

WEEK THIRTEEN

MINNESOTA AT WISCONSIN

MADISON, Wis. -- The giddy Minnesota players ran one way down the field, with one lucky Golden Gopher holding tightly on to Paul Bunyan's Axe as they raced toward a goal post.

Coach P.J. Fleck went the other way, jogged past the end zone and gave someone a bear hug. Fourteen years of frustration, all gone in one memorable night at Camp Randall Stadium.

Mohamed Ibrahim ran for 121 yards and a score, a resurgent defense held up on the road and Minnesota ran away from Wisconsin for a 37-15 win on Saturday to snap a 14-game losing streak in the rivalry and reclaim the precious axe. "This is why you coach. These are moments and memories you'll remember forever," Fleck said.

The Gophers (6-6, 3-6 Big Ten) also became bowl eligible for the first time under the excitable second-year head coach.

And yet that important step forward for the program was overshadowed, at least for one night, with the victory to take back the axe. It was Minnesota's first win in the series since 2003, and the first victory in Madison since 1994.

"When you hold the axe, now you know why everybody wants it so much," Fleck said. "It's a very surreal feeling." They earned it by following Wisconsin's blueprint for success, pounding away on the ground in the second half and capitalizing on four turnovers.

Bryce Williams ran for two touchdowns in the fourth quarter, both coming on drives after turnovers by Wisconsin quarterback Alex Hornibrook.

Jonathan Taylor, the nation's leading rusher, had 120 yards on 19 carries for the Badgers (7-5, 5-4). Hornibrook, starting for the first time since missing two games while in the concussion protocol, threw three interceptions and lost a fumble on a sack.

Minnesota scored 24 points off those miscues. Hornibrook was listed as questionable during the week after his second concussion in a month. Coach Paul Chryst said the team felt confident that Hornibrook was ready.

"Anytime you turn the ball over that number of times, you make it tough on yourselves," Chryst said.

IMPROVING DEFENSE

What a turnaround for Minnesota's defense since Joe Rossi took over as interim coordinator following a 55-31 loss to Illinois on Nov. 3. The Gophers have allowed just 49 points in the three games since that blowout.

And they had to play Saturday without top linebacker Blake Cashman for the majority of the game after the standout linebacker was ejected for targeting on a punt return early in the second quarter.

Jacob Huff had 10 tackles and forced fumble for the Gophers.

SCORING FLURRY

The Gophers took control in a pivotal stretch late in the second quarter that started when Ibrahim ran untouched into the front left corner of the end zone on fourth-and-1 from the 10 with 2:21 left in the half.

Normally sure-handed receiver A.J. Taylor dropped a third-down pass to force the Wisconsin punt returned by Demetrius Douglas for a 17-0 lead with 1:05 left.

WISCONSIN BADGERED

Wisconsin looked like it would take momentum back after Jake Ferguson made an athletic, twisting catch in the end zone on a 7-yard pass from Hornibrook with 1 second left to get to 17-7.

But the Badgers couldn't convert on fourth-and-3 from the Minnesota 44 on the opening drive of third quarter. It was a sign of things to come for Wisconsin.

"We didn't play good enough football to earn the right to keep the axe," Chryst said.

SEE IT, BELIEVE IT

Fleck said he had his team visualize all week what it would be like to claim back the axe.

"Being able to visualize this was huge," quarterback Tanner Morgan said.

TAKEAWAYS

Minnesota: The Gophers ran for 152 yards on 33 carries in the second half and went 5 of 9 on third downs. They held the ball for 21 after halftime and forced two turnovers over the final 5 minutes. It was Wisconsin-like football.

Wisconsin: The loss epitomized an underwhelming season for the offense. Taylor is the team's best big-play threat, though the Gophers keyed on the star running back early in the game. Hornibrook has been in and out of the lineup for much of the last five weeks because of injury. The passing game sputtered for much of that time whether Hornibrook or backup Jack Coan has been behind center. Hornibrook was 22 of 33 for 189 yards and two scores.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
MINN	3	14	6	14	37
WIS	0	7	0	8	15

Scoring Summary -----

	MINN	WIS
FIRST QUARTER		
MINN FG 2:37		
Emmit Carpenter 34 Yd Field Goal		
10 plays, 65 yards, 5:04	3	0
SECOND QUARTER		
MINN TD 2:21		
Mohamed Ibrahim 10 Yd Run (Emmit Carpenter Kick)		
9 plays, 59 yards, 5:46	10	0
MINN TD 1:05		
Demetrius Douglas 69 Yd Punt Return (Emmit Carpenter Kick)		
3 plays, 2 yards, 1:16	17	0
WIS TD 0:01		
Jake Ferguson 7 Yd pass from Alex Hornibrook (Rafael Gaglianone Kick)		
8 plays, 76 yards, 0:59	17	7
THIRD QUARTER		
MINN FG 7:47		
Emmit Carpenter 23 Yd Field Goal		
8 plays, 51 yards, 4:01	20	7
MINN FG 1:02		
Emmit Carpenter 42 Yd Field Goal		
9 plays, 31 yards, 4:52	23	7
FOURTH QUARTER		
MINN TD 4:56		
Bryce Williams 23 Yd Run (Emmit Carpenter Kick)		
1 play, 23 yards, 0:07	30	7
MINN TD 2:31		
Bryce Williams 16 Yd Run (Emmit Carpenter Kick)		
6 plays, 29 yards, 2:12	37	7
WIS TD 1:12		
Danny Davis III 13 Yd pass from Alex Hornibrook (Alex Hornibrook Pass to Adam Krumholz for Two-Point Conversion)		
7 plays, 75 yards, 1:19	37	15

Team Stats	MINN	WIS
First Downs	19	21
Total Yards	325	359
Total Plays	63	64
Avg Gain Per Play	5.2	5.6
Net Yards Rushing	201	170
Rushes	47	31
Yards Per Rush	4.3	5.5
Net Yards Passing	124	189
Comp-Att	9-16	22-33
Yards Per Pass	7.8	5.7
Times Sacked	0	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	0	-6
Interceptions	0	3
Punts	2	3
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	2	6
Penalty Yards	20	54
Fumbles	1	4
Fumbles Lost	0	1
Possession	35:06	24:54

Individual Stats

RUSHING

	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
MINN					
Mohamed Ibrahim	26	121	4.7	1	18
Bryce Williams	8	50	6.3	2	23
Seth Green	7	22	3.1	0	6
Tanner Morgan	3	12	4.0	0	6
Team	3	-4	-1.3	0	0
WIS					
Jonathan Taylor	19	120	6.3	0	20
Garrett Groshek	4	44	11.0	0	21
Taiwan Deal	4	13	3.3	0	7
Aron Cruickshank	1	-1	-1.0	0	0
Alex Hornibrook	3	-6	-2.0	0	0

PASSING

	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
MINN							
Tanner Morgan	9	16	124	7.8	0	0	64.0
WIS							
Alex Hornibrook	22	33	189	5.7	2	3	20.9

RECEIVING

	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	Long
MINN					
Tyler Johnson	4	76	19.0	0	28
Chris Autman-Bell	3	26	8.7	0	16
Rashod Bateman	2	22	11.0	0	17
WIS					
Danny Davis III	10	93	9.3	1	13
Jake Ferguson	5	46	9.2	1	12
A.J. Taylor	1	13	13.0	0	13
Kendric Pryor	2	13	6.5	0	7
Aron Cruickshank	1	11	11.0	0	11
Jonathan Taylor	1	8	8.0	0	8
Garrett Groshek	1	5	5.0	0	5
Taiwan Deal	1	0	0.0	0	0