

WEEK NINE  
WISCONSIN AT NORTHWESTERN

EVANSTON, Ill. -- Clayton Thorson ran for two touchdowns and threw for one, and Northwestern beat No. 20 Wisconsin 31-17 on Saturday.

The first-place Wildcats (5-3, 5-1) solidified themselves as contenders for the Big Ten West championship while gaining some revenge for a loss at Camp Randall Stadium early last season that helped prevent them from winning the division.

They increased their lead over the Badgers (5-3, 3-2) and Purdue -- a 23-13 loser at Michigan State -- to 1 1/2 games. Iowa, which began the day tied with the Boilermakers and Wisconsin, visited No. 17 Penn State.

With quarterback Alex Hornibrook sidelined by a concussion and the defense without several injured starters, it was simply a rough afternoon for Wisconsin. Northwestern turned two fumbles by star running back Jonathan Taylor and another by quarterback Jack Coan into 17 points on the way to its fourth straight victory.

The Wildcats went on a 17-0 run in the second half after rallying to beat then-winless Nebraska in overtime and beating struggling Rutgers by three last week.

"Around here, a lot of times we're called the Cardiac `Cats," Thorson said. "I don't know how much we like that name. But we haven't given anyone any reason not to call us that so it's nice to get a win like that."

Thorson was a bit shaky again after struggling in a narrow win at Rutgers. He completed 17 of 30 passes for 167 yards with three interceptions against a short-handed defense. But he ran for two TDs in the first half and found Kyric McGowan for a 24-yard score in the third quarter.

Isaiah Bowser ran for 117 yards and a touchdown. He scored on a 2-yard run early in the fourth, making it 31-10 after Coan fumbled deep in Badgers territory.

"I was proud of the effort certainly of a lot of our guys, but we need to play better football," Wisconsin coach Paul Chryst said. "We need to take better care of the football. When you turn it over and you're backed up in the opponent's red zone, that's hard."

Coan was 20 of 31 for 158 yards and a touchdown in his first career start.

Taylor, the nation's leading rusher, ran for just 46 yards on 11 carries after finishing with 100 or more in eight straight games.

Garrett Groshek ran for 68. But the Badgers lost for the second time in three games.

Northwestern was leading 14-10 early in the third when Wisconsin's Jack Sanborn got flagged for roughing the punter. That set up Thorson's TD pass to McGowan in the back of the end zone.

Taylor then lost his second fumble of the game when Paddy Fisher poked the ball out as he was tackled and Montre Hartage recovered at the Wisconsin 42. That led to a 26-yard field goal by Charlie Kuhbander, making it 24-10 with 2:39 left in the quarter.

The Wildcats added to their lead early in the fourth after Coan dropped the ball on a fake handoff, picked it up, scrambled and fumbled again. Bowser's 2-yard run made it 31-10.

THE TAKEAWAY

Wisconsin: With a chance to move into first place in the division, the Badgers simply came out flat. The offense struggled to move the ball without Hornibrook, and the turnovers didn't help.

Northwestern: The Wildcats will take a more lopsided victory after needing overtime to beat then-winless Nebraska and squeezing past Rutgers by three.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
WIS	7	3	0	7	17
NW	7	7	10	7	31
Scoring Summary -----					
FIRST QUARTER				WIS	NW
WIS TD 8:04					
Alec Ingold 4 Yd Run (Rafael Gaglianone Kick)					
5 plays, 29 yards, 2:20				7	0
NW TD 2:21					
Clayton Thorson 1 Yd Run (Charlie Kuhbander Kick)					
15 plays, 75 yards, 5:43				7	7
SECOND QUARTER				WIS	NW
NW TD 3:44					
Clayton Thorson 5 Yd Run (Charlie Kuhbander Kick)					
6 plays, 15 yards, 3:05				7	14
WIS FG 0:56					
Rafael Gaglianone 36 Yd Field Goal					
9 plays, 50 yards, 2:39				10	14
THIRD QUARTER				WIS	NW
NW TD 6:23					
Kyric McGowan 24 Yd pass from Clayton Thorson (Charlie Kuhbander Kick)					
10 plays, 70 yards, 4:05				10	21
NW FG 2:39					
Charlie Kuhbander 26 Yd Field Goal					
7 plays, 34 yards, 2:54				10	24
FOURTH QUARTER				WIS	NW
NW TD 12:50					
Isaiah Bowser 2 Yd Run (Charlie Kuhbander Kick)					
4 plays, 13 yards, 1:36				10	31
WIS TD 8:00					
Kendric Pryor 10 Yd pass from Jack Coan (Rafael Gaglianone Kick)					
5 plays, 29 yards, 1:27				17	31

Team Stats	WIS	NW
First Downs	17	19
Total Yards	323	349
Total Plays	65	79
Avg Gain Per Play	5.0	4.4
Net Yards Rushing	165	182
Rushes	32	49
Yards Per Rush	5.2	3.7
Net Yards Passing	158	167
Comp-Att	20-33	17-30
Yards Per Pass	4.8	5.6
Times Sacked	1	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	-5	-6
Interceptions	0	3
Punts	4	3
Punt Average	36.8	43.3
Penalties	5	3
Penalty Yards	54	20
Fumbles	3	0
Fumbles Lost	3	0
Possession	26:22	33:38

Individual Stats

RUSHING

WIS	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Garrett Groshek	7	68	9.7	0	20
Jonathan Taylor	11	46	4.2	0	10
Danny Davis III	1	19	19.0	0	19
Alec Ingold	4	12	3.0	1	4
Taiwan Deal	4	8	2.0	0	4
Kendric Pryor	2	7	3.5	0	15
Jack Coan	3	5	1.7	0	5

NW	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Isaiah Bowser	34	117	3.4	1	11
Clayton Thorson	8	29	3.6	2	27
Kyric McGowan	1	21	21.0	0	21
Chad Hanaoka	2	10	5.0	0	6
Berkeley Holman	1	5	5.0	0	5
Riley Lees	1	2	2.0	0	2
Team	2	-2	-1.0	0	0

PASSING

WIS	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Jack Coan	20	31	158	5.1	1	0	40.5
Team	0	2	0	0.0	0	0	--

NW	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Clayton Thorson	17	30	167	5.6	1	3	42.8

RECEIVING

WIS	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Danny Davis III	5	55	11.0	0	15
Kendric Pryor	4	52	13.0	1	18
Garrett Groshek	4	20	5.0	0	7
A.J. Taylor	2	16	8.0	0	8
Alec Ingold	2	12	6.0	0	9
Jake Ferguson	2	7	3.5	0	4
Jack Coan	1	-4	-4.0	0	0

NW	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Bennett Skowronek	4	73	18.3	0	32
Cameron Green	5	31	6.2	0	11
Kyric McGowan	1	24	24.0	1	24
Flynn Nagel	3	18	6.0	0	10
Chad Hanaoka	2	8	4.0	0	5
Riley Lees	1	7	7.0	0	7
JJ Jefferson	1	6	6.0	0	6