quarterback Khalil Tate connected with wide receiver Jamarye Joiner for a 48-yard touchdown that gave the Wildcats a 7-3 advantage.

The lead was Arizona's first since Oct. 26, when Arizona led at Stanford in a game it would eventually lose.

Joiner is the second Tucsonan in four years to score a touchdown in the Territorial Cup game. Former Salpointe Catholic High School player Cam Denson returned an interception for a touchdown in the 2015 game.

Another Zendejas

What's a Territorial Cup game without a Zendejas kicking? ASU's Christian Zendejas became the fifth member of the family to be a part of the Territorial Cup game on Saturday. Zendejas joined the Sun Devils as a walk-on in 2017, earning the starting job this season. He made his first eight attempts, including a game-winner at Michigan State, and was rewarded with a scholarship.

Zendejas is the son of former ASU kicker Luis Zendejas, who played in the NFL for the Vikings, Cowboys and Eagles. Christian's uncle Max and cousin Alex both kicked for the UA; his other uncle Alan, Luis' brother, was ASU's kicker from 1987-89.

Christian accounted for all six of ASU's first-half points on Saturday.

The big number

8 Years since the Wildcats last beat ASU in Tempe. Nick Foles was in his senior year as UA's quarterback and Tim Kish was the interim head coach after Mike Stoops was fired.

ADOT chiming in?

Arizona Department of Transportation posted digital signs along Interstate 10 between Tucson and Tempe on Saturday.

The message: "Be a Territorial Driver, Use Your Blinker."

Grass field problems

The Wildcats still managed to make their presence felt before Saturday's kickoff.

Call it the Sparky stomp. ASU's field management team painted a new logo at midfield for the Territorial Cup of the Sparky head with the outline of the state of Arizona underneath it.

The Wildcats weren't fans. The players went out on the field during pregame warmups and dug small divots on the logo.

Luckily for the Wildcats, ASU won't be able get even. The UA plays on FieldTurf, which is practically divot-proof.

Onward

Eagle-eyed TV-watchers might have noticed "O2V" painted on both 25-yard lines at Sun Devil Stadium. The meaning: "Onward to victory," a line from ASU's fight song. "Maroon and Gold" goes, in part:

Cheer, cheer for A-S-U.
Fight for the Old Maroon.
For it's hail, hail, the gang's all here
And it's onward to victory!
Yes, we know it doesn't rhyme.

First-half leads

Arizona led 7-6 at halftime Saturday, marking the fourth time in as many years that they've taken an advantage into the break in the Territorial Cup game.

Arizona went on to lose two of its previous three games, losing 42-30 in 2017 and 41-40 last season after leading by 10 and eight points at the break, respectively.

The Wildcats held a 28-14 halftime lead in 2016, and went on to win 56-35.

— Justin Spears and Alec White



JOSH GALEMORE / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Jamarye Joiner scores on his 48-yard touchdown in the first half that gave UA a 7-3 lead. He also scored on a 2-yard catch in the fourth quarter.

FOOTBALL

Continued from Page AB1

its best halves of the season in the opening 30 minutes, limiting the Sun Devils to six points and 146 yards.

But the turnovers, two missed field goals and an inability to stop Benjamin in the second half doomed the Wildcats.

A pair of Benjamin touchdown runs — the second following Tate's third interception — gave ASU a 21-7 lead through three quarters. Cristian Zendejas' third field goal — following Lucas Havrisik's second miss — made it 24-7 with 7:16 remaining.

Tate connected with Jamarye Joiner — who had a career night — for a 2-yard touchdown with 4:48 remaining to make it 24-14. The ensuing onside kick attempt was unsuccessful.

The game was scoreless after the first quarter. Arizona's best scoring chance came on its second series. Tate's 29-yard scramble on third-and-15 advanced the ball to the ASU 36-yard line. The drive stalled at the 29. On fourth-and-3, Sumlin elected to try a 47-yard field goal. Havrisik missed it wide left.

Later in the period, Arizona against faced fourth-and-short, needing 2 yards from the UA 40. Sumlin decided to go for it this time, but Evan Fields got pressure on Tate, forcing an incomplete pass.

ASU quickly advanced into the red zone on a 25-yard pass from Jayden Daniels to Brandon Aiyuk. But a sack by Justin Belknap — the senior's first of the season — derailed the drive. Zendejas' 33-yard field goal gave the Sun Devils a 3-0 lead with 13:07 left in the first half.

After an exchange of punts, the UA offense — which had been quiet since homecoming — finally got going. Tate's 20-yard pass to Jalen Johnson converted a third-and-6. Tate then hit Joiner for a 48-yard touchdown. Joiner notched career highs with seven catches, 140 yards and two TDs in his first Territorial Cup.

The score gave Arizona a 7-3 lead — its first in a game since the first quarter against Stanford on Oct. 26. It was also Tate's first touchdown pass since that game.

The Wildcats had a chance to expand their advantage late in the

first half, advancing to the ASU 24. But on first-and-10, Tate threw his first interception. Freshman receiver Boobie Curry didn't look back for the ball, which sailed past him into the arms of ASU cornerback Jack Jones.

The Sun Devils advanced to the UA 6 after the interception. But with only five seconds left in the half, Edwards elected to kick a field goal. Zendejas' 24-yarder at the buzzer trimmed Arizona's lead to one.

That interception turned out to be pivotal. Arizona could have led 10-3 or 14-3 entering the half. By early in the third quarter, ASU had the lead again.

