



USC SPORTS INFORMATION OFFICE • HER 103 • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90089-0601
TELEPHONE: (213) 740-8480 • FAX: (213) 740-7584 • WEB: USCTROJANS.COM

USC POSTGAME NOTES

USC vs. Washington

United Airlines Field at the L.A. Memorial Coliseum – Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023

Team	1Q	2Q	3Q	4Q	Final
Washington	7	28	7	10	52
USC	14	14	14	0	42

- With the 52-42 loss today, USC fell to 7-3, 5-2 and Washington improved to 9-0, 6-0. USC is now 51*-31-4 all-time vs. Washington (one win vacated due to NCAA penalty, original record 52-31-4). Today's game was USC's 100th Homecoming Weekend. USC is 67*-28-4 in Homecoming games (one win vacated due to NCAA penalty, original record 68-28-4). Today was the first time USC had played Washington since the 2019 season, and the first time at the Coliseum since the 2015 season.
- Today's game was a sellout of 72,243.
- With today's loss, the Trojans have lost consecutive home games for the first time since falling on Nov. 20, 2021 vs. UCLA (33-62) and Nov. 27, 2021 vs. BYU (31-35)
- Washington has won 16 consecutive games, second-longest active streak among FBS schools.
- USC's 42 points today were the most Washington allowed in a game this season (previous high 33 twice – Oregon and Stanford).
- There were 10 combined scoring drives of 75 yards or more today.
- The 35 first-half points by Washington were the most points the Huskies have ever scored in a game against the Trojans. (previous high of 34 in 1960, now 52).
- The combined 63 points in the first half were the most in a Pac-12 game in five seasons.
- The 4 TDs by Washington in the second quarter tied a USC opponent record for most TDs in one quarter (7th time, last Oregon in 2019).
- USC scored a TD on its first drive of the game which used 6:04 on the clock. It was the seventh opening drive this season in which the Trojans scored a touchdown. USC also had a field goal in one opening drive and have now scored points on 8 of its first 10 opening drives this season.
- USC's 14 first-quarter points are the most allowed by Washington in the first quarter this season. They had allowed a total of 23 points in the first quarter this season (previous high of 8 by Oregon).
- USC had two rushing plays in a second quarter drive of over 30 yards (Barlow -43, Jones – 31). The longest rush previously allowed by Washington in a game this season was 24 yards.
- **QB Caleb Williams** was 27-for-35 for 312 yards and 3 passing touchdowns. He also had a rushing touchdown to give him 4 TD plays on the day. Williams has had 8 games this season in which he has accounted for 4 TDs or more.
- **RB Raleek Brown** scored on a 2-yard TD run on USC's first drive of the game. It was Brown's first carry of the season. Brown had 3 rushing touchdowns and 3 receiving touchdowns last season as a freshman. Brown finished the game with 3 carries for 16 yards and the rushing TD. He also had 2 catches for 4 yards.
- **RB Darwin Barlow** had a 1-yard touchdown run in the second quarter. The previous play Barlow had a season-best 43-yard run. It was his first TD run of the season and 11th of his career. Those were his only 2 carries in the game.
- **RB Austin Jones** had 11 rushes for 127 yards. It was his first 100-yard rushing game this season, fourth as a Trojan.
- **WR Tahj Washington** caught a 41-yard TD pass in the second quarter. He finished the game with 8 catches for 122 yards. It was his fourth 100-yard receiving game of the season and seventh of his USC career.
- **WR Mario Williams** caught a 20-yard touchdown pass in the third quarter to tie the game at 42-all. Williams had 4 catches for 42 yards and the one score.
- **CB Christian Roland-Wallace** intercepted a Penix Jr. pass in the end zone. It was his second INT of the season (the first at Colorado) and the fourth of his career. He also recorded 3 tackles and 1 PBU.
- **WR Duce Robinson** blocked a Washington punt late in the first quarter. It was his first career blocked punt. It was USC's second blocked punt of the season (Romello Height at Colorado). Prior to that, USC had not blocked a punt since Jake Russell blocked a punt at UCLA in 2018.



POSTGAME QUOTES | USC

USC vs. Washington

United Airlines Field at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum | Los Angeles, Calif.

Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023

HEAD COACH LINCOLN RILEY

On defensive struggles:

"We didn't play very well tonight. Biggest thing was the run game. Way too many big plays, and then some of our worst ball was on some of the biggest plays of the game. Like the third and extra-long where we had a chance to sack him and he gets out and makes a crazy play there in the end zone. A couple other key third-down plays where we had chances to get off the field and we didn't. We did not make enough plays obviously to get enough stops to win."

On if there are any frustrations:

"Just in the moment, you know. Everybody wants to write the whole story of the whole thing and all that's happened. Every week is its own season for us. We were in the moment right now to try to go beat a top-five team here, and we were agonizingly close — maybe one holding call from getting that done. So we're just fighting like crazy every week to play as good as we can and not get too wrapped up in all the big-picture stuff right now. There's too much left to play for. So we're going to go prepare hard. Caleb's going to go prepare hard. Try and get past this one and get onto another big opportunity next week."

On the team's current morale:

"Right now, just 5-10 minutes after the game, we're pissed. We're pissed that we've missed this opportunity. They continue to swing; they continue to fight. It's been a tough stretch. I was talking to the crew here yesterday, and Chris Fowler made the comment that he looked at everybody's schedules and couldn't believe the nine-game stretch that we have right now. He said nobody else in the country has anything like it, and he's right. The way it's played out, the league is really strong and how it's all felt, yeah, it's been a tough stretch. It's a tough stretch of games. As a coach, when you go through tough stretches — I'm lucky I haven't been through too many — but you look for things. You look for, is the fight there in the team? And the fight is certainly there in this football team. We've seen that over the last few weeks. Coming into this game, we had four games in a row where we'd been down double-digit points at some point and we came back and gave ourselves a chance to win every one of them. We got two of them and agonizingly close to a third. The fight and all that is what's given us a chance. I think our guys are frustrated that we've been so, so close, and we haven't played good enough to be able to separate. We've had some errors in the last few weeks that have cost us. We've had a couple of bad breaks. Felt like we got more of the good ones last year and feels like more of the bad ones have just went against us. That's the nature of it when they're close, man, it comes down to just so many little things. Agonizingly close, certainly not defeated. There's a good group in there, a lot of character in that room, a lot of character on this staff — a lot of people that love being at USC and love fighting for this team and this program and our fans, and we're gonna continue to do so."

On defending Washington's ground game:

"I gotta watch it, but obviously it wasn't good enough, not by any stretch of the imagination. Couple of big plays in the run game certainly at opportune times. We played to try to limit some of the downfield stuff for them in the throw game, which we did a pretty decent job of. But we knew we had to be able to hold up in the run game to be able to do it, and we certainly just did not play nearly well enough."

On trouble limiting explosive plays by Washington:

"It's a good offense. It's a really good offense, and you know that you're going to have to be able to make some of your plays. They're going to make plays. They're going to make big plays against just about everybody. You got to make yours, and we had a couple. Obviously the pick and a couple of stops, but not as many as we should have. To me the third and extra-long scramble touchdown — that and the holding penalty at the end, I know my guys up top weren't real fired up about the call and we'll obviously get a look at it; that was a monumental play, that was probably the game — and then the sequence there before half with the fumble then score. I mean, that's the game. Other than that, it's two good teams trading jabs, trading blows, man, and that's what it came down to. Unfortunately it didn't fall in our favor."

On how he's been handling the defense this season:

"I'm not into the big-picture questions right now. My job is to go try to beat Oregon next week and to coach what we have here. I know as the head coach that all falls under my responsibility ultimately, and I don't shy away from that and I never have, but there are times and places for those discussions and those will happen at the appropriate times."

On approach to getting team going against Oregon:

"You just go play. I tell the guys, you don't sign up at the beginning of the year and put all this work and all the sacrifice we do just to say, 'Alright, well, only if everything goes great are we going to stick with it.' You're a phony if you do that, and that's not what this program is about. That's not what we're building. It will never be about that, and I don't think we have anybody in our locker room that feels that way. We battled our ass off and again, kind of like after Utah, we're probably one of about 20 different plays going different from being in here celebrating saying 'we got a win over a top-five team.' It's one deal, so we have to fight to make those here in the next few weeks. We get to play two great opponents that, like us, are at the top of the standings here. We still have a great opportunity. If we can go win these two games, we have a great opportunity, and that's what our focus is going to be."

