

WEEK ONE
Western Kentucky at Wisconsin

MADISON, Wis. -- Jonathan Taylor took the handoff and went left as the Wisconsin offensive line and three tight ends cleared a path to the end zone.

The dynamic back waited patiently for the holes and weaved through traffic. The closest any defender got to tackling Taylor was when defensive back Kyle Bailey reached out but could only tug at his jersey.

For openers, not a bad start for the fourth-ranked Badgers and their star tailback.

Taylor had two long touchdown runs, Alex Hornibrook threw for 257 yards and two scores and Wisconsin opened the season with a 34-3 victory over Western Kentucky on Friday night.

The Badgers had some ups and downs. Taylor fumbled, while the vaunted offensive line was challenged early by Western Kentucky's surprising pressure. Hornibrook missed what looked like a couple easy throws to open receivers.

"Offensively we were doing some good things and then we'd kind of sputter," coach Paul Chryst said. "But they kept their poise and that you appreciate because no game is going to go perfect."

Taylor finished with 145 yards on 18 carries, even watching most of the fourth quarter from the sideline with the game well in hand for Wisconsin. He picked up where he left off last year, when he rushed for an FBS-record 1,977 yards as a freshman.

Three tight ends and the Badgers' burly offensive line helped spring Taylor for a 47-yard touchdown run in the first quarter.

"He gave us a heck of a spark, and that first touchdown he didn't do it alone," Chryst said. "There were a lot of guys that made that happen."

Taylor scored from 30 yards with 3:48 left in the second quarter as the Badgers closed the first half with 14 consecutive points.

He had 100 yards and 11 carries by the half, when the Badgers held a 24-0 lead.

"You look at that team and it's a complete team in every way, shape and form," Western Kentucky coach Mike Sanford said.

Drew Eckels was 15 of 26 for 167 yards in his first career start for the Hilltoppers, while also running for 38 yards on seven carries.

Known as a passing team last year in Sanford's first season, Western Kentucky tried to keep Wisconsin off-balance early with read-option plays.

It didn't really work. The Hilltoppers punted on the first six possessions, including four three-and-outs.

A trick play flopped, too, when receiver Quin Jernighan's fluttering pass for Eckels from the 10 was picked off by cornerback Faion Hicks in the third quarter.

"We just tried to overthink some things. We did a good job but just have to capitalize more," Eckels said.

BADGERING DEFENSE

A young defense working in seven new starters forced two turnovers inside Wisconsin's 5.

"It was just the ability to carry over what we did in practice," said linebacker Ryan Connelly, one of four returning starters. "The young guys behind us, the fact that they were communicating and talking al; game just really makes you feel confident in them."

CATCHING UP

A.J. Taylor paced the short-handed receiving corps with five catches for 85 yards, while Garrett Groshek turned a screen pass into a 43-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter for a 31-point lead.

The Badgers finished with a flurry, scoring on five of six drives after punting on three of their first four possessions.

TOP THIS

Defensive back Drell Greene finished with seven tackles and recovered Taylor's fumble in the third quarter. ... Linebacker Ben Holt had six tackles, including a career high-tying 1 1/2 for a loss.

POLL IMPLICATIONS

The Badgers probably had a convincing enough win to allow them to stay at fourth in the poll.

THE TAKEAWAY

Western Kentucky: The defense posed an early challenge up front with pressures and blitzes against Wisconsin's line. Hornibrook was sacked three times in the first half. But a Conference USA team picked to finish fifth in its division couldn't take advantage of the Badgers' slow start.

"I did like a lot of things, starting with the way they fought against the best offensive line in the country and the best running back in the country hands down. It was something to be seen," Sanford said.