The Sun Devils got the ball to start the third quarter and marched 75 yards in 11 plays for the go-ahead touchdown. A la the Wildcats in the second half of the 2016 matchup, ASU didn't throw a single pass. Benjamin capped the drive with a bruising 6-yard run to put the Sun Devils up 13-7.

Tate's second pick came on the next series.

He threw the ball deep down the right sideline toward Cedric Peterson, who stopped running as the ball sailed over his head. Jones again was the beneficiary.

After a three-and-out forced by the UA defense — which deserved a better fate — Tate threw a perfect pass to Smith on third-and-9. But Smith couldn't handle it, and the ball caromed to ASU linebacker Merlin Robertson.

Extra points

- Arizona again shuffled its offensive line, welcoming back four players who had been out because of injuries. **Jordan Morgan, Josh McCauley, Cody Creason and Paiton Fears** returned to the lineup. Creason had missed the previous five games, McCauley the past two. Morgan and Fears sat out last week. The Wildcats haven't started the same offensive line two weeks in a row since the first two games of Pac-12 play.

- Morgan was reinjured at some point in the first half and didn't play the rest of the way.

- Defensive tackle **Myles Tapuso** (undisclosed) did not suit up. Tapuso started the previous two games at nose guard. He recorded 12 tackles and one sack in his first season as a Wildcat.



Arizona wide receiver Cedric Peterson tears up following the team's loss. UA has lost three straight games to ASU in the Territorial Cup.



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GAME SUMMARY

Arizona 0 7 0 7-14
Arizona State 0 6 15 3-24

SECOND QUARTER

- ASU: Zendejas 33 field goal, 13:07. Drive: 6 plays, 25 yards, 2:07

ASU 3, Arizona 0

- Arizona: Joiner 48 pass from Tate (Havrisik kick), 7:04. drive: 6 plays, 83 yards, 2:13

Arizona 7, ASU 3

- ASU: Zendejas 24 field goal, 0:00. Drive: 7 plays, 69 yards, 1:50

Arizona 7, ASU 6

THIRD QUARTER

- ASU: Benjamin 6 run (Zendejas kick), 9:30. Drive: 11 plays, 75 yards, 5:30

ASU 13, Arizona 7

- ASU: Benjamin 1 run (Daniels run), 1:20. Drive: 7 plays, 49 yards, 2:45

ASU 21, Arizona 7

FOURTH QUARTER

- ASU: Zendejas 26 field goal, 7:16. Drive: 12 plays, 72 yards, 6:29

ASU 24, Arizona 7

- Arizona: Joiner 2 pass from Tate (Havrisik kick), 4:48. Drive: 9 plays, 66 yards, 2:20

ASU 24, Arizona 14

GAME STATISTICS

TEAM STATISTICS	UA	ASU							
FIRST DOWNS	19	23	Berryhill III	1	7	0	7	7.0	
NET YARDS PASSING	228	104	Brightwell	1	6	0	6	6.0	
Comp-Att.	22-38	12-19	Peterson	1	5	0	5	5.0	
Yards per attempt	6.0	5.5	KICKING	FG	LG	XP	Pts		
Yards per completion	10.4	8.7	Havrisik	0-2	—	2-2	2		
Had intercepted	3	0	KICK RETURNS	No	Yds	Avg	LG	TD	
NET YARDS RUSHING	155	234	Taylor	3	67	22.3	30	0	
Rushing attempts	32	55	Curry	1	22	22.0	22	0	
Yards per rush	4.8	4.3	PUNT RETURNS	No	Yds	Avg	LG	TD	
TOTAL YARDS	383	338	Joiner	1	6	6.0	6	0	
Total offensive plays	70	74	PUNTING	No	Yds	Avg	Long	TB	-20
Yards per play	5.5	4.6	Ostendorp	2	64	32.0	39	0	0
Third-down conversions	7-15	7-16	Aragon	1	56	56.0	56	1	0
Fourth-down conversions	0-1	0-1	ARIZONA STATE						
Penalties-yards	8-90	4-45	PASSING	Com-Att	Yds	TD	Int		
Fumbles lost	0	0	Daniels	12-19	104	0	0		
Time of possession	25:31	34:29	RUSHING	Att	Yds	TD	Long	Avg	

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PASSING	Com-Att	Yds	TD	Int	
Tate	22-38	228	2	3	
RUSHING	Att	Yds	TD	Long	Avg
Tate	11	78	0	29	7.1
Taylor	14	48	0	11	3.4
Brightwell	5	22	0	10	4.4
Smith	2	7	0	6	3.5
RECEIVING	No	Yds	TD	Long	Avg
Joiner	7	140	2	48	20.0
Johnson	1	20	0	20	20.0
Taylor	3	19	0	18	6.3
Casteel	6	18	0	10	3.0
Cunningham	2	13	0	9	6.5

SUMLIN

Continued from Page AB1

loss, saying that he understands fans' frustration but urging them to trust the process. Gunnell, a two-time Sumlin recruit (at Texas A&M and Arizona) is expected to take over at quarterback in 2020, and the Wildcats have some promising young players on offense. Arizona's defense will take on the identity of its new coordinator, whoever that is, and his fellow assistants.

"We have a process that I believe in, and that our players believe in," he said. "... You can't go

back and do a bunch of different things differently. But how you respond to this is going to be extremely important."

Heeke said Sumlin "will do the things that need to be done to get Arizona back on track as a program." Sumlin and most of the UA's assistants will hit the road directly from Tempe. There's no time to waste: The early signing period begins later this month, and the Wildcats have just 13 verbal commitments.

"We have no reason not to be committed to Coach Sumlin, to Kevin, and the process he has put in place," Heeke said.