On decision to run the ball during final possession:

"I haven't seen the stats, but probably the fact that we were averaging close to 10 yards a carry."

On potential changes defensively to make progress:

"You evaluate everything that you're doing. You evaluate the positions you're putting the guys in, you evaluate the calls and then it goes back to is the problem the calls, is it the player, is it the execution of the call, or what is it. And you just keep grinding to fix it because every week's new. Every week's new matchups, it's a new game. Like I said, it's like every week is its own season, and so you're going to go put together the best plan you can with the guys that we have and battle like hell and try to go get a tough road win."

On if it's debilitating for players to experience multiple tough losses:

"You just you just play the game. I would say, I don't believe so. The reality is this team has all shared plenty, in the wins and the losses. It's a team game and the game flows based on how well the team can play together and so, no."

On playing without MarShawn Lloyd today:

"He has an injury from the Cal game and we found out about mid-week that he wasn't going to be available. I thought the guys stepped in and played well. I thought the O-Line did some really good things against a very talented front. Obviously Austin (Jones) had a productive game, Darwin (Barlow) came in there, Raleek (Brown) came in there and the guys did a nice job filling in for MarShawn."

JUSTIN DEDICH, OL

On the locker room postgame:

"Yeah it's just one of those things. How we respond is going to determine the rest of our season, so we have to keep our heads up and keep fighting every week and having practices that are at an elite level. We still got two more games."

On the week's prep for Washington:

"Obviously it was a great opponent, they're a great team. We prepared, had a great week of practice. Just had the wrong turnout."

CALEN BULLOCK, S

On big runs:

All the big runs I would say when somebody is not in their gap or somebody's not lined up. That's what happens, you see big runs. Preach everyone doing their job and big runs, just too many explosives."

On secondary handling passing game:

"We have to work on some things, like I said, we lost so, we didn't do a good job."

CALEB WILLIAMS, QB

On fourth-quarter sack:

"They ran a twist and dude came around the edge. Tried to move up, he grabbed my shoulder - sack."

On his emotions after the loss:

"I want to go home and cuddle my dog and watch some shows. We lost the game, something we work hard for throughout months, years, for big games like this, to try and go win and play your best - each and every one of us. We came out with a loss today so emotionally, I want to go home and I want to lay with my dog."

SHANE LEE, ILB

On explosive plays snowballing:

"Yeah, it definitely can snowball but that's just going back to everybody doing their job and being in the right spot. Communication pre-snap."

MASON COBB, ILB

On the biggest issue with the defense:

"I would say the biggest issue maybe was just too many explosives. You guys can notice the difference between when guys are there to make the play and when guys are not. That's kind of the biggest thing for me was explosive runs. It just kind of looked like guys weren't ready to make the play. That's something that we have been trying to work on and were just biting ourselves again."

On recalibrating and finding confidence for future games:

"Put our head down and keep doing the same stuff. We keep preaching in practice, it's just gotta be the same work."

TAHJ WASHINGTON, WR

On his "La Victoria" touchdown celebration:

"That was the first time I got the opportunity to do it. Every time I do it, 16 pounds of food gets donated to the food pantry, so, just the opportunity to do something and make the most of it."





USC SPORTS BRANDS & COMMUNICATIONS | HERITAGE HALL | LOS ANGELES, CA. 90089-0601
PHONE: 213-740-8480 | FAX: 213-740-7584 | WEB: USCTROJANS.COM

VISITORS POSTGAME QUOTES | WASHINGTON

USC vs. Washington

United Airlines Field at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum | Los Angeles, Calif.

Saturday, Nov. 4, 2023

HEAD COACH KALEN DEBOER

Opening Statement:

"Super proud of the way our team fought tonight. We finished, that's the big thing, 10-0 in the fourth quarter. That's the difference in the game. Got a couple of big stops. One at the end of the half, which gained the short field and took advantage of that, and then the stop on third down to force them to punt and great drive. The guys stayed with it, as far as the run game and seeing DJ (Dillon Johnson) do what we knew he is capable of doing. Special teams even just with Grady (Gross) kicking a big field goal there to give us the lead, and just a lot of guys stepping up and in the biggest moments. I feel like that's what we do best, is when the lights are brightest our guys are ready to play. Excited about the way we bounced back, considering everyone's thoughts on what we were doing the last couple of weeks. You know, we continue to win."

