

WEEK ONE
NORTHWESTERN ST AT TEXAS A&M

COLLEGE STATION, Texas -- Coach Jimbo Fisher has preached about the importance of explosive plays since he took over at Texas A&M.

On Thursday night, Trayveon Williams gave his new coach exactly that when he ran 73 yards for a touchdown on the team's third offensive play to get things going in what ended as a 59-7 rout of Northwestern State in Fisher's debut at the school.

"Coach Fisher (says) the team that has the most explosive plays is going to be the team that wins," Williams said. "So just being able to create that explosive play and just giving a lot of juice to the offense and to the team ... was just a great opportunity to ignite the game."

Williams ran for 240 yards and three touchdowns in just more than two quarters to lead the Aggies to the victory.

Williams scored Texas A&M's first touchdown on a 73-yard run, and a 2-yard scamper made it 21-0 in the second quarter. The junior pushed the lead to 42-0 when he burst through the line and simply outran everyone else for a 40-yard score early in the third quarter in his last play of the night.

"What Trayveon does is he has great acceleration," Fisher said. "He sees very well. He's just a natural runner with the football."

It was the second-best rushing performance in school history behind the 297 yards Bob Smith ran for against SMU on Nov. 11, 1950, and Williams became the 20th player in Texas A&M history to reach 2,000 career yards rushing (2,095). Kwami Etwi added 83 yards rushing and a score to help the Aggies rush for more than 400 yards (503) for the first time since 2003.

Williams said he didn't know how many yards he'd piled up until his night was done.

"We were just going out there and having fun ... just got caught up in the moment and I didn't even realize I had what I had," he said.

Kellen Mond started at quarterback for the Aggies after vying with Nick Starkel for the job throughout camp and threw for 184 yards and touchdown passes of 7 and 8 yards and added a score on a 1-yard run. Starkel took over in the third quarter with the game out of hand and threw for 63 yards and a touchdown.

The Aggies handled business easily against Northwestern State, an FCS school which plays in the Southland Conference, to help Fisher to a victory in his first game since leaving Florida State for a 10-year, \$75 million contract.

Fisher, who won a national championship at Florida State in 2013 admitted to being a bit nervous before kickoff on Thursday night.

"You're breaking new ground in new place," he said. "You've got to go out there and still play and coach and do the things you have to do. So I have butterflies no matter how long you're anywhere. It's just part of the game."

Northwestern State split plays at quarterback between Shelton Eppler and Clay Holgorsen. Eppler started and threw for 105 yards and Holgorsen finished with 125 yards passing and touchdown.

"The one thing we talked to this football team about afterward is that this one game will not define us," first-year coach Brad Laird said. "There's 10 more opportunities not counting postseason where we have the opportunity and look forward to."

THE TAKEAWAY

Northwestern State: The Demons were overmatched in their first game against a Southeastern Conference team since 2015, but Eppler and Holgorsen both made some nice throws that should translate to more success when they play other FCS schools.

Texas A&M: The Aggies looked good against lesser competition on Thursday night but will have to play much better next Saturday to get a win next Saturday when second-ranked Clemson visits.

TIGHT END TIME

Fisher utilized the tight end far more than the Aggies had in the years under coach Kevin Sumlin, who was fired in November, with Jace Sternberger finishing with five receptions for 56 yards and two touchdowns.

He's the first tight end at Texas A&M with two touchdown catches in a game since Michael Lamothe did it against Texas Tech in 2010.

TARGETING CALLS

While the offense looked in its first time out, there were some problems on defense with linebacker Otaro Alaka and safety Donovan Wilson both being ejected for targeting in the first half.

"That's just a fundamental mistake that we cannot have," Fisher said. "Hopefully, that's a lesson we learn because we can't do that anymore."

