



USC vs. Arizona
Galen Center • Los Angeles, Calif.
Saturday, March 9, 2024
Final: USC 78, Arizona 65

- With the 78-65 win tonight, USC improved to 14-17, 8-12 and Arizona fell to 24-7 (15-5). USC is 9-7 all-time against Arizona at the Galen Center. USC's win snapped a six-game losing streak to the Wildcats.
- USC's win over No. 5 Arizona was USC's first over a top 5 team since defeating No. 4 UCLA on Jan. 19, 2008 in Westwood. It was also the first win over a top 5 team at the Galen Center.
- USC has won three consecutive games for the first time this season.
- USC held Arizona to a season low in points tonight. Their previous low for points scored was 70 in a 73-70 loss at Washington State on Jan. 13.
- USC has won 4 of its last 5 games and 5 of its last 7 games.
- USC led 34-30 at halftime. USC made 46.4 of its first-half shots, while Arizona made 36.4 of its shots. Arizona outrebounded USC 23-14 in the first half.
- Freshman guard Isaiah Collier scored 16 points and had 5 assists. Despite missing 6 games due to injury, he now has 105 assists to move into 10th on USC all-time freshman assist list.
- Fifth-year guard Boogie Ellis scored 5 points and had 3 assists tonight. He also made one three-pointer to give him 219 career three-pointers as a Trojan, breaking his fifth-place tie on USC's all-time list with Brandon Granville (1999-02). He also now has scored 1,443 career points as a Trojan, moving into 13th on USC's all-time scoring list, passing Brian Scalabrine (1999-01). Dwight Lewis (2007-10) is 12th on the list with 1,460 points.
- Junior guard Kobe Johnson scored 19 points and had 4 assists and 6 steals. It was his 7th career game with 5 or more steals. Johnson has 23 steals in the last 6 games.
- Grad transfer DJ Rodman scored a season-high 19 points on 7 of 8 shooting and had 7 rebounds. He has averaged 15.7 points in his last 3 games (47 total), scoring in double figures each game.
- Freshman Bronny James scored 5 points, had a season-high 6 rebounds and 2 steals tonight. He also hit a key 3-pointer just before halftime to give USC a 34-30 lead at the break.
- USC had a season-high 15 steals tonight, its 9th game this season with 10 or more steals. The last time USC had 15 or more steals was March 8, 2017 vs. Washington, when it also had 15. It was USC's most steals vs. an AP top 5 team on record. The previous best was 14 vs. No. 4 North Carolina on Nov. 22, 1999.
- USC held Arizona to 38.7 percent shooting tonight, its second-lowest shooting percentage of the season. The Wildcats came into the game with a 49.6 field goal percentage.
- Despite allowing Arizona to get 14 offensive rebounds, USC outscored the Wildcats 9-2 on second-chance points.
- USC's starting three guards outscored Arizona's starting three guards 40-12 tonight.
- USC played before 8,976 fans tonight, its 22nd game this season playing before crowds of 6,000 or more. The last season USC played in more games in front of crowds of 6,000 or more was the 2008-09 season when it played 23 of 35 games in front of crowds of 6,000 or more.
- USC started a lineup of guards Boogie Ellis Isaiah Collier and Kobe Johnson, and forwards DJ Rodman and Joshua Morgan. This lineup was USC's season-opening lineup. USC is now 10-4 in games with this starting lineup.
- Forward Arrinten Page missed his second consecutive game with flu-like symptoms.
- USC's next game will be at the Pac-12 Tournament on March 13 at T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, Nev.

ANDY ENFIELD QUOTES:

Opening Statement: "Another good win for our team. The guys played hard, defended at a high level, they are coming together as a team and put together a little winning streak here before we go to Vegas, proud of our guys. They've really improved since we got healthy and started to be able to practice, they have put in the games now, and they're playing a pretty high level"



On defending Caleb Love: "He averages 23 on the road, 21 overall in league, he's a terrific scorer. We tried to contest every shot he took, especially as threes, he went Oh for six. And then we just tried to switch zone and our man, we just tried to pressure him and make him put the ball on the floor, and fortunately it worked today. He's a really good player."

