

Football: USC offense looks to get back on track vs. CU Buffs

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What's wrong with the USC offense?

That's what they're wondering in Los Angeles, despite the No. 11 Trojans' 5-1 overall record (3-1 in the Pac-12).

When Matt Barkley cited "unfinished business" as his reason for returning to USC instead of entering the NFL Draft, the senior quarterback was hinting at winning a national championship and perhaps a Heisman Trophy.

After all, the Trojans are loaded, especially at wide receiver (Marqise Lee, Robert Woods) and running back (Silas Redd, Curtis McNeal).

Despite all of the skill and talent, USC is seventh in the Pac-12 in total offense (415.2 ypg) and fourth in scoring offense (32.3 ppg) entering Saturday's game against Colorado at the L.A. Coliseum (4 p.m., Pac-12 Networks).

The Trojans' encountered a major road block on the road to the BCS title game with a 21-14 loss at Stanford on Sept. 15.

Barkley, the preseason Heisman Trophy favorite, needs a spectacular second half of the season to take home the hardware at the Downtown Athletic Club. He is currently fifth in the conference in passing (245.8 ypg) with 16 touchdowns and six interceptions.

"I continue to remind myself there's one goal and that's to win the game," USC head coach Lane Kiffin told the Los Angeles Times after his team's 24-14 win at Washington. "Are the numbers what we're used to? No. But we won."

Barkley completed 10 of 20 passes for 167 yards with one touchdown and one interception against the Huskies.

Meanwhile, the Buffs' defense gave up 593 yards during last Thursday's 51-17 loss to Arizona State.

Taylor Kelly completed 20 of 28 passes for 308 yards and five touchdowns. The Sun Devils also rushed for 261 net yards.

"We go back and figure out what we did wrong this game, fix it, and go back into film study for (USC)," CU defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe said. "This is a great team we're going to go play, nationally ranked, and we have to bring our 'A' game against these boys."

CU is last in the Pac-12 in total defense (494.2 ypg) and scoring defense (41.3 ppg).

Last season Barkley threw for 318 yards and a USC record six touchdown passes during a 42-17 victory over the Buffs at Folsom Field.

"I'm very excited because they have a lot of great receivers, and I feel like we have to come out and compete and play hard," CU freshman cornerback Kenneth Crawley said. "We've just got to come back to practice, hit the film, and study on those guys. Their offense is explosive, and we need to make plays."

CU is hoping to get senior safety Ray Polk back for the first time since the opener against Colorado State when he

suffered a serious ankle sprain. The defense could use some leadership after allowing 31 points in the second half against Arizona State.

USC opened as a 40-point favorite over CU in Las Vegas.

"We have a tough schedule, but the whole season is tough," junior safety Parker Orms said. "We're going to go in there and we're going to fix things like we always try to do and we're going to play the best we can against them."

The road won't get any easier on Oct. 27 when the Buffs (1-5, 1-2) travel to Eugene to face No. 2 Oregon.

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