

Kansas City Blasts Oakland, Clinches AFC Playoff Berth

Sports

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Oakland, CA (SportsNetwork.com) - Jamaal Charles racked up 195 receiving yards and five total touchdowns in a record-setting performance that carried the Kansas City Chiefs to a wild 56-31 win over the Oakland Raiders and a secured spot in the AFC Playoffs.



Four of Charles' eight catches went for touchdowns and he added a score on the ground, becoming the first player in NFL history to record four TD receptions and run in another.

"I think Jamaal was special," said Kansas City head coach Andy Reid. "The receiving yards, the receptions for touchdowns, he had one of those days."

Kansas City (11-3) also received big games out of quarterback Alex Smith and its opportunistic defense en route to sewing up a postseason berth just one year after tying for the league's worst record at 2-14.

Smith threw five touchdown passes in all while completing a sharp 17-of-20 throws for 287 yards, while the Chiefs forced seven turnovers in posting their second straight lopsided victory on the road. Kansas City was coming off a 45-10 drubbing of Washington a week ago.

Eric Berry accounted for two of the Chiefs' four interceptions of Matt McGloin, one of which he returned 47 yards for a touchdown.

"Hopefully those guys can learn from those mistakes," said Oakland head coach Dennis Allen. "Its tough when you're going through a learning process. As the losses mount up, it gets frustrating. It gets frustrating for everybody, but we've got a job to do. We've got to go out there and try to win football games."

Rashad Jennings had a pair of rushing touchdowns while gaining 91 yards on 23 carries for Oakland (4-10), which was dealt a fourth consecutive loss. McGloin finished with 297 yards and two touchdowns on an 18-of-36 completion rate.

Charles wasted absolutely no time making an impact. On the game's initial play from scrimmage, the playmaking back took a short screen pass from Smith, broke to the sideline and outran the Raiders defense for a 49-yard touchdown and a 7-0 lead just 22 seconds in.

"As the season keeps going on, I get stronger and stronger," said Charles. "I just want to continue to do that and stay healthy."

Oakland's first play also resulted in a big gain, with fullback Marcel Reece rumbling 45 yards on a short toss from McGloin to eventually set up Sebastian Janikowski's 34-yard field goal with just under four minutes elapsed.

The Chiefs easily marched downfield on the ensuing drive, however. After Smith found Donnie Avery for a 23-yard gain into Raiders' territory, Charles again got loose on a screen and followed a convoy of blockers all the way to a 39-yard score that staked Kansas City to a 14-3 advantage midway

through the opening quarter.

Kansas City's defense got in the act shortly afterward, as Berry jumped a route intended for Reece and raced untouched all the way to the end zone to put Oakland in a 21-3 hole.

McGloin quickly shook off the pick-six, though, directing a 11-play, 82-yard series that was highlighted by a 23-yard, third-down connection to Rod Streater that placed the Raiders at the Kansas City eight. After a roughing the passer penalty on Berry extended the march, Jennings leaped over the goal line from a yard out on the first play of the second quarter.

McGloin committed two more costly turnovers before the half ended, though, with the Chiefs capitalizing on both to further the margin.

He wasn't able to cover up a bad shotgun snap deep in Oakland's own end on the Raiders' next possession, with Tamba Hali pouncing on the loose ball for Kansas City at the 11-yard line. Charles punched in a 1-yard run three plays later to put the Chiefs up by a 28-10 count.

A 22-yard pass from Reece to Chimdi Chekwa on a fake punt got the Raiders inside the opposing 35-yard line later in the quarter, but Berry cut in front of Streater to intercept McGloin once again. His 49-yard runback, combined with a personal foul on the Raiders, gave the Chiefs the ball at Oakland 16. Charles went in standing up on another screen play on the next snap for his fourth TD of the day.

The Raiders weren't deterred, however, putting up touchdowns on three straight drives to cut the 25-point deficit down to four.

An eight-play, 80-yard jaunt aided by two critical Kansas City penalties, the last a pass interference infraction by linebacker Frank Zombo that spotted the ball at the 1-yard line, led to Jennings' short touchdown run that gave Oakland some momentum entering the half.

Taiwan Jones' 52-yard catch-and-run on the opening sequence of the third quarter got the Raiders in position to close the gap further, with McGloin hitting Andre Holmes for a 6-yard touchdown to bring Oakland within 35-24.

Jennings came through with a drive-saving 21-yard run on 3rd-and-10 on the Raiders' next trip, which ended on Mychal Rivera's leaping 14-yard grab of McGloin's well-thrown ball down the seam that made it a four-point game with just under five minutes left in the third quarter.

Kansas City then once again turned to Charles, who burned linebacker coverage to haul in Smith's deep strike and sprinted free for a 71-yard touchdown that turned the tide back in the Chiefs' favor.

Jones fumbled away the subsequent kickoff at his own 28-yard line, and Smith converted three straight passes -- the last a 6-yard touchdown hookup with tight end Sean McGrath -- to lengthen Kansas City's lead to 49-31 with 1:20 remaining in the third quarter.

McGloin's final pass attempt also ended up in an interception, with Derrick Johnson snaring a ball intended for Holmes near midfield. That led to a short four-play drive that Knile Davis capped with a 17-yard touchdown run with 8:19 remaining.