

Francois throws 2 TD passes as Seminoles hold off NIU 37-19

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- Florida State has been seeking improvement on offense after managing just 10 combined points in its two FBS losses. The Seminoles found some reasons to be optimistic for a turnaround on Saturday.

Deondre Francois threw for a season-high 352 yards and two touchdown passes as Florida State used an efficient first-half offense en route to a 37-19 win over Northern Illinois.

Francois had his seventh career 300-yard day, completing 23 of 31 passes. The junior had a 78-yard touchdown pass to Tamorrion Terry and an 8-yard TD pass to Jacques Patrick.

The Seminoles held a players-only meeting early in the week and a re-energized performance in practice was also reflected against the Huskies.

"A lot of the guys stepped up and said we've got to do better," Francois said. "We got to play better and we've got to stop blaming it on everybody else. We've got to stop blaming each other, got to stop blaming our coaches. Today, I feel like we did a better job at doing our job."

Despite using a fourth different starting lineup on the offensive line, the Seminoles generated a season-high 473 yards against the Huskies. Florida State was at its best in the first half, generating four scoring drives as the Seminoles took a 20-7 lead.

The Seminoles (2-2) gave coach Willie Taggart his first win over an FBS opponent in 2018. Florida State's other win came against Samford on Sept. 8.

Taggart was pleased with the passing game but saw some inconsistency in the ground game as FSU had 121 rushing yards but averaged just 2.1 yards per carry. He also lamented four turnovers (three fumbles and one interception).

"We can't turn the ball over like we did," Taggart said. "We had it on the ground too often, and we threw an interception that shouldn't have happened."

Ricky Aguayo had made just one of four field-goal attempts coming into the game but connected on three kicks -- from 50 yards and twice from 42 yards. It was the fifth time in his career that Aguayo has made three or more field-goal attempts.

Marcus Childers tossed a pair of touchdown passes, including a 66-yard catch-and-run to D.J. Brown. Childers completed 20 of 41 passes for 215 yards and also had an 11-yard touchdown run for NIU (1-3), which was forced to punt eight times and couldn't convert a pair of fourth-down conversions.

"I think we were in a fight, we were swinging and just didn't land some of our punches," NIU coach Rod Carey said. "We didn't do enough offensively."

Florida State held NIU to 6 rushing yards on 20 carries, the lowest total allowed by the Seminoles in a game since 2008.

Keith Gavin set career highs for catches (six) and receiving yards (93) in the first half for the Seminoles, who won their 15th consecutive nonconference home game.

**THE TAKEAWAY**

Northern Illinois: The Huskies were ranked 128th out of 130 FBS teams in scoring offense coming into Saturday and needed 19 minutes to earn their initial first down. NIU scored its first-half touchdown with the benefit of a short field, starting at Florida State's 23 after the Huskies recovered a fumble. That set up Childers' TD pass to Jauan Wesley.

Florida State: The Seminoles had 23 first downs and were efficient, relative to the previous three games, despite losing three fumbles. Florida State ran a season-high 88 plays.

<b>Final</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>T</b>
NIU	0	7	6	6	19
FSU	14	6	3	14	37

**Scoring Summary -----**

	NIU	FSU
<b>FIRST QUARTER</b>		
FSU TD 9:53 Jacques Patrick 8 Yd pass from Deondre Francois (Ricky Aguayo Kick) 13 plays, 75 yards, 5:07	0	7
FSU TD 5:13 Cam Akers 7 Yd Run (Ricky Aguayo Kick) 8 plays, 70 yards, 2:55	0	14
<b>second Quarter</b>		
NIU TD 6:01 Jauan Wesley 20 Yd pass from Marcus Childers (Andrew Gantz Kick) 3 plays, 23 yards, 0:49	7	14
FSU FG 3:58 Ricky Aguayo 42 Yd Field Goal 6 plays, 40 yards, 2:03	7	17
FSU FG 0:00 Ricky Aguayo 50 Yd Field Goal 10 plays, 26 yards, 2:04	7	20
<b>third Quarter</b>		
FSU FG 4:27 Ricky Aguayo 42 Yd Field Goal 9 plays, 55 yards, 4:06	7	23
NIU TD 2:48 D.J. Brown 66 Yd pass from Marcus Childers (Two-Point Run Conversion Failed) 4 plays, 75 yards, 1:39	13	23
<b>fourth Quarter</b>		
FSU TD 10:13 Tamorrion Terry 78 Yd pass from Deondre Francois (Ricky Aguayo Kick) 2 plays, 80 yards, 0:37	13	30
NIU TD 8:01 Marcus Childers 11 Yd Run (Two-Point Pass Conversion Failed) 4 plays, 37 yards, 1:07	19	30
FSU TD 0:12 Amir Rasul 7 Yd Run (Ricky Aguayo Kick) 6 plays, 28 yards, 3:41	19	37

<b>Team Stats</b>	NIU	FSU
First Downs	13	23
Total Yards	221	473
Total Plays	61	89
Avg Gain Per Play	3.6	5.3
Net Yards Rushing	6	121
Rushes	20	57
Yards Per Rush	0.3	2.1
Net Yards Passing	215	352
Comp-Att	20-41	23-32
Yards Per Pass	5.2	11.0
Times Sacked	2	4
Yds Lost To Sacks	-17	-26
Interceptions	0	1
Punts	8	4
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	3	9
Penalty Yards	15	60
Fumbles	2	5
Fumbles Lost	0	3
<b>Possession</b>	<b>22:33</b>	<b>37:27</b>

**Individual Stats**

**RUSHING**

NIU	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
28 Jordan Nettles	3	13	4.3	5	0
22 Tre Harbison	4	7	1.8	4	0
21 Marcus Jones	2	2	1.0	4	0
15 Marcus Childers	11	-16	-1.5	11	1
FSU	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
3 Cam Akers	22	64	2.9	11	1
9 Jacques Patrick	16	56	3.5	16	0
22 Amir Rasul	6	28	4.7	7	1
24 Anthony Grant	1	-1	-1.0	0	0
12 Deondre Francois	9	-1	-0.1	7	0
8 Nyqwan Murray	2	-5	-2.5	2	0

**PASSING**

NIU	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Marcus Childers	20	41	215	5.2	2	0	108.9
FSU	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Deondre Francois	23	31	352	11.4	2	1	184.4

**RECEIVING**

NIU	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
10 D.J. Brown	7	117	16.7	66	1
18 Cole Tucker	6	40	6.7	11	0
9 Jauan Wesley	3	35	11.7	20	1
14 Spencer Tears	2	16	8.0	12	0
44 Corey Lersch	2	7	3.5	7	0
82 Fotis Kokosioulis	0	0	-	-	0
FSU	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
89 Keith Gavin	6	93	15.5	39	0
8 Nyqwan Murray	5	85	17.0	32	0
15 Tamorrion Terry	2	77	38.5	78	1
Tre'shaun Harrison	3	34	11.3	17	0
6 Tre' McKitty	2	23	11.5	11	0
29 D.J. Matthews	3	23	7.7	11	0
9 Jacques Patrick	2	17	8.5	9	1