

WEEK TEN  
PENN ST at MINNESOTA

No. 17 Minnesota tops No. 5 PSU 31-26 in match of unbeatens

MINNEAPOLIS -- Minnesota's Jordan Howden picked off Sean Clifford in the end zone with 1:01 left, the third interception thrown by Penn State's quarterback, and the 13th-ranked Gophers held on for a 31-26 victory on Saturday afternoon over the fifth-ranked Nittany Lions for their first win over a top-five team in 20 years.

Tanner Morgan passed for 339 yards and three touchdowns to direct a dismantling of Penn State's staunch defense, as Minnesota (9-0, 6-0, No. 17 CFP) not only remained undefeated but stayed on track for its first trip to the Big Ten championship game.

The first sellout crowd for the Gophers at home in four years swarmed the field after the clock ran out, reveling in the biggest step forward yet under coach P.J. Fleck in his third season. The Gophers scrambled the College Football Playoff picture, too, after Penn State (8-1, 5-1, No. 4 CFP) emerged with a top-four spot in the first edition of the rankings.

Rashod Bateman got the Gophers going with a 66-yard score on their first possession and finished with seven catches for 203 yards, the second-most in program history. Tyler Johnson had seven receptions for 104 yards and a touchdown, too, as Minnesota made enough early gains to hold up during the late rally by Penn State.

Journey Brown's second rushing touchdown of the game with 3:49 to go cut the lead to five points, and the Gophers promptly went three and out. K.J. Hamler muffed the punt when a teammate backed into him, and though the Nittany Lions recovered, they were pushed back to their 28-yard line.

Clifford, who went 23 for 43 for 340 yards and one score, connected with Jahan Dotson for 49 yards to get Penn State to the 11. Two plays later, however, came the drive killer for Penn State. Daniel George was called for offensive pass interference during an over-the-middle catch by Brown that reached the 2. Clifford, who was off target for most of the day, overthrew George on the next play before the game-sealing pick by Howden. Clifford, who came into the game leading the Big Ten in total offense, had only three interceptions over the first eight games.

Antoine Winfield Jr. had the first two picks in the first half, matching the FBS lead and setting the all-time Minnesota record with seven on the season. Both were inside the 10-yard line.

The Gophers had 321 yards and a 24-13 lead at halftime, already the most points allowed in a game by the Nittany Lions this season, but a fumble near midfield by Shannon Brooks at the end of a run on the first play after a punt sapped some momentum.

Penn State went the other way for a touchdown pass from Clifford to backup tight end Nick Bowers, but Bateman broke open again for a 36-yard gain on the next drive to set up a scoring plunge by Seth Green. The Gophers have touchdowns on all 19 of their goal-to-go possessions this season. Chris Williamson batted down Clifford's fourth-down throw into the end zone on the ensuing drive by Penn State, giving the Gophers another opportunity to drain the clock.

THE TAKEAWAY

Penn State: Seeking their first berth in the College Football Playoff, the Nittany Lions watched a defense that had allowed the second-fewest points in the FBS entering the game take a step back against a group of Gophers receivers that was the best they'd faced all year.

Minnesota: Ending a 13-game losing streak to ranked opponents and beating a top-five team for the first time since a win at No. 2 Penn State in 1999, the Gophers produced a potentially program-changing victory that has been missing for so many decades. They have a two-game lead in the West Division with three to go.

POLL IMPLICATIONS

Penn State could fall behind Minnesota, which will certainly climb into the top 10 when the next rankings come out on Sunday. The loss will also hurt the Nittany Lions in the CFP pecking order, with the Gophers getting a boost but still with a long way to go to be in the mix.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
PSU	10	3	6	7	26
MINN	14	10	0	7	31

Scoring Summary -----

FIRST QUARTER		PSU	MINN
MINN TD 12:06 Rashod Bateman 66 Yd pass from Tanner Morgan (Brock Walker Kick)			
5 plays, 95 yards, 2:18		0	7
PSU TD 10:51 Journey Brown 45 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)			
4 plays, 69 yards, 1:15		7	7
MINN TD 4:29 Chris Autman-Bell 21 Yd pass from Tanner Morgan (Brock Walker Kick)			
10 plays, 87 yards, 6:22		7	14
PSU FG 2:12 Jake Pinegar 33 Yd Field Goal			
7 plays, 64 yards, 2:17		10	14
SECOND QUARTER		PSU	MINN
MINN TD 7:18 Tyler Johnson 38 Yd pass from Tanner Morgan (Brock Walker Kick)			
3 plays, 61 yards, 1:30		10	21
MINN FG 3:36 Brock Walker 26 Yd Field Goal			
6 plays, 51 yards, 2:42		10	24
PSU FG 0:00 Jake Pinegar 21 Yd Field Goal			
13 plays, 71 yards, 3:36		13	24
THIRD QUARTER		PSU	MINN
PSU TD 4:05 Nick Bowers 10 Yd pass from Sean Clifford (Two-Point Pass Conversion Failed)			
9 plays, 50 yards, 3:38		19	24
FOURTH QUARTER		PSU	MINN
MINN TD 14:11 Seth Green 1 Yd Run (Brock Walker Kick)			
8 plays, 75 yards, 4:54		19	31
PSU TD 3:49 Journey Brown 6 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)			
8 plays, 63 yards, 2:28		26	31

Team Stats	PSU	MINN
First Downs	25	20
Passes for First	17	12
Rushes for First	7	7
Penalties for First	1	1
Third Down Efficiency	8-16	4-10
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	1-1
Total Yards	518	460
Total Plays	73	60
Avg Gain Per Play	7.1	7.7
Net Yards Rushing	178	121
Rushes	29	40
Yards Per Rush	6.1	3.0
Net Yards Passing	340	339
Comp-Att	23-44	18-20
Yards Per Pass	7.7	17.0
Times Sacked	2	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	-10	-10
Interceptions	3	0
Punts	2	4
Punt Average	47.5	36.8
Penalties	4	5
Penalty Yards	45	40
Fumbles	1	2
Fumbles Lost	0	1
Time of Poss	31:01	28:59

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
PENN ST	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Journey Brown	14	124	8.9	2	45		
Sean Clifford	10	39	3.9	0	17		
Devyn Ford	3	9	3.0	0	4		
KJ Hamler	2	6	3.0	0	8		
MINNESOTA	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Rodney Smith	18	51	2.8	0	11		
Shannon Brooks	6	33	5.5	0	22		
Mohamed Ibrahim	7	33	4.7	0	21		
Seth Green	3	6	2.0	1	3		
Tanner Morgan	4	0	0.0	0	7		
Team	2	-2	-1.0	0	0		
PASSING							
PENN ST	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Sean Clifford	23	43	340	7.9	1	3	53.7
Team	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	--
MINNESOTA	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Tanner Morgan	18	20	339	17.0	3	0	98.1
RECEIVING							
PENN ST	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
KJ Hamler	7	119	17.0	0	25		
Pat Freiermuth	7	101	14.4	0	20		
Jahan Dotson	3	70	23.3	0	49		
Dan Chisena	1	20	20.0	0	20		
Journey Brown	1	17	17.0	0	17		
Nick Bowers	1	10	10.0	1	10		
Daniel George	1	8	8.0	0	8		
Ricky Slade	1	0	0.0	0	0		
Des Holmes	1	-5	-5.0	0	0		
MINNESOTA	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Rashod Bateman	7	203	29.0	1	66		
Tyler Johnson	7	104	14.9	1	38		
Chris Autman-Bell	3	31	10.3	1	21		
Brevyn Spann-Ford	1	1	1.0	0	1		