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SPORTS

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SMU Athletics

SMU fell to Houston 35-22 Oct. 7 on the road.

Shaky defense buries SMU in Houston

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A year ago, SMU fans stormed the field after the Mustangs beat No. 12 Houston in what many consider to be Chad Morris' signature win on the Hilltop.

In Houston, SMU was unable to repeat its success, falling to the Cougars 35-22. The loss dropped SMU to 4-2 on the season and 1-1 in conference play.

The story for SMU was its defense. The Mustang offense moved the ball sufficiently against Houston, but its defense was unable to come up with stops.

After SMU held UConn to minus-8 yards rushing the previous week, the Cougars exploded for 265 yards and two touchdowns on the ground.

Houston's Duke Catalon did yeoman's work, picking up 177 yards on 22 carries.

SMU's biggest issue on defense was tackling.

Houston ballcarriers repeatedly juked and ran by SMU defenders, picking up large chunks of yardage.

SMU picked off Houston quarterback Kyle Postma twice, with Mikial Onu and Christian Davis forcing the turnovers, but Postma had success for most of the day.

He completed 19 of 27 passes and helped the Cougars go 8-12 on third downs. Postma also caught a touchdown pass, hauling in a 22-yard score from D'Eriq King on a trick play.

After Ke'Mon Freeman punched in a touchdown to cut Houston's lead to 21-19 in the third quarter, the Cougars immediately answered with a touchdown of their own. SMU kicked a field goal on its next drive, and Houston marched down for another seven points.

On the ensuing SMU possession, Sutton was not able to haul in a fourth down pass from Hicks, and Houston regained possession.

SMU had two more possessions after that, and Ben Hicks threw interceptions in Houston territory on both

of them.

Hicks was 41-for-58 on the day, throwing for a career-high 397 yards and one touchdown to go along with the two interceptions. He was under pressure all day from an impressive Houston defensive line that featured superstar Ed Oliver, who was a game time decision with an injured knee.

Two bright spots in the game for SMU were wide receivers Courtland Sutton and Trey Quinn. Hicks completed 28 of 41 passes to the standout receivers. Sutton caught 11 balls for 160 yards and Quinn caught 17 for 156 yards and a touchdown. The most impressive play of the day was a leaping, one-handed snag by Quinn.

While SMU's start to the season is encouraging, the team show it is not where it wants to be. The Mustangs are still winless on the road and have not been able to stop the two best offenses they've played: TCU and Houston.

SMU will get rest with a bye week before traveling to Cincinnati Oct. 21.