

WEEK EIGHT  
NORTHWESTERN AT RUTGERS

PISCATAWAY, N.J. -- With a game for first place in the Big Ten West on the horizon against No. 23 Wisconsin, Northwestern almost got caught looking past lowly Rutgers.

Isaiah Bowser scored on a 5-yard run with 8:12 to play and Northwestern avoided a major letdown by converting two fourth-downs plays on the game-winning drive in a much-harder-than-expected 18-15 win on Saturday.

"We had confidence in them the whole game," Wildcats defensive end Joe Gaziano said of his offense. "We knew that they could put the points up (we) needed to score and needed to win the game, so I think in the fourth quarter we kind of looked at each other and said, 'let's do this.'"

The Wildcats (4-3, 4-1) did, just barely, scoring the final 11 points and limiting Rutgers (1-7, 0-5) to a field goal in the second half.

The win set up a showdown at home Saturday against Wisconsin, which beat Illinois 49-20. The Badgers (5-2, 3-1) and Iowa (6-1, 3-1) are a half game behind Northwestern in the West. Iowa beat Maryland 23-0 Saturday.

"It feels great, like I said. All the guys in the locker room are supporting me and saying congratulations and everything and it was a great win," said Bowser, who rushed for 108 yards on 24 carries. He also scored the opening touchdown on a 3-yard run after Rutgers hurt itself by muffing the opening kickoff and being forced to punt from its own 5.

Drew Luckenbaugh added a 23-yard field goal for the Wildcats who won their third straight game overall and sixth straight on the road. Clayton Thorson hit Flynn Nagel on a 2-point conversion pass after Bowser's go-ahead run.

Thorson drove the offense 63 yards in 11 plays for the game winner. He ran 4 yards on a quarterback sneak on a fourth-and-1 from his own 46 early in the drive and he hit Nagel on a 10-yard pass on a fourth-and 4 from the Rutgers 15. Bowser scored on the next play.

"Their defense played really well," said Thorson, who was 17 of 34 for 150 yards. "That's the best we've seen them play."

Northwestern coach Pat Fitzgerald wasn't surprised his team struggled against Rutgers in the Scarlet Knights' Homecoming.

"That's Big Ten football, man," he said. "Win and advance. It doesn't matter about style points. It's probably really good discussion on your guys blog sites, but I don't care, to be crystal clear. Find a way to win."

Isaih Pacheco scored on a 44-yard run for Rutgers (1-7, 0-5), which lost its seventh straight game. Justin Davidovicz kicked field goals of 42 and 26 yards, while Willington Previlon had a sack for a safety.

"It definitely hurts," Rutgers defensive end Kevin Wilkins said. "I thought everyone played hard, both sides of the ball. You love to see that. Like I said in the past, there will come a point in time where it will click for us. You are going to see how much talent we have on both sides of the ball. You got a glimpse of that today."

Rutgers, which had not led in the second quarter of a game since a season-opening win over Texas State, led 12-7 halftime lead.

Davidovicz got the Scarlet Knights on the board with a 42-yard field goal. Pacheco gave Rutgers a 10-7 lead with the Scarlet Knights' longest play from scrimmage on offense with 5:09 left in the half. Previlon sacked Thorson for the safety 1:38 before halftime.

They just could not hold on.

"I feel for our players because they really want to be able to celebrate on a Saturday," Rutgers coach Chris Ash said. "I really want that for them. Disappointed."

TAKEAWAY

Northwestern: Northwestern has a history of playing up and down to its opponents. It knocked off Michigan State two weeks ago and then went to overtime with Nebraska. It should be interesting to see how it plays against Wisconsin and No. 4 Notre Dame the next two weeks.

Rutgers: This was the game the Scarlet Knights needed if they were going to win again. They have Wisconsin, Michigan, Penn State and Michigan State in the home stretch.

<b>Final</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>NW</b>	7	0	3	8	18
<b>RUTG</b>	0	12	3	0	15

Scoring Summary -----

	NW	RUTG
<b>FIRST QUARTER</b>		
NW TD 9:46		
Isaiah Bowser 3 Yd Run (Drew Luckenbaugh Kick)		
8 plays, 43 yards, 3:17	7	0
<b>SECOND QUARTER</b>		
RUTG FG 9:19		
Justin Davidovicz 42 Yd Field Goal		
6 plays, 13 yards, 2:20	7	3
RUTG TD 5:09		
Isaih Pacheco 44 Yd Run (Justin Davidovicz Kick)		
6 plays, 66 yards, 2:21	7	10
RUTG SF 1:38		
Team Safety		
2 plays, -22 yards, 0:28	7	12
<b>THIRD QUARTER</b>		
RUTG FG 9:58		
Justin Davidovicz 26 Yd Field Goal		
9 plays, 39 yards, 3:56	7	15
NW FG 5:13		
Drew Luckenbaugh 23 Yd Field Goal		
11 plays, 71 yards, 4:45	10	15
<b>FOURTH QUARTER</b>		
NW TD 8:12		
Isaiah Bowser 5 Yd Run (Clayton Thorson Pass to Flynn Nagel for Two-Point Conversion)		
11 plays, 63 yards, 4:36	18	15

Team Stats	NW	RUTG
First Downs	20	10
Total Yards	278	188
Total Plays	81	57
Avg Gain Per Play	3.4	3.3
Net Yards Rushing	128	107
Rushes	47	26
Yards Per Rush	2.7	4.1
Net Yards Passing	150	81
Comp-Att	17-34	15-31
Yards Per Pass	4.4	2.6
Times Sacked	3	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	-18	-17
Interceptions	0	0
Punts	7	9
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	6	7
Penalty Yards	49	60
Fumbles	1	0
Fumbles Lost	1	0
Possession	34:23	25:37

Individual Stats

RUSHING

NW	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Isaiah Bowser	24	108	4.5	2	23
Chad Hanaoka	6	26	4.3	0	7
Drake Anderson	7	24	3.4	0	6
JJ Jefferson	1	-3	-3.0	0	0
Clayton Thorson	9	-27	-3.0	0	4
RUTG	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Isaih Pacheco	11	76	6.9	1	44
Raheem Blackshear	6	23	3.8	0	6
Trey Sneed	6	13	2.2	0	7
Artur Sitkowski	3	-5	-1.7	0	12

PASSING

NW	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Clayton Thorson	17	34	150	4.4	0	0	24.5
RUTG	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Artur Sitkowski	15	31	81	2.6	0	0	11.8

RECEIVING

NW	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Flynn Nagel	8	71	8.9	0	14
Riley Lees	1	29	29.0	0	29
Chad Hanaoka	2	15	7.5	0	9
Ramaud Chiaokhiao-Bowman	2	14	7.0	0	8
Bennett Skowronek	1	7	7.0	0	7
Isaiah Bowser	1	6	6.0	0	6
Cameron Green	1	4	4.0	0	4
Charlie Fessler	1	4	4.0	0	4
RUTG	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
Trey Sneed	3	23	7.7	0	14
Eddie Lewis	4	18	4.5	0	11
Daevon Robinson	2	14	7.0	0	9
Travis Vokolek	2	9	4.5	0	6
Raheem Blackshear	1	8	8.0	0	8
Isaih Pacheco	1	7	7.0	0	7
Shameen Jones	2	2	1.0	0	1