

## Koyotes advance in APFL playoffs

Team rallies around departing coach Green for 54-18 playoff victory



JAKE GATCHELL/ THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

Koyotes quarterback Jordan Brill (10) attempts to break the hold of Junction City's Eric Washington during Friday night's 54-18 Koyotes win at the Kansas Expocentre.

BY [RICK PETERSON JR.](#)

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Just days after Jim Green announced he was stepping down as head coach of the Kansas Koyotes because of health reasons, his team was able to give him an appropriate send off.

The Koyotes breezed through the first round of the American Professional Football League playoffs, rolling to a 54-18 win Friday against the Junction City Force in Green's last game at Landon Arena.

"It was a great way to go out," Green said. "I couldn't be more proud of these guys, and now they just need to keep that spirit up."

Green, who will undergo heart surgery Tuesday, called the plays for the offense on the first three series before turning it over to the assistants. Jeff Summers will take over as interim coach as the Koyotes gear up for next weekend's game at Iowa.

"When I handed over the clipboard with the plays, that was really tough," Green said. "One of the coaches leaned over and said, 'You're going to miss this,' and I said, 'Oh yeah.' You've been with these guys for five years and they're a part of your family. But what a way to go out."

Jordan Brill, who threw six touchdown passes, said he thought the Koyotes rallied around Green.

"He's a guy that's meant a lot to our organization and done a lot for us," he said. "We just wanted to come out here and get a win for him this week and then try to go avenge a couple of losses (to Iowa)."

The Koyotes opened strong with Brill throwing touchdowns on each of the first four series, helping the Koyotes build a 34-6 lead at halftime.

"The guys were really prepared, emotionally and physically," Summers said. "They really came out with desire. We wanted to come out strong, and they definitely did."

Brill finished with 173 passing yards, while Justin Wrecke caught six passes for 107 yards and two touchdowns. Dawight Benning also was a key contributor with five receptions for 52 yards and two touchdowns.

The Koyotes defense picked off Junction City quarterback Chris Vercher five times. Morgan Dewey and Henry Talley each had two interceptions, while Lamarcus Betts had one.

Dewey helped set the tone early with an interception on Junction City's first drive and later returned a pick 15 yards for a touchdown.

Green said he feels confident the Koyotes can continue the momentum next week, when they hit the road against top-seeded Iowa.

"We only beat ourselves last time against Iowa," he said. "If we can create turnovers and move the ball and control the clock, we can win that game."

Koyotes kicker Chris Thompson didn't play but will be back next weekend. Chad Reine handled the bulk of the kicking duties for the Koyotes.

Force 6 0 6 6 — 18

Koyotes 13 21 13 7 — 54

Koyotes — Wrecke 41 pass from Brill (Reine kick)

Force — Moret 4 pass from Vercher (run failed)

Koyotes — Wrecke 22 pass from Brill (kick failed)

Koyotes — Benning 8 pass from Brill (Reine kick)

Koyotes — Benning 10 pass from Brill (kick failed)

Koyotes — Dewey 15 interception return (Smith run)

Force — Smith 7 run (pass failed)

Koyotes — Hoffman 41 pass from Brill (run failed)

Force — Thomas 31 pass from Vercher (pass failed)

Koyotes — Helms 3 run (Reine kick)

Koyotes — Benning 1 run (Reine kick)

#### Individual Statistics

Rushing — Force: Kearse 8-42, Vercher 2-1, Smith 4-4, Thomas 3-3; Koyotes: Helms 8-18, Smith 5-11, Brill 1-(minus) 5, Brown 1-8.

Passing — Force: Vercher 10-21-5 103 yards, Thomas 2-3-0 7 yards; Koyotes: Brill 11-13-0 173 yards, Benning 1-2-0 35 yards.

Receiving — Thomas 4-66, Moret 5-25, Kearse 1-(minus) 2, Smith 1-1; Koyotes: Wrecke 6-107, Benning 5-52, Smith 1-8, Hoffman 1-41.