

Receiver a Boone for Utah Blaze in 69-40 victory

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By [Trevor Phibbs](#), Deseret News

SALT LAKE CITY — The Dallas Vigilantes did everything they could to force Utah to stutter on offense.

But whenever the Blaze needed a big play, Aaron Boone stepped up and became the "skull and crossBoone" in the Dallas effort to give Utah the 69-40 win at EnergySolutions Arena Thursday night.

The Blaze (2-1) have already matched its win total from last season.

Boone continually bailed out Utah on fourth down and long yardage situations with monster catches.



Photo by Mike Terry, Deseret News

Utah's Alvanse Robinson straight arms Dallas' Chris LeFlorie at the EnergySolutions Arena. From the archive

"He's our clutch guy, he has been for years," said Blaze coach Ron James on Boone. "He's a proven performer in this league. It's great to have a guy like Aaron, with his experience, on our ball club."

As a result — Utah scored on 10-of-11 possessions and converted on 3-of-4 fourth downs and was 6-of-11 on third-down plays.

Boone had 13 receptions for 226 yards and two scores on a night where he was honored for 400 career receptions and 100 touchdowns in front of 7,163 fans.

"I just love playing this game; I just love being out here. It's special on a night like tonight with my mom being down here," Boone said. "It's the first time she's been up in awhile — it was kind of fun playing in front of her."

"I had a lot of people come up. I'm from a small school, Millard High, down in Fillmore, and it's fun to see them come up. I've been all over the world playing this game but nothing is like playing at home."

On the first possession of the game, Boone was able to keep the scoring hopes alive after beating his defender on an underneath route on fourth down to push the ball into Dallas territory.

Two plays later, quarterback Tommy Grady lobbed a floater to wide open Ernie Pierce to give the Blaze the 7-0 lead.

The Vigilantes (2-1) would respond the ensuing drive when Dan Raudbaugh hit Demarcus James on an 8-yard buttonhook to end the first quarter tied.

With Utah leading 14-7 in the second, Dallas took over after a turnover on downs and pulled within one after Tiger Jones beat his defender with 9:23 remaining, but the PAT sailed wide-left.

Utah recaptured the lead quickly after Boone pulled a move worthy of "Dancing With The Stars" and left his defender in a standstill before finally being tackled at the 5-yard line. The following play, Alvance Robinson put Utah up 21-13.

The defining moment came late in the second quarter when Utah attempted its second onside kick in a row, both of which proved unsuccessful, giving Dallas the ball on its own 9-yard line with one minute remaining in the first half.

However, Utah's Devon Hicks busted through the line of scrimmage and forced a fumble two plays later.

The Blaze would then embark on a four-play scoring drive that culminated with 13-yard pass to Robinson to give the Blaze a 34-20 lead heading into the locker rooms.

"We were trying to get an extra possession and also trying to spin the clock. There were some things we were trying to do at the end of the half, clock management wise, that I thought worked out very well for us," James said. "In particular getting a turnover on the goal-line and putting us up by those two scores."

With Utah leading 41-26 in the third quarter, Boone delivered on fourth down once more — this time with a diving reception for six points.

Then, after a defensive stop, Boone hauled in a 5-yard dump pass and broke it open to score on the length of the field to put the game out of reach at 55-26 with 47 seconds left in the third.

"I think it's just playing this game for a lot of years — you kind of know where to be," said Boone.

Grady became the first Utah quarterback since 2007 to throw for 300 yards in three straight games.

The Blaze hit the road to face San Jose on April 8 at 8:30 p.m.

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