On changing the game plan to running the ball:

"It certainly helps, I mean all those runs were in the game plan, so having the ability to run deep in your own territory and rattle off probably a 50-yard plus run when you're backed up inside your own ten, that's a big deal. All of the sudden, you're in plus territory and so it takes the heat off Mike (Michael Penix Jr.). It allows other guys to get touches and DJ had a hot hand and he's just doing what we really thought he could do when he came to our program when we saw the film a year ago. It's just fun seeing the work he's put in to get himself in the condition and the speed that he's at right now. The physicality he's playing with; he needed every bit of it. I'm proud of him, proud of the offensive line, the receiving corps. Some of those perimeter runs, those guys popping guys. It takes a team effort to run the football, these things that maybe we weren't doing the last couple of weeks, but we did tonight."

On scoring the most points against a USC football team:

"I did not (know about scoring the most points versus USC). I mean 52 is quite a few, but I didn't know that."

On the growth of Michael Penix Jr.:

"There's the big moments where you just entrust him with getting the protections right, you win again. This has happened now both years, but when he's seeing the same thing that we're talking about on the side, he's seeing the whole field. He's not just executing the play, reading one defender, he's seeing everything and when he gets on the headphone, he knows and is right on the same page with coach (Ryan) Grubb and the rest of the staff. The thing is, when it doesn't go perfect, he just owns it and knows that he needs to come back and be even better. But you know that doesn't happen too often, because he's on point. I just think his leadership, and being willing to put it on him during the week of practice and just his energy is what we thrive off of. There's other great leaders in our program and on offense, but when he's on point and leading the way, it's just a different day."

On emotional week for Zion Tupuola-Fetui:

"I think early in the week he just said, 'I'm going to be there and play.' He's got a smile that lights up a room. He just makes everything when he's around, just so positive. Having him with us here today, knowing what he's capable of doing on the field, that was a big boost for us. We needed his relentlessness, just his pursuit, his passion. I know that he was playing that game not just for himself tonight, he was playing that game for his dad as well. The emotions came out here afterwards, but that's to be expected. It's been a heartbreak for him, but couldn't be more proud, we all love him."

On the high-scoring game:

"I mean they're one of the top couple of offenses in the country, right? I mean I know we're up there too. They've gotten there, at this point in the season, by scoring a lot of points and getting a lot of yards. And you can see the playmakers they have on the field. I mean, Caleb Williams is one thing. You would have thought we had him hemmed up a couple of times, but he's gonna be out there once in a while just making people miss and then putting the ball where he needs to. That fourth down play in the third quarter, I thought we had him. With two guys making a play, and some great players around him, some offensive lineman around him and a good run game, they're supportive. They're a really tough offense to defend and we knew that coming in, and so we just knew we had to go blow for blow, you know, and keep smiling and fight. That's what our guys did, and at some point, someone's gonna make a big play. We did that a couple of times tonight."

On players thoughts regarding the high scoring game:

"I mean they're confident. They're confident because we've done it, and not just one game. We've done it for a couple of years now with the same guys. I do think that there's been big stops, and those big wins that set us up. We had to go the length of the field, but getting a stop on third down, enforcing the punt in the fourth quarter, that was huge, because we had a three-point lead there. So, it's team football. It's guys knowing that if you just keep playing, we're gonna make that play, on both sides of the ball, but offensively there's certainly a lot of confidence that you can hit down field. You can hit sideline to sideline, and it's just automatic with DJ running the football, we can hit'em with the run too."

On he defense's resilience:

"There's something to be said about that, having some calls ready at those times and the guys executing and continuing to come in. We've constantly caused some problems there in the fourth quarter for teams, and like you said, it's just about the fight that our guys have."

On run game:

"We found fun ways to get the ball outside and then it really opens up the inside. I thought the box didn't dance. The linemen, I thought, were really on point with who they were going to on their assignments, and so everyone's doing their job. There's no reason we look at our offensive line and our running backs and shouldn't be able to run the football. That challenge was put out to them earlier in the week, last week, and we showed them the areas that we had just missed and what we're capable of. When you start churning and get given that momentum, it's tough to stop. You saw that the other way too, with some of the runs that they had. It's hard to get out and go inside and outside and then have passing go along with it."

