

WEEK ONE  
NORTHWESTERN AT PURDUE

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. -- Jeremy Larkin proved he could be Northwestern's workhorse Thursday night.

He also showed he's more than capable of replacing career rushing leader Justin Jackson.

In his first game as the Wildcats' feature back, the sophomore carried 26 times for a career-high 143 yards, scored two touchdowns and helped close out a season-opening 31-27 victory at Purdue with a final drive that consumed more than 7 1/2 minutes.

"I thought he (Larkin) managed the end of the game," Northwestern coach Pat Fitzgerald said. "All the little things, goes down and keeps the clock running. All those seconds count. That's a veteran guy even though he's still young."

It was a much needed change in direction for Northwestern, which opened last season 2-3.

Since then, it has won nine straight overall and nine straight over Big Ten foes -- the Wildcats' longest streaks since their 1995 Rose Bowl. And, for now, they still have the longest winning streak among Power Five schools.

The game also marked the return of quarterback Clayton Thorson, who tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee in December. Team doctors advised Fitzgerald to play Thorson and backup TJ Green played in a rotation and both played solid.

Thorson wound up 16 of 26 with 172 yards passing in his 40th consecutive start but must wait at least one more week to break a tie with Brett Basanez and Len Williams to become the school's career leader in TD passes.

Green was 7 of 11 for 63 yards and scored on a 1-yard run to make it 24-14 midway through the second quarter.

For Purdue, it was frustrating.

Elijah Sindelar was benched after throwing three interceptions in the first half -- each leading to a touchdown. He wound up 18 of 30 with 196 yards and connected with freshman Rondale Moore on a 32-yard score late in the first quarter.

"We can take a sack, it's not a complete killer but we just tossed it to the other team too many times and that's disappointing," Purdue coach Jeff Brohm said. "I know he (Sindelar) is disappointed. It will get better."

Moore had a huge college debut, catching 11 passes for 109 yards, running two times for 79 yards including a nifty 76-yard run to tie the score at 14 and broke Otis Armstrong's single-game record for all-purpose yards. Armstrong had 312 yards against Indiana in 1972. Moore had 302 at halftime and wound up with 313.

The difference, as usual, was turnovers.

Sindelar's first interception led to Larkin's 1-yard run, and John Moten IV capped the Wildcats' second possession with a 2-yard TD run.

After Moore tied the score, Northwestern kicker Charlie Kuhbander made it 17-14 with a 34-yard field goal.

Sindelar was picked off two more times before halftime and the Wildcats cashed in with Green's TD plunge and Larkin's 4-yard scoring run to make it 31-17 at halftime.

Things slowed down in the second half after D.J. Knox broke free for a 45-yard run on Purdue's first play. Knox made it 31-24 with a 2-yard TD run and Evans made a 27-yard field goal just 4 seconds into the fourth quarter.

But Thorson and Larkin played keep away for the final 7:57, closing it out after Purdue's Lorenzo Neal was called for a personal foul on third-and-11 with 2:31 to go and the Boilermakers out of timeouts.

"He did an awesome job," Thorson said, referring to Larkin. "It's a credit to how he worked in the offseason and we'll be behind him all season."

**THE TAKEAWAY**

Northwestern: The Wildcats needed a change after slow starts the past two seasons. This key road win could help them challenge for the Big Ten West crown.

Purdue: The Boilermakers made too many mistakes in the first half and couldn't get the ball back despite some late chances. Sindelar was benched in favor David Blough, who nearly led Purdue back.

**INJURIES**

Northwestern: Receiver Bennett Skowronek and safety Jared McGee both left in the first half but returned later. Defensive tackle Alex Miller limped off in the third quarter with what appeared to be a left leg injury.

Purdue: Cornerback Simeon Smiley left on a golf cart after a helmet-to-helmet collision with one of his teammates late in the first half. He had a cut over his left eye and did not return.

**THEY SAID IT**

Northwestern: "To see Clayton come back after that type of injury and be back for the opener, I think, is nothing short of just absolutely inspiring," Fitzgerald said.

Purdue: "I didn't think they played very hard in the first half," Brohm said about his defense. "I didn't think they finished, I didn't think they ran to the ball. It was very disappointing."

