

KC Chiefs Move To 8-0, Beat Cleveland 23-17

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Sports

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Kansas City, MO (SportsNetwork.com) - The Kansas City Chiefs remained the lone unbeaten team in the NFL, but only after surviving a stiff test from the upset-minded Cleveland Browns.



Alex Smith threw a pair of touchdown passes and the Chiefs held on for a 23-17 victory at Arrowhead Stadium despite nearly being shut out in the second half.

Smith finished with 225 yards on 24-of-36 passes and connected with Dexter McCluster and Anthony Sherman for scores as the Chiefs (8-0) continued their best start since winning their first nine games in 2003.

Jamaal Charles gained 100-plus yards from scrimmage for the eighth straight game, but the running back was limited by a knee injury in the second half and Kansas City's offense suffered as a whole.

Jason Campbell got the starting nod under center for Cleveland and was mostly effective as he tossed for 293 yards and two touchdowns on 22-of-36 passing.

"I proved I can still play the game," said a laughing Campbell, who was making just his second start since Week 6 of the 2011 season.

Josh Gordon caught five passes for 132 yards and a score for the Browns (3-5), losers of three in a row after a promising 3-2 start.

Kansas City went up and down the field for 281 yards in the first half but gained just 50 after the break to keep Cleveland within striking distance.

"It was like two different games," Chiefs head coach Andy Reid said. "It was awfully close."

Trailing 20-17 early in the fourth quarter, the Browns reached Kansas City's 36-yard line before a holding penalty and a sack pushed the ball back into their own territory.

Cleveland punted away but forced a three-and-out and were about to get great field position, but Davone Bess muffed a punt near midfield. Kansas City recovered the loose ball and moved the chains once before giving the visitors another chance with four minutes left.

With no timeouts, the Browns were forced to go for it on 4th-and-7 at their own 31. Campbell bought time with his legs and had an open receiver over the middle, but Bess dropped the ball and Kansas City took over with 2:01 to play.

Ryan Succop, who made kicks of 42 and 35 yards in the first quarter, added a 40-yarder with 17 seconds left, and Cleveland only ran one play before the clock ran out.

Kansas City built on its 6-0 lead early in the second quarter when the seldom-used Sherman caught

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a screen pass to the left and used a convoy of blockers to get into the end zone from 12 yards out for his first career touchdown.

It was the first touchdown pass since Week 4 for Smith, who scrambled for 23 yards for a first down to keep the drive alive and ran four more on 3rd-and-3 the next series, which ended with Succop narrowly missing a 52-yard kick.

The Browns, after going three-and-out three straight times, gained their initial first down after the change of possession on Jordan Cameron's 19-yard catch, and a flea-flicker on the next play saw Gordon get behind the secondary and haul in Campbell's 39-yard touchdown pass with 2:44 left in the half.

Kansas City answered by going 75 yards in just six plays, with Smith finding McCluster on a seam down the middle of the field for a 28-yard TD.

The quick scoring strike left 1:11 on the clock, and Gordon's 47-yard catch- and-run set up Billy Cundiff's 44-yard kick just before halftime.

A gutsy fourth-down conversion out of the break brought Cleveland even closer. Willis McGahee ran for two yards on 4th-and-1 from the Kansas City 19, and on the next play rookie Fozzy Whittaker was left uncovered out of the backfield for a 17-yard touchdown catch.

"I thought our guys did a great job fighting and getting back into the game," Browns head coach Rob Chudzinski said. "We will get over this quickly and be ready for Baltimore next week."