

WEEK ONE
HOLY CROSS at NAVY

Navy rolls past Holy Cross 45-7 in opener

ANNAPOLIS, Md. -- The new-look Navy football team passed its first test with flying colors.

Nelson Smith ran for 96 yards with three touchdowns, Diego Fagot had nine tackles and the Midshipmen dominated Holy Cross 45-7 in the regular-season opener Saturday.

"I thought it was a great team win," Navy coach Ken Niumatalolo said. "I thought we played well today. We still have a lot of room for improvement. You can't take any of these wins for granted."

One of Niumatalolo's main areas of focus is improving the passing offense, which ranked last (130th) among FBS programs, averaging 72.8 passing yards per game in 2018. He wants to attack teams with elements of the run-and-shoot and Navy gained 103 yards through the air Saturday.

After passing for just 12 yards through much of the first half, Malcolm Perry found Mychal Cooper for a 44-yard gain in the final minute. Two plays later, Perry scored from the 1, boosting the lead to 24-7 and the Midshipmen were never threatened the rest of the way.

Perry was 6 of 9 for 103 yards and a 162.8 quarterback rating.

"Obviously, it wasn't perfect. It wasn't my best performance," said Perry. "But I was pleased to be able to go out there and throw the ball."

Navy still builds its offense around the triple-option and amassed 428 yards on the ground against the Crusaders.

"It was an exciting feeling," said slotback CJ Williams, who finished with 91 yards and a touchdown. "We've had a lot of hard work. We trusted our training."

The Midshipmen plan to be more aggressive under new defensive coordinator Brian Newberry and finished with three sacks, seven tackles for a loss and a forced fumble.

"I made a ton of mistakes personally. We're 1-0 and we just have to keep getting better everyday," Fagot said.

Quarterback Connor Degenhardt was 16 of 29 for 167 yards for Holy Cross, a member of the Patriot League in the Football Championship Subdivision.

Running back Domenic Cozier, who led Holy Cross with 643 yards rushing and eight touchdowns last season, did not play because of an illness. Miles Alexander filled the void and had a 16-yard touchdown run that cut the margin to 17-7 late in the first quarter.

"I think we shot ourselves in the foot at times," Holy Cross coach Bob Chesney said. "I thought we had a chance to hang with them a little bit at the beginning."

GOOD START

Bijan Nichols is the first freshman to start as the placekicker for Navy since Nick Sloan in 2012. Nichols converted a 44-yard field-goal attempt late in the first quarter that provided a 10-0 lead.

THE TAKEAWAY

Holy Cross: The Crusaders have four starters back on the defense that is expected to be among the best in their conference. This unit forced a turnover and were constantly tested by Navy's high-powered attack, which should bode well moving forward.

Navy: The Midshipmen took their first step toward bouncing back from a disappointing 2018 season when they went 3-10, losing to both Army and Air Force. It was their fewest wins since 2002. Niumatalolo hired seven new coaches to get back on track.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
HC	0	7	0	0	7
NAVY	10	14	14	7	45

Scoring Summary -----

	HC	NAVY
FIRST QUARTER		
NAVY TD 10:42 Nelson Smith 4 Yd Run (Bijan Nichols Kick)	0	7
7 plays, 75 yards, 4:18		
NAVY FG 5:56 Bijan Nichols 44 Yd Field Goal	0	10
8 plays, 25 yards, 3:08		
SECOND QUARTER		
NAVY TD 7:29 CJ Williams 16 Yd Run (Bijan Nichols Kick)	0	17
7 plays, 80 yards, 3:52		
HC TD 1:48 Miles Alexander 16 Yd Run (Derek Ng Kick)	7	17
12 plays, 75 yards, 5:41		
NAVY TD 0:10 Malcolm Perry 1 Yd Run (Bijan Nichols Kick)	7	24
7 plays, 75 yards, 1:38		
THIRD QUARTER		
NAVY TD 10:56 Nelson Smith 1 Yd Run (Bijan Nichols Kick)	7	31
5 plays, 20 yards, 2:34		
NAVY TD 4:27 Isaac Ruoss 2 Yd Run (Bijan Nichols Kick)	7	38
7 plays, 75 yards, 3:25		
FOURTH QUARTER		
NAVY TD 14:52 Nelson Smith 49 Yd Run (Bijan Nichols Kick)	7	45
7 plays, 80 yards, 2:12		

Team Stats	HC	NAVY
First Downs	14	28
Passes for First	8	5
Rushes for First	5	23
Penalties for First	1	0
Third Down Efficiency	3-12	8-12
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-1	2-2
Total Yards	231	531
Total Plays	56	76
Avg Gain Per Play	4.1	7.0
Net Yards Rushing	64	428
Rushes	27	67
Yards Per Rush	2.4	6.4
Net Yards Passing	167	103
Comp-Att	16-29	6-9
Yards Per Pass	5.8	11.4
Times Sacked	1	3
Yds Lost To Sacks	-7	-19
Interceptions	0	0
Punts	5	1
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	3	3
Penalty Yards	15	25
Fumbles	1	2
Fumbles Lost	1	1
Time of Poss	23:55	36:05

Individual Stats

RUSHING

HOLY CROSS	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Miles Alexander	12	40	3.3	1	16
Connor Degenhardt	10	17	1.7	0	10
Peter Oliver	4	8	2.0	0	4
NAVY	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Nelson Smith	15	96	6.4	3	49
CJ Williams	10	91	9.1	1	18
Myles Fells	3	56	18.7	0	31
Tazh Maloy	4	55	13.8	0	24
Garrett Winn	3	33	11.0	0	24
Malcolm Perry	10	28	2.8	1	12
Tyreek King-El	2	17	8.5	0	11
James Harris II	6	17	2.8	0	7
Isaac Ruoss	4	10	2.5	1	6
Dalen Morris	1	9	9.0	0	9
Justin Smith	1	9	9.0	0	9
Keoni-Kordell Makekau	2	9	4.5	0	6
Perry Olsen	2	0	0.0	0	2
Tyger Goslin	4	-2	-0.5	0	3

PASSING

HOLY CROSS	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Connor Degenhardt	16	29	167	5.8	0	0	-
NAVY	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Malcolm Perry	6	9	103	11.4	0	0	50.6

RECEIVING

HOLY CROSS	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Derek Mountain	4	62	15.5	0	32
Tenio Ayeni	7	46	6.6	0	10
Spencer Gilliam	1	18	18.0	0	18
Jack Jewell	1	18	18.0	0	18
Ayir Asante	1	18	18.0	0	18
Dominik Thomas	1	8	8.0	0	8
Miles Alexander	1	-3	-3.0	0	0
NAVY	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
Mychal Cooper	2	48	24.0	0	44
Keoni-Kordell Makekau	1	29	29.0	0	29
Chance Warren	2	22	11.0	0	12
Ryan Mitchell	1	4	4.0	0	4