On the season: "We had our two best players get hurt at the same time and our starting center, and we lost six games in a row and couldn't score 70 points. At Washington Boogie and Isaiah had 48 points between them. Since they've been back, I think everybody has elevated their game. I thought this was the team we were going to have in mid January because we beat Cal and Stanford and scored 93 and 84. I didn't anticipate the run was going to be losses instead of wins. So unfortunately, that really hurt our season because it's hard to lose six in a row without your two leading scorers who happen to be your two lead guards. Josh being out with his sickness losing 15 pounds hurt us as well. Unfortunately, we had to go through some injuries. But really, we're all very proud, our staff very proud of these guys."

On what the win means: "It was important for us to play well today. Win or lose. Fortunately we won. They are an outstanding basketball team. They score 90 points a game and they're very explosive. They play very fast and they have great size. Talk to me about having a guy that averages 17 and 11, Ballo (Oumar Ballo) averages 11 rebounds a game and so anytime you got a guy like that in a low post, and for some reason, you're gonna get in foul trouble. It's amazing. With all that physicality he had one foul today, it's incredible. In regards to start making threes and he's controlling the paint, they're hard to play against. So it's very important for us to try to come out here and play on senior night and get some momentum going into Vegas."

On DJ Rodman's play tonight: "Terrific. Play with heart, play with energy, seven for eight from the field. He had seven rebounds, he was great. Senior Night, that's what it's all about."

On going into Vegas: "We just have to have a few good days of practicing with some confidence, I think our guys should be confident. The two games we lost in these last seven games we lost double overtime, where we gave the game away by missing free throws and layups down the stretch. Then we lost a one possession game up in Pullman where we led most of the game, so hopefully we've learned from some of our mistakes in the last three or four minutes of games. We have to go into Vegas confident, and also understand that the margin of error is very small, and we know that because we've been on the wrong side of a few games this year."

DJ RODMAN QUOTES:

On his game tonight: "It feels good, making shots obviously. For me and especially, if I make my first one I know I'm gonna have a good game. So I'm just way more excited that we won rather than my own stats. Winning is what we want to do and what we plan to do from the beginning of the season. It feels good to be undefeated in March, even though I just started, we're just starting, so I'm happy about it."

On the win: "It feels great beating them obviously. I had the opportunity to beat them last year. So I mean, beating Arizona is always fun and especially since we haven't beat them for a minute. I don't even know how long but it feels great. You know, I like to wear my heart on my sleeves and that shows a lot so I like being hype, I like making plays, and I like when my teammates make plays, especially when CKobe steals. I'm more hype than they are for themselves."

On WSU: "I said some things at the beginning of the year and obviously I was proven wrong. I didn't say it out of any negativity at all, I wasn't trashing them at all, I am happy for them, that's my second home. I hope that we can play them and beat them, hopefully we see them again in the Pac-12 tournament."

KOBE JOHNSON QUOTES:

On the game: "Every time we play Arizona, we know it's gonna be a physical, physical game, so we knew coming into it right away that we needed to be the more physical team. The game plan the whole week, we did focus a lot on Caleb Love because we know how good of a player he is and how good he can be."



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So we tried to pressure him, trying to make them take some tough shots, which I think we did perfectly. So I think we all follow the game plan exactly how we should have and I think the results show for themselves."

On the win: "Like DJ said, it's an amazing win. This is my first time beating Arizona, it just feels amazing. To be able to win this game at this time of year, especially with the season we had, I felt like this is exactly what we needed. I don't think we can take our foot off the pedal quite yet because we still have four more games to win, but I think this is the perfect boost to give us going into the Pac-12 Tournament."

On Ballo: "With Ballo, I think you just gotta be physical with him because you're not gonna just move him out of the way completely. You can move him off track, but you have to keep a body on him at all times. I think our bigs tried their best. I think we all tried to help rebound, help them out, but he was gonna get some offensive rebound just because he's so big. I felt like we did a good job detaining him, making him score the ball a lot more than the others. Just because he had a great game, I felt like we still stuck to our defensive principles."

ARIZONA HEAD COACH TOMMY LLOYD:

On Arizona tonight:

We didn't have good rhythm on offense so I've got to give USC credit on defense. Today was USC's day.

We never got a rhythm so that's it. We turned the ball over a lot which probably helped with their offense a bit but not taking anything away from USC, they were a lot better than we were today.

You've got to connect passes to the same colored jersey. You've got to be better at that and we just weren't today. We'll take a look at it and figure it out and if there's something that needs to be addressed, it will be. I'll give SC credit for disruption but we didn't handle disruption.