

Final	1	2	3	4	T
PITT	7	0	7	0	14
ND	0	6	6	7	19

Book, Boykin bailout No. 5 Notre Dame in 19-14 win vs Pitt

SOUTH BEND, Ind. -- Wide receiver Miles Boykin had a message for quarterback Ian Book after the No. 5 Notre Dame remained unbeaten Saturday, coming from behind and then holding off Pittsburgh 19-14 on Saturday.

"I told him winning is fun, but let's not win like this again," the 6-foot-4 Boykin said after he caught the game-winning, 35-yard touchdown pass from Book with 5:43 remaining in the fourth quarter.

The Book-to-Boykin combination is beginning to etch itself in Notre Dame lore along with other combinations such as quarterback Terry Hanratty and wide receiver Jim Seymour, the "Fling and Cling" combo that helped Ara Parseghian's Irish to the 1966 national championship.

Book and Boykin have had memorable moments before -- their 55-yard touchdown with 1:28 in the Citrus Bowl last Jan. 1 provided the Irish with a 21-17 victory over LSU.

Saturday's TD completion helped to improve the Irish to 7-0 for the first time since 2012, the year they went to the BCS title game for coach Brian Kelly, who was feeling a little better after the Irish held off the upset bid by the Panthers (3-4).

"Proud of our guys and their grit -- they hung in there and found a way to win," Kelly said. "We were not sharp mentally, we didn't execute efficiently. They weren't at their best and Pittsburgh played well. We still found a way."

Pitt led 14-12 thanks to a long first-quarter touchdown drive and a 99-yard kickoff return by Maurice Ffrench to start the second half.

But the Irish, who were held to 80 yards rushing, prevailed behind Book, who is 4-0 as a starter since replacing Brandon Wimbush. Book was intercepted twice, but finished with 264 yards passing. He was 13 of 14 for 158 yards in the second half.

"I didn't even see (Book) throw it," Boykin said after finishing with four receptions for 84 yards. "I just saw the ball up there and thought I have to catch up to this. It was a dime. (Ian's) a baller. He's always calm and poised."

As far as Book is concerned, it's mutual admiration.

"(Miles is) really rangy, so I just got to put it up there and give him a chance," Book said. "Day in and day out, he works so hard. I think our chemistry is starting to come along a little bit."

Pat Narduzzi's Panthers were looking to upset an Associated Press top-five team for the third straight season after knocking off No. 3 Clemson in Death Valley during the 2016 season and No. 2 Miami last November in Pittsburgh.

"I feel bad for our kids in the locker room," Narduzzi said. "I'm disappointed for them. They fought their tails off. We were ahead almost the entire game. Sometimes you can't control what you can't control. We went toe-to-toe with a top-five team and we didn't pull it off in the end."

Kenny Pickett was 19 for 28 for 126 yards, and was sacked by Khalid Kareem -- Notre Dame's only sack of the game -- for a loss of 14 yards on Pitt's final possession to set up a fourth-and-long the Panthers could not convert.

Pitt also ran a strange faked punt, inserting third-string quarterback Jeff George Jr. as the punter and having him throw, on its second-to-last drive around midfield that failed.

"(Trying) to get a first down," Narduzzi said. "That certainly wasn't the game."

TAKEAWAYS

Pittsburgh: The Panthers gained just 12 yards on their last three drives of the first half. Their first, however, was a thing of beauty: 17 plays, 88 yards, six first downs, consuming 9:43 of the clock and ending with Ollison taking a direct snap, faking an end-around handoff and running into the end zone on second-and-goal from the Irish 9.

Notre Dame: The Irish trailed for the first times after the first quarter (7-0), at halftime (7-6) and after three quarters (14-12), and they were their own worst enemy with turnovers, quarterback sacks and penalties at inopportune times.

