



17

ARKANSAS

VS RICE



38

SEPTEMBER 4, 2021

DONALD W. REYNOLDS RAZORBACK STADIUM

GAME NOTES

- » QB KJ Jefferson scored the first Arkansas TD of the year, on a career-long rush of 34 yards in the first quarter. It's the longest rush by a Razorback QB since Matt Jones' 72-yard TD run against Ole Miss on November 13, 2004
- » Jefferson is the first Arkansas QB to rush for two TDs in a game since Tyler Wilson against Ole Miss on Oct. 22, 2011.
- » Jefferson finished 12-of-21 passing for 128 yards and 1 TD and rushed for a career-high 89 yards with 2 TDs.
- » Jefferson is the first Arkansas player to run for at least 2 TDs and throw for a TD since RB Rawleigh Williams ran for 4 TDs and threw a TD pass on Nov. 18, 2016 against Mississippi State.
- » WR Treyton Burks made a catch in his 21st career game, and is one of seven players in the country to record a catch in every career game played (minimum 20 games). He led the team with five grabs for 42 yards.
- » With Arkansas' two interception game (Jalen Catalon 2x, Montaric Brown) the team has recorded multiple picks in four of 11 games since Barry Odom began his tenure as defensive coordinator.
- » RB Trelon Smith scored a TD in four of his last five games dating back to last season and finished with 102 rushing yards, his third career 100+ yard rushing game.
- » RB Dominique Johnson scored his first career TD in the fourth quarter.
- » LB Bumper Pool recorded the 10th double-digit tackle game of his career with 14 stops including 1.5 TFL.
- » DB Jalen Catalon posted the eighth double-digit tackle game of his career (11 stops) and a career-high two interceptions.
- » In his first collegiate game, K Cam Little went 1-for-1 on field goals converting a 34-yard field goal and made all four point after tries.
- » Arkansas scored 31 unanswered points to finish the game.
- » Arkansas racked up 245 rushing yards, eclipsing 200 rushing yards in the season-opener for the 10th time since 2000.
- » Arkansas scored 21 points in the fourth quarter for the first time since Sept. 14, 2019, vs. Colorado State.
- » The Razorbacks improved to 100-24-4 in season openers and have won 14 of their last 15 home openers.

WEATHER



MOSTLY CLOUDY

GAME INFO

CAPTAINS

Grant Morgan, Jalen Catalon, Myron Cunningham, KJ Jefferson, Joe Foucha

COIN TOSS

Rice won the toss and deferred to the second half.

UNIFORMS

ARK - Red Helmet, Red Jersey, White Pants
RICE - Navy helmet, White Jersey, Navy Pants

ATTENDANCE

64,065

ARK SCORING

TOUCHDOWN | 1Q | 8:23

Jefferson rush of 34 yards.

TOUCHDOWN | 3Q | 8:11

Jefferson rush of 5 yards.

FIELD GOAL | 3Q | 0:18

Little field goal of 34 yards.

TOUCHDOWN | 4Q | 12:44

Smith rush of 2 yards.

TOUCHDOWN | 4Q | 4:07

Jefferson pass complete to Morris for a 9-yard touchdown.

TOUCHDOWN | 4Q | 0:58

Johnson rush of 3 yards.

STARTERS

ARKANSAS

QB KJ Jefferson
RB Trelon Smith
WR Treyton Burks
WR Tyson Morris
WR De'Vion Warren
TE Blake Kern
LT Myron Cunningham
LG Brady Latham
C Ricky Stromberg
RG Ty Clary
RT Dalton Wagner

JACK Dorian Gerald
DT Isaiah Nichols
DT Markell Utsey
DE Tre Williams
LB Grant Morgan
LB Bumper Pool
CB LaDarrius Bishop
CB Montaric Brown
S Jalen Catalon
S Joe Foucha
NB Greg Brooks Jr.

