

WEEK ONE
SYRACUSE AT WESTERN MICHIGAN

KALAMAZOO, Mich. -- When Tim Lester recruited Eric Dungey to play quarterback at Syracuse a few years ago, games like Friday night were what he envisioned.

Just not against Lester's team.

The Syracuse quarterback compiled 384 yards of total offense, leading the Orange to a 55-42 victory against Western Michigan, returning in the second half after it looked like he might have a short night.

The Broncos are led by Lester, the former offensive coordinator at Syracuse, who was the main recruiter for Dungey when he was an unheralded high school player out of Lake Oswego, Oregon. He thanked his former coach on the field after the game.

"I just told him, thank you for everything," Dungey said. "He's very competitive and I'm very competitive, so I'm glad I could come out on top in this one."

It looked like it would be an easy one for the Orange, who scored the first 17 points of the game and led 34-7 at halftime.

Dungey connected with Jamal Custis six times for 168 of his 184 passing yards. The senior wide receiver set career highs with those numbers, in addition to two touchdowns.

But when Syracuse coach Dino Babers inserted backup quarterback Tommy DeVito, a redshirt freshman, Western Michigan charged back, scoring 21 straight points after halftime.

Quarterback Jon Wassink found D'Wayne Eskridge for two touchdowns and LeVante Bellamy had a 64-yard touchdown to pull within 34-28.

That's when Dungey came back, leading three straight drives for touchdowns.

"He's like a river behind a dam, you've got to hold him off," Babers said. "I wanted to see if we could battle out of that without him. But we didn't get that done, so we put him back in."

Syracuse's Kielan Whitner intercepted Wassink on the first play of the fourth quarter. On the next play, Dungey scored a 27-yard run to go up 55-35.

Dungey rushed for 200 yards, a Syracuse record for rushing yards by a quarterback.

"He's a really good player, and we knew that coming in," Lester said of his former recruit. "The plan early on was to run the ball and try to control the clock, but they buried us early and so we had to switch things up. We didn't have the consistency in our run game that we want yet."

THE TAKEAWAY

Syracuse: Dungey proved he's one of the top dual-threat quarterbacks in the country, and the Orange defense was good early. After the quarterback missed the final three games last season -- and the defense gave up 54.0 points per game in that stretch -- the first half gave fans reason to believe after dropping five straight to finish 4-8 last year.

Western Michigan: The Broncos were pummeled early on but rallied. But despite losing their 13th season opener in 14 years, Western Michigan has reached a bowl game in six of those seasons. Western Michigan will have another shot at Syracuse in 2019 at the Carrier Dome.

MILESTONES

Wassink was 19-of-36 passing for a career-high 379 yards, three touchdowns and two interceptions.

Eskridge's 240 receiving yards was a career high to go with his two touchdowns. The junior's yardage output was the 12th most in Mid-American Conference history.

Freshman Jayden Reed caught seven passes for 121 yards and his first career touchdown for Western Michigan.

EXPERIENCE SHOWS

With DeVito under center, the Orange had 55 yards on 13 plays, with all five drives coming up empty on the scoreboard. With Dungey in, Syracuse gained 505 yards on 77 plays.

SCARY SCENE

Western Michigan junior running back Davon Tucker was taken off the field on a stretcher after suffering an upper body injury blocking on a kickoff return, but was walking around the locker room after the game.

Tucker appeared to injure his head or neck when he lowered his head for a collision in the first quarter while blocking for the return.

"When I went out to check on him I feared the worst, but when he talked to me, with his face mask still buried in the turf, I could sense the smile and that he was OK," Lester said. "I told the guys in the huddle that Tuck was being Tuck and they were super relieved."