On the defense hurting their CFP run:

"I think this week, it was a matter of you're given a short field one time, and then we held them to 14 points in the second half. There's times you want to make a play and you want to get off the football field. Again, you've got to give a little bit of credit to USC and what they were able to do this week. There's just a play here and there, I think we've all seen football. The time of possession heavily favored us this week; the last couple of weeks it's been the exact opposite. We've had some turnovers that put the defense in tough spots. We're always going to continue to improve. I do feel like we have the makings of what it takes to be a championship football team. It's going to take all phases: offense, defense and special teams."

ZION TUPUOLA-FETUI, EDGE

On his emotional week:

"It's been a week since I got the news. I got it, not too far north from here after the Stanford game. It's been a tough week for sure. I think the thing that really helped me to keep on going was just knowing my dad's love for me. My dad's love for football, and he would have loved this game. He would have loved to be in the Coliseum to watch us winning, and that performance that I put on today. This one was rough, but I think knowing that it's what he would have wanted, helped me out a little bit more."

On the meaning of the win:

"Yeah I think if we were to listen to outside noise, and there's a lot of negative things that can be said about our team, but we're very fortified and our belief in ourselves from before. We thought we're the best team in the country coming into the season. We just got to go out there and prove it every week. I know that there may be particular styles and ways that people want us to win, but a win's a win. You only need one point to win. So I think we played well. I mean, at the end of the day we made enough stops to beat them, defensively speaking. Offense showed up today, as I felt like we played a quality game, we had each other's backs. It's a team game, and I think that is what we exemplified today."

MICHAEL PENIX JR., QB

On anticipating a high scoring game:

"To be honest, the one thing I anticipated was a win. However it came, however it went about, that's all I anticipated. That's all we preached and that's all we were looking forward to today. We were able to get it done, we found ways to get it done and, whenever it mattered most we came up with it."

On getting revenge against USC:

"Oh, I didn't never said that. I never said anything about revenge. There's no revenge. This is my first time playing so what's the revenge? This is about winning. That's what we love to do and we're gonna continue to do so. There is no revenge."

On making the running game click:

"It's the work that the guys put in all week. We push the guys each and every rep and finish each and every rep. That's what we're going to do in the game. Those guys in the front played a heck of a game and I'm just so proud of them."



On his personal growth:

"Just maturing, as far as I know. Gaining experience and being a second year with these guys has definitely been something that helped us out, and helped us find different ways to win. I feel like whenever I came back, it was about getting a second year with these guys. I knew that we were gonna be able to do something special and we're doing it right now. We just got to continue to keep our foot on the pedal and never get complacent."

On the throw to Devin Culp Or, TE:

"I just had to leave the pocket. I got my eyes up and I saw him in the back of the endzone behind everybody else. Then I just gave him a shot at the ball."

DILLON JOHNSON, RB

On his performance:

"It's a special game. I don't even know how to put it into words. It's just God's plan, and God's timing. We were kind of struggling in a run game the last two weeks. The whole goal this week was to establish the run game and that's what we did."

On what did you see from USC's defense to run:

"We just wanted to be the most physical team. As I said, the last two weeks, we hadn't played up to our standards. We wanted to come out and be the most physical team. I said before, the most physical team is going to win this game and we were that."

On managing injuries:

"My coaches did a good job making sure that if I need fewer reps in practice, then I won't get as many reps in practice. Also, I stayed in the training room and I think that was the biggest thing for me because it was rough when I first got here. The injury I had coming to Washington, Washington did a great job getting me back onto my feet and getting my leg back. It would have never happened without the trainers and the coaching staff, so I'm pleased with that."

On runs outside:

"I don't dance anyway. I'm a physical runner, but the offensive line did a great job making holes for me. So my run game was pretty easy. I just hit whatever hole that was open. So it's pretty easy."

On his total rushing yards:

"I was definitely shocked. I was like 250 yards, that's crazy. My career-high is 100 yards. So that tells you a little bit right there."

On setting rushing records :

"It was a blessing from God. I'm blessed to be put in that position. I want to continue to establish myself and help the team win no matter what I have to do."

On USC slowing down:

"They were slowing down. They weren't pressuring as much as we thought they would. It made our day kind of easy."