RICE

QB Wiley Green
RB Khalan Griffin
WR Bradley Rozner
WR Joshua Bailey
TE Jack Bradley
TE Jaeger Bull
LT Clay Servin
LG Cole Garcia
C Isaac Klarkowski
RG Shea Baker
RT Jovaun Woolford

DE Trey Schuman
NT Elijah Garcia
DT Ikenna Enechukwu
DE Kenneth Orji
LB Antonio Montero
LB Treshawn Chamberlain
LB Myron Morrison
CB Sean Fresch
CB Jordan Dunbar
SS Naeem Smith
FS George Nyakow



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QUOTES

Sam Pittman, Arkansas Head Coach

Opening statement:

"We didn't play well at all. We did about everything we possibly could do wrong in the first half. We had a lot of penalties; a lot of drops. The defense did a really good job in the first half. They [Rice] had field position the whole time because we couldn't get any first downs. We just didn't play well at all. But, we came back in the second half, we still had way too many penalties but we did catch the ball a little better. KJ started making some plays, I thought the rush got to their quarterback a little bit and he threw us a few interceptions which were big. We got a lot to improve on. I told the team we were going to face adversity but I didn't know it was going to be that entire first half. Give Rice credit, they were really prepared and they did a nice job. I'm so happy we won but we didn't field a very good football team today and we have to get better."

RE: On KJ Jefferson's slow start:

"Well, I think some [nerves were involved] when you look at it. It's his team now and to be honest with you, the crowd, we didn't have it then we did. I think that would affect anybody and it affected me; running through the A was a big deal. I think that might have affected him. Last year, he really didn't know if he was starting, depending on if Feleipe [Franks] was cut up. I'm so glad he had a better second half and that he ran the ball. It's unfortunate that we got a holding call on that option he ran because that was a heck of a run. I think his confidence is back, but I think all of us had a little bit of nerves going into that game."

RE: On what he told the team postgame:

"I just talked to them about, we had talked to them Friday, I had my team meeting on Friday and when I talked to them and the coordinators take them on Saturday. I just told them that I was excited to see how we would handle adversity and then I laughed and said, 'I didn't want the whole first half of it. I don't want a whole sheet of it.' I was proud of it and I told them anytime you win a football game you need to be excited about it and that's how I feel about it. The bottom line is we could be gloom and doom all we want with the 38-17 win, we can. The bottom line is if we would have won 35-7 or we had lost, come tomorrow we are going to watch the tape and make the corrections and come Monday we are gonna correct it and we are going to love our kids and get them to play better, we are going to coach better. That's the bottom line of it. That's kind of what I told them and we called the Hogs and turned the damn jukebox on. That's it. It is what it is guys. You have three and a half hours to play the best ball and sometimes you don't, but in the second half they corrected it. The kids did and the coaching staff did and hopefully we won't have to put a full-game together against Texas, but this may help us and wake us up a little bit more than we probably were. Us and the kids."

KJ Jefferson, Arkansas QB

RE: On his first start at home:

"There was a little bit of excitement, it was a big deal having the first start at home, but it was full of nerves. The crowd was a big deal."

RE: Changes made in the second half:

"My mindset was to lead the offense, the defense was leading us, but we needed to step up in the second half. I needed to show my leadership."

RE: His performance in the second half:

"The main thing was me settling down and having a calm composure. Coach Briles told me to stay being myself and do better."

Jalen Catalon, Arkansas DB

RE: The defenses helping the offense in the first half:

"We always tell the offense, it doesn't matter what, we have your back. I know y'all can get stuff right but trust in us. Know that we have your back. When we get that stop, let that be your momentum. Eventually they did and got some good possessions going that ended up in touchdowns. KJ had a rough start but still came in and did his thing, showed that he can handle the adversity. I know he's the guy for sure. Nothing but positive things going forward. Definitely things to work on but we will get right."

RE: The mood on the sideline during the 31 point scoring run:

"Coach just started laughing. Coach looked at us and said 'we're fine'. I think when you have that confidence in somebody and as a player you see that, you have nothing to worry about but to just go out and play. Coach Pittman told us he was hoping we would face some adversity in this game because the adversity was going to determine how good this team would be. I think we handled it really well. I think yeah, at 17-7, you can start pointing fingers and a lot of teams would that late in the game. But no one panicked, we pulled together and pulled through. Started making big plays and before you knew, we had changed the game around."