Final	1	2	3	4	T
NW	14	17	0	0	31
PUR	14	3	7	3	27

**Scoring Summary** -----

	NW	PUR
<b>FIRST QUARTER</b>		
TD 7:58		
Jeremy Larkin 1 Yd Run (Charlie Kuhbander Kick)		7
11 plays, 64 yards, 4:42		0
TD 5:34		
John Moten IV 2 Yd Run (Charlie Kuhbander Kick)	14	
5 plays, 65 yards, 1:09		0
TD 4:20		
Rondale Moore 32 Yd pass from Elijah Sindelar (Spencer Evans Kick)	14	7
6 plays, 60 yards, 1:14		
TD 1:02		
Rondale Moore 76 Yd Run (Spencer Evans Kick)	14	14
3 plays, 85 yards, 1:20		
<b>SECOND QUARTER</b>		
FG 13:37		
Charlie Kuhbander 34 Yd Field Goal	17	14
8 plays, 59 yards, 2:25		
TD 7:06		
TJ Green 1 Yd Run (Charlie Kuhbander Kick)	24	14
3 plays, 55 yards, 0:58		
FG 3:44		
Spencer Evans 38 Yd Field Goal	24	17
10 plays, 44 yards, 3:22		
TD 0:37		
Jeremy Larkin 4 Yd Run (Charlie Kuhbander Kick)	31	17
5 plays, 30 yards, 2:04		
<b>THIRD QUARTER</b>		
TD 11:37		
D.J. Knox 2 Yd Run (Spencer Evans Kick)	31	24
6 plays, 71 yards, 1:52		
<b>FOURTH QUARTER</b>		
FG 14:56		
Spencer Evans 27 Yd Field Goal	31	27
14 plays, 76 yards, 6:46		

Team Stats	NEB	PUR
First Downs	25	23
Total Yards	242	270
Total Plays	80	71
Avg Gain Per Play	3.0	3.8
Net Yards Rushing	0	0
Rushes	42	25
Yards Per Rush	0.0	0.0
Net Yards Passing	242	270
Comp-Att	24-38	30-46
Yards Per Pass	6.4	5.9
Times Sacked	0	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	0	-8
Interceptions	0	3
Punts	7	4
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	5	9
Penalty Yards	53	95
Fumbles	1	1
Fumbles Lost	0	0

**Individual Stats**

**RUSHING**

Northwestern	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Jeremy Larkin	26	143	5.5	46	2
Kyric McGowan	1	17	17.0	17	0
Clayton Thorson	3	8	2.7	6	0
John Moten IV	5	8	1.6	2	1
Cameron Green	1	-4	-4.0	0	0
TJ Green	4	-7	-1.8	4	1
Purdue	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Rondale Moore	2	79	39.5	76	1
D.J. Knox	7	77	11.0	45	1
Markell Jones	7	27	3.9	14	0
David Blough	5	19	3.8	7	0
Tario Fuller	2	2	1.0	2	0
Elijah Sindelar	2	-2	-1.0	3	0

**PASSING**

Northwestern	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Clayton Thorson	16	26	172	6.6	0	0	117.1
TJ Green	7	11	63	5.7	0	0	111.7
Purdue	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Elijah Sindelar	18	30	196	6.5	1	3	105.9
David Blough	12	16	74	4.6	0	0	113.9

**RECEIVING**

Northwestern	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Flynn Nage	15	58	11.6	22	0
Cameron Green	5	50	10.0	16	0
Bennett Skowronek	3	47	15.7	40	0
John Moten IV	2	25	12.5	18	0
Jeremy Larkin	4	20	5.0	8	0
Ramaud Chiaokhiao-Bowman	1	14	14.0	14	0
Riley Lees	2	14	7.0	11	0
Charlie Fessler	1	7	7.0	7	0
Kyric McGowan	0	0	-	-	0
Purdue	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Rondale Moore	11	109	9.9	32	1
Jared Sparks	6	76	12.7	19	0
Terry Wright	3	22	7.3	15	0
Isaac Zico	2	17	8.5	11	0
Tario Fuller	2	14	7.0	11	0
Jackson Anthrop	2	12	6.0	9	0
Jarrett Burgess	1	9	9.0	9	0
Brycen Hopkins	1	7	7.0	7	0
Markell Jones	1	5	5.0	5	0
D.J. Knox	1	-1	-1.0	0	0