

WEEK SIX
ILLINOIS at MINNESOTA

Rodney Smith, Gophers run over Illinois on way to 40-17 win

MINNEAPOLIS -- Rodney Smith ran for a career-best 211 yards and a touchdown, Shannon Brooks added 111 rushing yards and a touchdown in his second game back from injury and Minnesota totaled 332 yards on the ground against Illinois in a 40-17 win on Saturday afternoon.

Tanner Morgan was 9-of-17 passing for 155 yards and three touchdowns for the Gophers (5-0, 2-0 Big Ten), who have won seven straight games dating back to last season and rushed for more than 300 yards for the first time since tallying 409 yards against Nebraska in 2017.

Minnesota's defense allowed just three points and held Illini running back Reggie Corbin, the third-leading rusher in the Big Ten, to 68 yards on 14 carries.

Illinois (2-3, 0-2) scored two defensive touchdowns. Dele Harding returned an interception of Morgan for a touchdown in the first quarter to give the Illini an early lead and Milo Eifler returned a fumble for another score in the third after Jake Hansen stripped Morgan on a sack.

Illinois lost starting quarterback Brandon Peters in the first half after he hit the turf hard while being tackled. He walked off the field with assistance and was replaced by Matt Robinson, who was 15-of-29 passing for 125 yards.

Smith helped the Gophers grab momentum in the second after a slow start by both teams. He had a season-long 64-yard run to set up the Gophers first touchdown.

Minnesota put together its best rushing game of the season as it gets healthier in the backfield with the return of Brooks, who had played just two games in the past two seasons because of knee injuries.

THE TAKEAWAY

Illinois: Not being able to stop the run is a bad omen for continuing in on in the Big Ten. It's the second straight game the Illini have allowed more than 300 yards rushing. Nebraska ran for 346 yards on Sept. 21. Lovie Smith's defense has generated sacks (13th in FBS per game coming in) and turnovers (ninth in the FBS with 2.5 per game coming in). But if Illinois can't stop the run, it's going to be another long season.

Minnesota: The Gophers have taken advantage of back-to-back games against two of the Big Ten's worst defenses in terms of yards allowed. The schedule also sets up nicely for Minnesota to continue their run, at least through October. The Gophers host Nebraska next week before going on the road at Rutgers. The month finishes with a home date with Maryland. If Minnesota is still undefeated come November, home games against No. 12 Penn State and No. 8 Wisconsin sandwich games at No. 14 Iowa and Northwestern.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
ILL	7	3	7	0	17
MINN	3	13	14	10	40

Scoring Summary -----

	ILL	MINN
FIRST QUARTER		
ILL TD 6:58 Dele Harding 40 Yd Interception Return (James McCourt Kick)		
4 plays, 18 yards, 1:56	7	0
MINN FG 0:52 Michael Lantz 28 Yd Field Goal		
4 plays, 3 yards, 1:27	7	3
SECOND QUARTER		
MINN TD 11:23 Tyler Johnson 12 Yd pass from Tanner Morgan (Michael Lantz Kick)		
4 plays, 85 yards, 2:02	7	10
MINN TD 1:32 Shannon Brooks 21 Yd Run (Two-Point Run Conversion Failed)		
6 plays, 75 yards, 3:08	7	16
ILL FG 0:13 James McCourt 46 Yd Field Goal		
9 plays, 47 yards, 1:19	10	16
THIRD QUARTER		
MINN TD 12:53 Chris Autman-Bell 10 Yd pass from Tanner Morgan (Michael Lantz Kick)		
4 plays, 75 yards, 2:07	10	23
MINN TD 7:52 Brevyn Spann-Ford 12 Yd pass from Tanner Morgan (Michael Lantz Kick)		
6 plays, 65 yards, 2:59	10	30
ILL TD 2:27 Milo Eifler 7 Yd Fumble Return (James McCourt Kick)		
4 plays, 5 yards, 2:04	17	30
FOURTH QUARTER		
MINN TD 12:48 Rodney Smith 8 Yd Run (Michael Lantz Kick)		
8 plays, 75 yards, 4:39	17	37
MINN FG 0:51 Michael Lantz 27 Yd Field Goal		
9 plays, 32 yards, 4:50	17	40

Team Stats	ILL	MINN
First Downs	14	24
Passes for First	10	7
Rushes for First	3	15
Penalties for First	1	2
Third Down Efficiency	5-17	2-10
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	1-1
Total Yards	248	487
Total Plays	66	69
Avg Gain Per Play	3.8	7.1
Net Yards Rushing	91	332
Rushes	27	52
Yards Per Rush	3.4	6.4
Net Yards Passing	157	155
Comp-Att	20-39	9-17
Yards Per Pass	4.0	9.1
Times Sacked	1	3
Yds Lost To Sacks	-8	-17
Interceptions	1	1
Punts	7	4
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	8	4
Penalty Yards	80	25
Fumbles	3	1
Fumbles Lost	0	1
Time of Poss	24:16	35:44

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
ILLINOIS	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Reggie Corbin	14	68	4.9	0	21		
Brandon Peters	2	10	5.0	0	7		
Ra'Von Bonner	2	8	4.0	0	5		
Dre Brown	2	6	3.0	0	4		
Matt Robinson	7	-1	-0.1	0	11		
MINNESOTA	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Rodney Smith	24	211	8.8	1	64		
Shannon Brooks	16	111	6.9	1	25		
Seth Green	5	16	3.2	0	8		
Bryce Williams	3	1	0.3	0	2		
Team	1	-1	-1.0	0	0		
Tanner Morgan	3	-6	-2.0	0	2		
PASSING							
ILLINOIS	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Matt Robinson	15	29	125	4.3	0	0	23.9
Brandon Peters	5	10	32	3.2	0	1	3.5
MINNESOTA	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Tanner Morgan	9	17	155	9.1	3	1	40.3
RECEIVING							
ILLINOIS	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Trevon Sidney	5	50	10.0	0	13		
Donny Navarro	3	33	11.0	0	16		
Josh Imatorbhebhe	4	27	6.8	0	10		
Daniel Barker	2	15	7.5	0	11		
Jordan Holmes	1	10	10.0	0	10		
Justice Williams	2	10	5.0	0	8		
Ricky Smalling	1	6	6.0	0	6		
Luke Ford	1	6	6.0	0	6		
Kyron Cumby	1	0	0.0	0	0		
MINNESOTA	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Rashod Bateman	2	71	35.5	0	59		
Tyler Johnson	3	38	12.7	1	20		
Chris Autman-Bell	2	30	15.0	1	20		
Brevyn Spann-Ford	1	12	12.0	1	12		
Rodney Smith	1	4	4.0	0	4		