Wisconsin: A young secondary featuring three first-year starters had a solid opener. Safety Scott Nelson, in particular, played well with seven tackles and two pass breakups, and showed a propensity to deliver hard hits. It was a confidence-building night for a unit that will face tougher tests later this season.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
WKU	0	0	3	0	3
WIS	7	17	3	7	34

Scoring Summary -----

	WKU	WIS
FIRST QUARTER		
TD 7:38		
Jonathan Taylor 47 Yd Run (Rafael Gaglianone Kick)	0	7
3 plays, 3 yards, 1:50		
SECOND QUARTER		
FG 8:44		
Rafael Gaglianone 39 Yd Field Goal	0	10
TD 3:48		
Jonathan Taylor 30 Yd Run (Rafael Gaglianone Kick)	0	17
3 plays, 1 yard, 0:46		
TD 0:08		
Kendric Pryor 2 Yd pass from Alex Hornibrook (Rafael Gaglianone Kick)	0	24
4 plays, 25 yards, 1:42		
THIRD QUARTER		
FG 13:15		
Ryan Nuss 25 Yd Field Goal	3	24
FG 10:10		
Rafael Gaglianone 42 Yd Field Goal	3	27
FOURTH QUARTER		
TD 13:21		
Garrett Groshek 43 Yd pass from Alex Hornibrook (Rafael Gaglianone Kick)	3	34
3 plays, 6 yards, 1:23		

TEAM STATS	WKU	WIS
First Downs	15	24
Total Yards	305	491
Total Plays	64	70
Avg Gain Per Play	4.8	7.0
Net Yards Rushing	124	234
Rushes	34	39
Yards Per Rush	3.6	6.0
Net Yards Passing	181	257
Comp-Att	17-30	17-31
Yards Per Pass	6.0	8.3
Times Sacked	3	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	-18	-5
Interceptions	1	0
Punts	6	4
Punt Average	35.2	39.5
Penalties	6	8
Penalty Yards	65	70
Fumbles	1	1
Fumbles Lost	1	1

Individual Stats

RUSHING

WKU	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	LONG
Drew Eckels	9	38	4.2	0	15
Davis Shanley	3	31	10.3	0	14
Gino Appleberry Jr.	7	27	3.9	0	8
Joshua Samuel	3	13	4.3	0	6
D'Andre Ferby	3	11	3.7	0	5
Garland LaFrance	2	4	2.0	0	6
Marquez Trigg	4	3	0.8	0	4
Jacquez Sloan	1	1	1.0	0	1
Team	1	-1	-1.0	0	0
Jahcour Pearson	1	-3	-3.0	0	0

WIS

	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	LONG
Jonathan Taylor	18	145	8.1	2	47
Taiwan Deal	8	53	6.6	0	16
Kendric Pryor	1	19	19.0	0	19
Alec Ingold	4	16	4.0	0	9
Chris James	2	10	5.0	0	7
Garrett Groshek	1	3	3.0	0	3
Alex Hornibrook	5	-12	-2.4	0	4

PASSING

WKU	COMP	ATT	YDS	Y/A	TD	INT	QBRAT
Drew Eckels	15	26	167	6.4	0	0	26.7
Davis Shanley	2	3	14	4.7	0	0	93.2
Quin Jernighan	0	1	0	0.0	0	1	0.0
WIS	COMP	ATT	YDS	Y/A	TD	INT	QBRAT
Alex Hornibrook	17	29	257	8.9	2	0	63.4
Team	0	2	0	0.0	0	0	--

RECEIVING

WKU	REC	YDS	AVG	TD	LONG
Jacquez Sloan	1	48	48.0	0	48
Xavier Lane	4	40	10.0	0	17
Quin Jernighan	2	30	15.0	0	18
Kyle Fourtenbary	2	23	11.5	0	14
Lucky Jackson	4	22	5.5	0	10
Garland LaFrance	3	13	4.3	0	10
Mik'Quan Deane	1	5	5.0	0	5
WIS	REC	YDS	AVG	TD	LONG
A.J. Taylor	5	85	17.0	0	25
Kendric Pryor	4	51	12.8	1	22
Garrett Groshek	1	43	43.0	1	43
Jake Ferguson	4	43	10.8	0	11
Jack Dunn	1	20	20.0	0	20
Taiwan Deal	1	10	10.0	0	10
Adam Krumholz	1	5	5.0	0	5