Final	1	2	3	4	T
SYR	24	10	14	7	55
WMU	7	0	28	7	42

Scoring Summary -----

	SYR	WMU
FIRST QUARTER		
TD 11:36 Jamal Custis 27 Yd pass from Eric Dungey (Andre Szmyt Kick) 4 plays, 59 yards, 1:16 FG 9:32 Andre Szmyt 26 Yd Field Goal 8 plays, 22 yards, 1:55	7	0
TD 6:39 Moe Neal 1 Yd Run (Andre Szmyt Kick) 6 plays, 52 yards, 1:27 TD 3:10 LeVante Bellamy 7 Yd Run (Josh Grant Kick) 7 plays, 90 yards, 3:29 TD 0:51 Moe Neal 3 Yd Run (Andre Szmyt Kick) 6 plays, 63 yards, 2:19	10	0
SECOND QUARTER		
TD 11:53 Dontae Strickland 1 Yd Run (Andre Szmyt Kick) 9 plays, 68 yards, 2:57 FG 9:25 Andre Szmyt 43 Yd Field Goal 8 plays, 58 yards, 1:30	31	7
THIRD QUARTER		
TD 14:06 D'Wayne Eskridge 21 Yd pass from Jon Wassink (Josh Grant Kick) 2 plays, 58 yards, 0:00 TD 7:32 D'Wayne Eskridge 84 Yd pass from Jon Wassink (Josh Grant Kick) 3 plays, 95 yards, 1:13 TD 5:19 LeVante Bellamy 64 Yd Run (Josh Grant Kick) 2 plays, 66 yards, 0:00 TD 2:45 Jamal Custis 21 Yd pass from Eric Dungey (Andre Szmyt Kick) 8 plays, 60 yards, 2:34 TD 1:56 Jon Wassink 4 Yd Run (Josh Grant Kick) 3 plays, 75 yards, 0:00 TD 0:48 Dontae Strickland 1 Yd Run (Andre Szmyt Kick) 4 plays, 59 yards, 1:08	41	28
FOURTH QUARTER		
TD 14:46 Eric Dungey 27 Yd Run (Andre Szmyt Kick) 1 play, 27 yards, 0:00 TD 2:50 Jayden Reed 17 Yd pass from Jon Wassink (Josh Grant Kick) 7 plays, 98 yards, 2:41	55	35

Team Stats	SYR	WM
First Downs	26	24
Passes for First	7	14
Rushes for First	17	7
Penalties for First	2	3
Third Down Efficiency	7-17	2-10
Fourth Down Efficiency	2-3	1-2
Total Yards	560	621
Total Plays	90	64
Avg Gain Per Play	6.2	9.7
Net Yards Rushing	334	242
Rushes	62	28
Yards Per Rush	5.4	8.6
Stat Name		
Net Yards Passing	226	379
Comp-Att	11-28	19-36
Yards Per Pass	8.1	10.5
Times Sacked	1	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	-2	-11
Interceptions	0	2
Punts	4	5
Punt Average	43.8	36.6
Penalties	5	6
Penalty Yards	45	45
Fumbles	1	0
Fumbles Lost	1	0

Individual Stats

RUSHING

Syracuse	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Eric Dungey	15	200	13.3	49	1
Moe Neal	28	82	2.9	9	2
Dontae Strickland	11	38	3.5	15	2
Tommy DeVito	8	14	1.8	13	0
Chris Elmore	0	0	-	-	0
W. Michigan	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
LeVante Bellamy	11	120	10.9	64	2
Jamauri Bogan	6	68	11.3	59	0
Chase Brown	4	40	10.0	13	0
Jon Wassink	7	14	2.0	4	1

PASSING

Syracuse	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Eric Dungey	7	19	184	9.7	2	152.9	
Tommy DeVito	4	9	42	4.7	0	0	83.6
W. Michigan	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Jon Wassink	19	36	379	10.5	3	2	157.6

RECEIVING

Syracuse	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
Jamal Custis	6	168	28.0	50	2
Dontae Strickland	1	22	22.0	22	0
Ravian Pierce	2	19	9.5	9	0
Moe Neal	2	17	8.5	10	0
Sean Riley	0	0	-	-	0
W. Michigan	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
D'Wayne Eskridge	8	240	30.0	84	2
Jayden Reed	7	121	17.3	37	1
Drake Harris	1	12	12.0	12	0
LeVante Bellamy	3	6	2.0	6	0