Montaric Brown, Arkansas DB

RE: His interception:

"I mean it's just something that translates in practice, you know that's what I do in practice, I'm just thankful for the guys for our team, scout team, just getting me that look in practice and it



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just translated over to the game, it was just easy and I had to trust what I had to see on the field.”

RE: On the importance of the good defense in the first half:

“It’s very important, you know you have to go out there and play every field you know. Offense started out slow, but you know like Catalon said we got their back, we just played every play hard and you know we faced adversity, but we got over it and adjusted the second half.”

RE: How much did the crowd feed you in the second half:

“It’s a great feeling man, not having the fans last year it’s like totally different from this year and it just gave us momentum and like just to play hard, um I love the fans, they played a good part and I thank them for coming out.”

Mike Bloomgren, Rice Head Coach

Opening Statement:

“What a great opportunity for our team. I’m heartbroken for the way it turned out. We did what we wanted to do, getting the game to the fourth quarter, tied at 17-17. Had everything right there for us. You have to take your hat off to Sam Pittman and the way he prepared his guys. They were in the same spot we were entering the fourth quarter, 17-17. They ended up turning it into a boat race and running us off the field at the end. We weren’t able to stand toe-to-toe with them for 60 minutes like we wanted to.”

RE: Jalen Catalon:

“I told him he’s as good as we’ve played at safety. I thought he did a good job of roaming around back there and taking some of those balls out of the air, but the other thing he did an incredible job of was coming up and smoking dudes running the football. The ability for him to fill and make plays from the post-safety position is what makes him really special. Those two turnovers were a feather in his cap today.”

RE: On KJ Jefferson:

“He challenged the heck out of us every time he ran the ball. I think our defense did a good job of keeping him under duress. I think our guys on the outside did a good job of covering. So, I don’t think there’s anything to be alarmed about if you’re a Razorback fan. I think KJ does some really good things, he gives them a lot of opportunities to extend plays.”

Wiley Green, Rice QB

RE: On the TD pass to August Pitre III:

“We came out at halftime with a lot of good adjustments. We felt very confident in what we were doing on the offense, and we just had to make sure we got the ball rolling a little bit. We were able to get a good first down and we knew when we crossed that 50 we wanted to attack that area. Good play action and able to get the ball up to August Pitre, when he’s wide open it’s hard to miss him. It was a good play call by Coach Tuiasosopo and Coach Bloom (Bloomgren). Right there in that situation we were able to execute it. That was a pretty good chance right there.”

RE: On what Arkansas changed in the second half and Arkansas DB Jalen Catalon:

“I don’t think it’s necessarily something that they did. I think we shot ourselves in the foot a couple of times. Obviously, you look back at a tip pass for an interception on the sideline. You can’t have those. I have to play better from an overall standpoint. The guys expect more from me and I expect more from myself. Just ready to move on and get some good film on this, get better from it and move on. He (Catalon) is a good player. We knew that coming in he was gonna fly around on the field, but overall we have to be able to execute. Just a couple miscommunications on certain points and I have to find where everyone is on the field. No worries, we’ll get better from it.”

Antonio Montero, Rice LB

RE: On the first couple series to start the game:

“Like Coach Bloomgren said, we had quite a bit of time to prepare for them, so we were ready for their offense, and we’ve also played that system in the past. We were expecting what was coming to us and they gave us some different looks, but the quarterback run game kind of got to us. On that second series where they had a series of long plays. For the most part, we knew what they were going to run, and we played it pretty well, especially in the first half. We are optimistic about that, but we have to be a little more sound in our assignments and techniques, especially when the quarterback is such a threat like that.”

RE: On what changed in the fourth quarter:

“I think they threw some different looks at us and caught us in some calls that maybe weren’t ideal to the plays. They were adjusting, they would look at our defense. The quarterback long run that they had on the jet sweep. They had motioned to that; made a few different motions that caught us in some looks that weren’t ideal. I think for the most part we played well throughout the whole game. I don’t think it was necessarily something on our end. They just did a good job in adjusting to our defense.”