

WEEK EIGHT  
MINNESOTA at RUTGERS

Smith runs for 2 TDs, No. 20 Minnesota routs Rutgers 42-7

PISCATAWAY, N.J. -- No. 20 Minnesota won its first game as a ranked team in five years and suddenly it has the lead in the West Division and a clear path to the Big Ten title game .

It all fell into place Saturday as Rodney Smith ran for 111 yards and two touchdowns and the Gophers improved to 7-0 for the first time since winning the national title in 1960 with a 42-7 victory over Rutgers on Saturday.

Coupled with Illinois’ stunning last-second victory over No. 6 Wisconsin, Minnesota (7-0, 4-0) has a one-game over the Badgers (6-1, 3-1) in the division and control over its destiny.

The path is not going to be easy. After facing Maryland (3-4) next weekend, the Gophers get a bye and then face No. 7 Penn State, No. 23 Iowa, Northwestern and Wisconsin in the regular-season finale.

“They’ve been very mature during this whole process,” Minnesota coach P.J. Fleck said. “It’s my job to keep them grounded and focused. Today we’re 1-0 in the Rutgers football championship. That’s all that matters.”

Minnesota struggled against Rutgers in the first half before scoring four touchdowns in the second, including one by the defense.

Smith scored on runs of 3 and 16 yards and Tanner Morgan threw two touchdowns as the Gophers won their ninth straight game spanning two seasons. Rutgers (1-6, 0-5) lost its fifth consecutive loss overall and 17th straight in the Big Ten Conference.

The nine-game winning streak is the Gophers’ longest since 1941-42.

Morgan gave much of the credit for the offense’s success to his skill players, the runners who can go inside or outside and his receivers, who can beat double coverages.

“Coach (Fleck) has done a great job of preparing us and not allowing us to look ahead,” said Morgan, who was 15 of 28 for 245 yards.

The Gophers blew the game open in the fourth quarter, when Mohamed Ibrahim had a 6-yard TD run and defensive back Antoine Winfield Jr. scored on a 33-yard interception return on consecutive plays on offense. Morgan threw his second TD, a 56-yard pass to Tyler Johnson that could have been viewed as rubbing it in against a beaten foe.

Rutgers interim coach Nunzio Campanile had no problem with the late TD, saying it was up to his team to prevent it.

There was a tender moment after the Ibrahim touchdown. Redshirt sophomore Casey O’Brien, a four-time cancer survivor, was sent out to hold the ball for the extra point by kicker Michael Lantz. He was mobbed by teammates after the kick.

Rutgers avoided its fourth shutout in a Big Ten game this season when Kay’Ron Adams scored on a 5-yard run with 5:33 to play.

“We have a lot of a long way to go, but like I keep saying, I just want this team to be, those players to be better players by the time we get to the end of the year,” Campanile said.

The Scarlet Knights’ score prevented Minnesota from picking up its first shutout since 2006 and first in a league game since 2004.

The Scarlet Knights came into the game as 29 1/2-point underdogs and made the Gophers sweat a little. Smith didn’t get Minnesota on the scoreboard until late in the first quarter with his short run and Morgan had a 13-yard TD pass to Rashod Bateman with less than five minutes left in the half. Smith scored from 16 yards out on the opening series of the second half for a 21-0 lead.

Rutgers, which is using its third quarterback in a season marked by the firing of Chris Ash after the fourth game, was outgained 443-197. Johnny Langan was 9 of 19 for 48 yards and three interceptions, two by Winfield.

“It is frustrating at times, but Coach (Campanile) really does a good job of keeping us looking forward to games ahead because it’s another opportunity for us to possible get a win,” said Rutgers linebacker Deion Jennings, who had eight tackles, including three for losses, in his first start.

THE TAKEAWAY

Minnesota: The Gophers stay undefeated, face inconsistent Maryland at home next week and then get a week off before Penn State.

Rutgers: Rutgers put up a good effort on defense until late. The positive is that next week is a winnable game.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
MINN	7	7	7	21	42
RUTG	0	0	0	7	7

Scoring Summary -----

FIRST QUARTER	MINN	RUTG
MINN TD 1:31 Rodney Smith 3 Yd Run (Michael Lantz Kick)		
9 plays, 57 yards, 4:27	7	0
SECOND QUARTER	MINN	RUTG
MINN TD 4:40 Rashod Bateman 13 Yd pass from Tanner Morgan (Michael Lantz Kick)		
12 plays, 77 yards, 4:48	14	0
THIRD QUARTER	MINN	RUTG
MINN TD 9:23 Rodney Smith 16 Yd Run (Michael Lantz Kick)		
11 plays, 71 yards, 5:29	21	0
FOURTH QUARTER	MINN	RUTG
MINN TD 11:25 Mohamed Ibrahim 6 Yd Run (Michael Lantz Kick)		
MINN TD 9:03 Tyler Johnson 56 Yd pass from Tanner Morgan (Michael Lantz Kick)		
11 plays, 66 yards, 0:10	42	0
RUTG TD 5:53 Kay’Ron Adams 5 Yd Run (Justin Davidovicz Kick)		
7 plays, 75 yards, 3:10	42	7

Team Stats	MINN	RUTG
First Downs	25	16
Passes for First	12	4
Rushes for First	10	10
Penalties for First	3	2
Third Down Efficiency	7-14	8-14
Fourth Down Efficiency	2-3	0-0
Total Yards	443	189
Total Plays	73	59
Avg Gain Per Play	6.1	3.2
Net Yards Rushing	198	141
Rushes	45	40
Yards Per Rush	4.4	3.5
Net Yards Passing	245	48
Comp-Att	15-28	9-19
Yards Per Pass	8.8	2.5
Times Sacked	0	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	0	-14
Interceptions	0	3
Punts	3	5
Punt Average	37.0	37.4
Penalties	3	5
Penalty Yards	40	55
Fumbles	0	3
Fumbles Lost	0	0
Time of Poss	33:33	26:27

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
MINNESOTA	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Rodney Smith	19	111	5.8	2	20		
Mohamed Ibrahim	15	62	4.1	1	12		
Shannon Brooks	5	15	3.0	0	6		
Treyson Potts	3	9	3.0	0	4		
Tanner Morgan	3	1	0.3	0	2		
RUTGERS	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Isaih Pacheco	15	50	3.3	0	11		
Elijah Barnwell	1	40	40.0	0	40		
Kay’Ron Adams	6	30	5.0	1	12		
Johnny Langan	13	19	1.5	0	6		
Aaron Young	4	3	0.8	0	7		
Team	1	-1	-1.0	0	0		
PASSING							
MINNESOTA	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Tanner Morgan	15	28	245	8.8	2	0	80.2
RUTGERS	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Johnny Langan	9	19	48	2.5	0	3	2.1
RECEIVING							
MINNESOTA	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Tyler Johnson	6	130	21.7	1	56		
Rashod Bateman	4	72	18.0	1	27		
Rodney Smith	2	24	12.0	0	18		
Brevyn Spann-Ford	1	13	13.0	0	13		
Demetrius Douglas	1	9	9.0	0	9		
Chris Autman-Bell	1	-3	-3.0	0	0		
RUTGERS	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Eddie Lewis	3	18	6.0	0	10		
Isaiah Washington	2	17	8.5	0	10		
Prince Taylor	1	12	12.0	0	12		
Daevon Robinson	1	7	7.0	0	7		
Isaih Pacheco	1	-2	-2.0	0	0		
Bo Melton	1	-4	-4.0	0	0		