UPSET PANTHERS

This is the 11th time in the last 12 games between the two teams that the winning margin was in single digits. The Panthers won 28-21 in 2013 and 27-22 in 2009, both at home. Pitt last win at Notre Dame Stadium was a 36-33 four-overtime affair in 2008.

The Irish also prevailed at home 29-26 in triple overtime in 2012 in a game in which the Panthers missed a possible game-winning field goal in the second extra period.

"The message to the kids is sometimes you can't control what you can't control," Narduzzi said. "For whatever reason, we didn't pull it out at the end."

Scoring Summary -----

FIRST QUARTER	PITT	ND
PITT TD 1:26 Qadree Ollison 9 Yd Run (Alex Kessman Kick)	7	0
17 plays, 88 yards, 9:43		
second Quarter	PITT	ND
ND FG 4:34 Justin Yoon 22 Yd Field Goal		3
10 plays, 44 yards, 3:34		
ND FG 0:05 Justin Yoon 41 Yd Field Goal		6
12 plays, 42 yards, 3:32		
third Quarter	PITT	ND
PITT TD 14:46 Maurice Ffrench 99 Yd Kickoff Return (Alex Kessman Kick) 0 plays, 0 yards, 0:14	14	6
ND TD 2:09 Chase Claypool 16 Yd pass from Ian Book (Two-Point Pass Conversion Failed) 8 plays, 71 yards, 2:51	14	12
fourth Quarter	PITT	ND
ND TD 5:43 Miles Boykin 35 Yd pass from Ian Book (Justin Yoon Kick)	14	19
5 plays, 80 yards, 1:43		

Team Stats

	PITT	ND
First Downs	14	23
Total Yards	242	344
Total Plays	60	70
Avg Gain Per Play	4.0	4.9
Net Yards Rushing	116	80
Rushes	30	38
Yards Per Rush	3.9	2.1
Net Yards Passing	126	264
Comp-Att	19-30	26-32
Yards Per Pass	4.2	8.3
Times Sacked	1	3
Yds Lost To Sacks	-14	-32
Interceptions	0	2
Punts	4	3
Punt Average	41.8	46.7
Penalties	8	4
Penalty Yards	80	35
Fumbles	0	1
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Possession	33:27	26:33

Individual Stats

RUSHING

PITT	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
22 Darrin Hall	9	62	6.9	17	0
30 Qadree Ollison	16	50	3.1	16	1
2 Maurice Ffrench	1	6	6.0	6	0
35 George Aston	1	4	4.0	4	0
8 Kenny Pickett	3	-6	-2.0	9	0
ND	Rush	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
12 Ian Book	16	31	1.9	22	0
2 Dexter Williams	13	31	2.4	13	0
6 Tony Jones Jr.	4	12	3.0	7	0
10 Chris Finke	2	10	5.0	8	0

PASSING

PITT	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
8 Kenny Pickett	19	28	126	4.5	0	0	105.7
30 Qadree Ollison	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
Kirk Christodoulou	0	1	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
ND	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
12 Ian Book	26	32	264	8.3	2	2	158.7

RECEIVING

PITT	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
6 Aaron Mathews	4	47	11.8	14	0
Rafael Araujo-Lopes	6	32	5.3	9	0
22 Darrin Hall	4	20	5.0	16	0
2 Maurice Ffrench	1	15	15.0	15	0
10 Will Gragg	1	7	7.0	7	0
30 Qadree Ollison	2	5	2.5	4	0
35 George Aston	1	0	0.0	0	0
ND	Rec	Yds	Avg	Long	TD
81 Miles Boykin	4	84	21.0	35	1
10 Chris Finke	6	62	10.3	26	0
83 Chase Claypool	5	61	12.2	21	1
86 Alize Mack	6	31	5.2	9	0
4 Kevin Austin	1	13	13.0	13	0
84 Cole Kmet	1	8	8.0	8	0
87 Michael Young	1	3	3.0	3	0
2 Dexter Williams	2	2	1.0	5	0