Final	1	2	3	4	T
NWST	0	0	0	7	7
TA&M	7	28	17	7	59

Scoring Summary -----

FIRST QUARTER	NWST	TA&M
TD 11:41		
Trayveon Williams 73 Yd Run (Daniel LaCamera Kick)		7
3 plays, 93 yards, 1:24	0	
SECOND QUARTER	NWST	TA&M
TD 14:56		
Jace Sternberger 7 Yd pass from Kellen Mond (Daniel LaCamera Kick)		14
7 plays, 59 yards, 2:37	0	
TD 8:11		
Trayveon Williams 2 Yd Run (Daniel LaCamera Kick)		21
9 plays, 76 yards, 3:58	0	
TD 4:16		
Kellen Mond 1 Yd Run (Daniel LaCamera Kick)		28
8 plays, 55 yards, 2:34	0	
TD 0:06		
Jace Sternberger 8 Yd pass from Kellen Mond (Daniel LaCamera Kick)		35
12 plays, 87 yards, 2:21	0	
THIRD QUARTER	NWST	TA&M
TD 12:20		
Trayveon Williams 40 Yd Run (Daniel LaCamera Kick)		42
6 plays, 65 yards, 2:40	0	
TD 9:23		
Kwame Etwi 4 Yd Run (Daniel LaCamera Kick)		49
6 plays, 61 yards, 2:06	0	
FG 3:24		
Daniel LaCamera 52 Yd Field Goal		52
11 plays, 57 yards, 4:45	0	
FOURTH QUARTER	NWST	TA&M
TD 14:39		
Jazz Ferguson 71 Yd pass from Clay Holgorsen (Austyn Fendrick Kick)		52
1 play, 71 yards, 0:14	7	
TD 8:00		
Jalen Preston 14 Yd pass from Nick Starkel (Daniel LaCamera Kick)		59
11 plays, 75 yards, 6:39	7	

TEAM STATS	NWST	TA&M
First Downs	13	40
Total Yards	251	758
Total Plays	48	96
Avg Gain Per Play	5.2	7.9
Net Yards Rushing	21	503
Rushes	13	61
Yards Per Rush	1.6	8.2
Net Yards Passing	230	255
Comp-Att	18-35	23-35
Yards Per Pass	6.6	7.3
Times Sacked	2	0
Yds Lost To Sacks	-17	0
Interceptions	0	0
Punts	9	2
Punt Average	42.1	52.5
Penalties	11	8
Penalty Yards	93	95
Fumbles	1	2
Fumbles Lost	0	1

Individual Stats

RUSHING

NORTHWESTERN ST	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	LONG
Clay Holgorsen	2	7	3.5	0	4
Jared West	4	7	1.8	0	6
Stadford Anderson	4	4	1.0	0	3
Da'Von Smith	3	3	1.0	0	3
TEXAS A&M	RUSH	YDS	AVG	TD	LONG
Trayveon Williams	20	240	12.0	3	73
Kwame Etwi	8	83	10.4	1	17
Vernon Jackson	7	49	7.0	0	22
Jashaun Corbin	8	49	6.1	0	12
Jacob Kibodi	3	26	8.7	0	15
Deneric Prince	2	21	10.5	0	18
Connor Blumrick	3	20	6.7	0	19
Charles Strong Jr.	4	12	3.0	0	6
Kellen Mond	6	3	0.5	1	9

PASSING

NORTHWESTERN ST	COMP	ATT	YDS	Y/A	TD	INT	QBRAT
Clay Holgorsen	9	19	125	6.6	1	0	--
Shelton Eppler	9	16	105	6.6	0	0	--
TEXAS A&M	COMP	ATT	YDS	Y/A	TD	INT	QBRAT
Kellen Mond	17	25	184	7.4	2	0	85.0
Nick Starkel	5	8	63	7.9	1	0	85.5
Connor Blumrick	1	1	8	8.0	0	0	90.2

RECEIVING

NORTHWESTERN ST	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Jazz Ferguson	4	129	32.3	1	71
Jaylen Watson	3	30	10.0	0	11
Quan Shorts	4	20	5.0	0	10
Jared West	3	18	6.0	0	11
Stadford Anderson	1	12	12.0	0	12
Marquisian Chapman	1	9	9.0	0	9
Da'Von Smith	1	7	7.0	0	7
Bryson Bourque	1	5	5.0	0	5
TEXAS A&M	REC	YDS	AVG	LONG	TD
Jhamon Ausbon	6	81	13.5	0	21
Jace Sternberger	5	56	11.2	2	31
Camron Buckley	3	44	14.7	0	34
Kendrick Rogers	2	33	16.5	0	20
Jalen Preston	1	14	14.0	1	14
Ryan Renick	1	8	8.0	0	8
Andrew Boykin	1	8	8.0	0	8
Jashaun Corbin	1	8	8.0	0	8
Trayveon Williams	1	2	2.0	0	2
Roshauud Paul	1	2	2.0	0	2
Cullen Gillaspia	1	-1	-1.0	0	-1