

WEEK SEVEN
PENN ST at IOWA

No. 10 Penn State holds off No. 17 Iowa 17-12

IOWA CITY, Iowa -- On the road against one of the best defenses in America, 10th-ranked Penn State won the turnover battle and converted on third downs to survive yet another tough trip to Iowa.

Noah Cain ran for a 5-yard touchdown with 5:17 left and Penn State held off the 17th-ranked Hawkeyes 17-12 on Saturday night, its first win over a ranked opponent this season.

Cain finished with 102 yards for the Nittany Lions (6-0, 3-0 Big Ten), who extended their winning streak over the Hawkeyes (4-2, 1-2) to six games.

"This is a team. You're going to have to earn it," Penn State coach James Franklin said about the Hawkeyes. "The defense has been great all year. We leaned on them heavily."

A matchup between two of the nation's top defenses turned when Iowa's Nate Stanley threw an interception near midfield with 9:22 remaining. Penn State drove 35 yards on a gassed Iowa defense, and the last of three straight runs by Cain made it 17-6.

The Nittany Lions gained just 294 yards. But they were 10 of 19 on third downs against a defense ranked fourth in scoring defense entering play, and they scored 10 points off of two Iowa miscues.

"We grinded it out," Franklin said.

Iowa pulled within 17-12 when Stanley found Brandon Smith for a 33-yard TD pass with 2:31 to go. The Hawkeyes' two-point try failed though, and Cain converted a crucial third down that ensured that Iowa never saw the ball again.

The Hawkeyes have dropped back-to-back games by just 12 points after its first 4-0 start since 2015.

"We're doing the right things. We've just got to do a little better," Iowa defensive end A.J. Epenesa said.

Up 7-6 late in the third quarter, Penn State recovered a fumble at Iowa's 16 and Sean Clifford connected on an apparent touchdown pass to Pat Freiermuth that was overturned on review. Iowa then held the Nittany Lions at the 1-foot line, and two straight holding calls forced them to settle for a 33-yard field goal.

KJ Hamler caught seven passes, including an acrobatic 22-yarder for a TD, for Penn State.

Stanley threw for 286 yards, but the Hawkeyes ran for just 70 yards on 30 attempts.

THE TAKEAWAY

Penn State: The Nittany Lions survived their toughest road challenge outside of a trip to Ohio State on Nov. 23. Penn State was on the road against a talented team with a jacked-up crowd, and yet the Nittany Lions were the ones making the plays that made the difference.

Iowa: The Hawkeyes nearly went back-to-back games without a touchdown. Granted, Michigan and Penn State are really good on defense. But Iowa can't continue to lean on its own defense to keep it in games. At 1-2 in the league and with Wisconsin looking like one of the best teams in America, the Big Ten West doesn't look so winnable anymore. "We've just ended up shooting ourselves in the foot," Stanley said.

PIVOTAL MOMENT

Penn State was facing a third-and-10 at Iowa's 35 after Stanley's interception. But Clifford broke right on an option, kept it, burst through a hole and gained 11 yards to extend what proved to be the game's winning drive. "He didn't necessarily play his best game. But he was gutsy," Franklin said. "That was a big-time play."

THE NUMBERS

Clifford was 12 of 24 for 117 yards, snapping his streak of five straight games with at least 200 yards passing. ... Freshman Tyler Goodson led Iowa with 35 yards rushing, though he lost a fumble that won't help his chances of winning the starting job. Starter Mekhi Sargent had just 18 yards on nine tries. ... Penn State punter Blake Gillikin placed five of his seven kicks inside Iowa's 20-yard line. ... Iowa, which at one point this season went three games without a turnover, fumbled three times and lost one. ... Penn State has 52 points off of turnovers through six games.

HE SAID IT

"I've got confidence in our football team," Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz said. "We didn't play good enough this week or last against two really good football teams. I think we have a good team."

POLL IMPLICATIONS

Penn State might move up a few spots. Iowa might struggle to hang onto its spot in the Top 25 after back-to-back losses.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
PSU	0	7	3	7	17
IOWA	3	3	0	6	12

Scoring Summary -----

	PSU	IOWA
FIRST QUARTER		
IOWA FG 2:12 Keith Duncan 47 Yd Field Goal		3
11 plays, 38 yards, 5:28	0	
SECOND QUARTER		
PSU TD 8:36 KJ Hamler 22 Yd pass from Sean Clifford (Jake Pinegar Kick)	7	3
15 plays, 85 yards, 5:40		
IOWA FG 0:20 Keith Duncan 24 Yd Field Goal		6
10 plays, 84 yards, 1:26	7	
THIRD QUARTER		
PSU FG 2:08 Jake Pinegar 33 Yd Field Goal	10	6
6 plays, 1 yard, 2:38		
FOURTH QUARTER		
PSU TD 5:17 Noah Cain 5 Yd Run (Jake Pinegar Kick)	17	6
8 plays, 35 yards, 4:05		
IOWA TD 2:31 Brandon Smith 33 Yd pass from Nate Stanley (Two-Point Pass Conversion Failed)		12
12 plays, 87 yards, 2:46	17	

Team Stats	PSU	IOWA
First Downs	20	21
Passes for First	8	14
Rushes for First	12	5
Penalties for First	0	2
Third Down Efficiency	10-19	8-18
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	2-2
Total Yards	294	356
Total Plays	77	73
Avg Gain Per Play	3.8	4.9
Net Yards Rushing	177	70
Rushes	53	30
Yards Per Rush	3.3	2.3
Net Yards Passing	117	286
Comp-Att	12-24	25-43
Yards Per Pass	4.9	6.7
Times Sacked	3	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	-13	-17
Interceptions	0	1
Punts	7	5
Punt Average	42.1	35.0
Penalties	8	1
Penalty Yards	80	5
Fumbles	0	3
Fumbles Lost	0	1
Time of Poss	32:52	27:08

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
PENN ST							
Noah Cain	22	102	4.6	1	12		
Sean Clifford	16	52	3.3	0	11		
Devyn Ford	4	17	4.3	0	6		
Journey Brown	4	16	4.0	0	8		
Ricky Slade	4	8	2.0	0	6		
Jahan Dotson	1	-4	-4.0	0	0		
Team	2	-14	-7.0	0	0		
IOWA							
Tyler Goodson	8	35	4.4	0	29		
Toren Young	7	22	3.1	0	9		
Mekhi Sargent	9	18	2.0	0	5		
Nate Stanley	6	-5	-0.8	0	5		
PASSING							
	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
PENN ST							
Sean Clifford	12	24	117	4.9	1	0	42.1
IOWA							
Nate Stanley	25	43	286	6.7	1	1	60.9x
RECEIVING							
	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
PENN ST							
KJ Hamler	7	61	8.7	1	22		
Pat Freiermuth	2	25	12.5	0	15		
Jahan Dotson	2	19	9.5	0	13		
Justin Shorter	1	12	12.0	0	12		
IOWA							
Brandon Smith	7	86	12.3	1	33		
Ihmir Smith-Marsette	5	72	14.4	0	36		
Nico Ragaini	7	55	7.9	0	18		
Nate Wieting	4	54	13.5	0	25		
Mekhi Sargent	1	10	10.0	0	10		
Tyler Goodson	1	9	9.0	0	9		