

WEEK FOUR
CENTRAL MICHIGAN AT MICHIGAN STATE

EAST LANSING, Mich. -- Michigan State played well for about 30 minutes, and that was more than enough.

The final score was closer than it could have been, though.

"It's just disappointing for me. It's something that we are very aware," quarterback Brian Lewerke said. "Offensively, we just kind of got stopped a little bit, little bit of the third and fourth quarter. Probably should have put up more points."

Lewerke ran for two touchdowns in the first half, and the 21st-ranked Spartans overcame a slow start and an underwhelming finish to beat Central Michigan 31-20 on Saturday. Michigan State led 31-3 before letting CMU rally a bit in the fourth quarter.

Connor Heyward and La'Darius Jefferson also ran for touchdowns for the Spartans. Michigan State entered with the nation's top-ranked run defense and held CMU to 5 yards on the ground in the first half.

"We're difficult to move the ball on, so I think everything was pretty lopsided in that regard," Spartans coach Mark Dantonio said. "Then the fourth quarter came. It got a little bit interesting for us."

CMU (1-4) kicked a field goal on the game's first possession and held that lead at the end of the first quarter. Lewerke threw an interception in the end zone in the first, but the Spartans (3-1) would have plenty of chances in the red zone.

Lewerke scored on runs of 3 and 5 yards, and Michigan State led 17-3 at halftime. CMU's Tommy Lazzaro threw two interceptions in the first half, giving the Spartans great field position.

Heyward and Jefferson scored their TDs in the third, but the Spartans didn't close the game out very emphatically. CMU scored a touchdown, recovered an onside kick and then kicked a field goal to make it 31-13. Then the Chippewas scored on a trick play, with running back Jonathan Ward throwing a 29-yard pass to Tony Poljan with 6:44 remaining.

The Spartans were able to run out the clock after that.

"I thought we dug ourselves a hole early in the first half," CMU coach John Bonamego said. "We didn't come here to play a game. We came to win a game and we didn't do that. However, I'm very proud of the fight in our football team and how they came out and played in the second half and made a game of it."

THE TAKEAWAY

CMU: The Chippewas kept this game close for most of the first half, but the turnovers by Lazzaro made a difficult task even harder. The late comeback made the final score respectable.

Michigan State: Mistakes like Lewerke's interception could cause bigger problems against better competition. Still, this was a dominant defensive performance by the Spartans until the final quarter, and if that stinginess continues, Michigan State can certainly be a factor in the Big Ten.

TOUGH UP FRONT

Michigan State was allowing 32.7 yards rushing per game. That average went up after the Chippewas finished with 63, but it was still a fine performance by the Spartans' defensive front, especially in the first half.

Michigan State's streak of five straight games allowing under 50 yards rushing came to an end.

DIFFICULT TEST

Lazzaro made his first career start in last weekend's win over Maine. This opponent was clearly a step up in class.

"We knew they were going to be good against the run, and they were really good against the run. We knew we'd have to come out and throw it," Lazzaro said. "The first drive went good. After that I was getting a little antsy back there and I kind of needed to settle down. So those first two picks were definitely on me."

Lazzaro ended up going 19 of 34 for 153 yards and a touchdown.

INJURY CONCERNS

Michigan State lost receiver Cody White to a broken hand during the game. The Spartans were also without running back LJ Scott for a second straight game, and receiver Jalen Nailor didn't play either.

Regarding Nailor, Dantonio said only that it was not a disciplinary issue.

POLL IMPLICATIONS

The Spartans never seemed as if they were in much danger of losing, but they didn't rack up many style points against an opponent they were expected to beat easily.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
CMU	3	0	0	17	20
MSU	0	17	14	0	31

Scoring Summary -----

	CMU	MSU
FIRST QUARTER		
CMU FG		
13:09		
Ryan Tice 40 Yd Field Goal		
5 plays, 43 yards, 1:51	3	0
SECOND QUARTER		
MSU TD 10:57		
Brian Lewerke 3 Yd Run (Matt Coghlin Kick)		
4 plays, 35 yards, 2:03	3	7
MSU TD 2:23		
Brian Lewerke 5 Yd Run (Matt Coghlin Kick)		
6 plays, 46 yards, 2:52	3	14
MSU FG 0:29		
Matt Coghlin 33 Yd Field Goal		
8 plays, 19 yards, 1:29	3	17
THIRD QUARTER		
MSU TD 10:24		
Connor Heyward 2 Yd Run (Matt Coghlin Kick)		
8 plays, 58 yards, 4:27	3	24
MSU TD 4:18		
La'Darius Jefferson 2 Yd Run (Matt Coghlin Kick)		
8 plays, 44 yards, 4:42	3	31
FOURTH QUARTER		
CMU TD 13:29		
Julian Hicks 10 Yd pass from Tommy Lazzaro (Ryan Tice Kick)		
13 plays, 75 yards, 5:49	10	31
CMU FG 12:08		
Ryan Tice 40 Yd Field Goal		
6 plays, 26 yards, 1:19	13	31
CMU TD 6:44		
Tony Poljan 29 Yd pass from Jonathan Ward (Ryan Tice Kick)		
8 plays, 69 yards, 3:06	20	31

Team Stats	CMU	MSU
First Downs	13	23
Total Yards	245	345
Total Plays	57	72
Avg Gain Per Play	4.3	4.8
Net Yards Rushing	63	160
Rushes	22	47
Yards Per Rush	2.9	3.4
Net Yards Passing	182	185
Comp-Att	20-35	16-25
Yards Per Pass	5.2	7.4
Times Sacked	3	1
Yds Lost To Sacks	-16	-2
Interceptions	2	1
Punts	5	4
Punt Average	40.4	35.5
Penalties	7	5
Penalty Yards	64	55
Fumbles	0	1
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Possession	22:21	37:39

Individual Stats

RUSHING

CMU	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Tommy Lazzaro	11	32	2.9	0	13
Jonathan Ward	8	26	3.3	0	16
Damon Terry	1	3	3.0	0	3
Kumehnnu Gwilly	1	1	1.0	0	1
Cameron Cole	1	1	1.0	0	1
MSU	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
La'Darius Jefferson	13	56	4.3	1	15
Connor Heyward	15	48	3.2	1	7
Brian Lewerke	8	39	4.9	2	10
Weston Bridges	6	18	3.0	0	9
Andre Welch	2	7	3.5	0	11
Team	1	-1	-1.0	0	0
Rocky Lombardi	2	-7	-3.5	0	4

PASSING

CMU	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Tommy Lazzaro	19	34	153	4.5	1	2	17.7
Jonathan Ward	1	1	29	29.0	1	0	100.0
MSU	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Brian Lewerke	16	25	185	7.4	0	1	75.8

RECEIVING

CMU	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Brandon Childress	3	46	15.3	0	35
Julian Hicks	5	41	8.2	1	16
Tony Poljan	1	29	29.0	1	29
Cameron Cole	2	18	9.0	0	16
Drayton Law	2	17	8.5	0	10
Logan Hessbrook	1	8	8.0	0	8
Jonathan Ward	2	8	4.0	0	5
JaCorey Sullivan	2	7	3.5	0	4
Bernhard Raimann	1	5	5.0	0	5
Devon Spalding	1	3	3.0	0	3
MSU	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Felton Davis III	3	66	22.0	0	37
Cody White	2	40	20.0	0	24
Laress Nelson	3	31	10.3	0	19
Brandon Sowards	2	29	14.5	0	20
Connor Heyward	4	16	4.0	0	12
Matt Sokol	1	6	6.0	0	6
La'Darius Jefferson	1	-3	-3.0	0	0