

WEEK ONE
SOUTH DAKOTA ST at MINNESOTA

Gophers avoid upset with 28-21 win over South Dakota State

MINNEAPOLIS -- Don't tell coach P.J. Fleck that Minnesota's narrow win against FCS South Dakota State on Tuesday wasn't good enough.

The Big Ten Gophers were double-digit favorites for the season's first game against their neighbors from the southwest, who nearly beat Minnesota in 2009, long before Fleck joined the Gophers.

So, when Mohamed Ibrahim finally put the Gophers ahead late in the fourth quarter, Fleck was ready to enjoy a win no matter how others perceive the narrow victory.

"There's hard wins, there are no bad wins, and that is my message to the football team today," Fleck said. "There are no bad wins. That's a really good football team out there."

Ibrahim plunged up the middle for a 1-yard touchdown run with 5:39 remaining and Minnesota avoided an upset with a 28-21 win at home against South Dakota State on Thursday night.

Winston DeLattiboudere recovered a fumbled exchange between Jackrabbits quarterback J'Bore Gibbs and running back Pierre Strong with South Dakota State holding a 21-20 lead in the fourth quarter.

Minnesota capped a five-play, 34-yard drive with Ibrahim's touchdown to pull ahead and extend the nation's longest winning streak of nonconference games to 16 in a row.

"These guys just spent 30 days practicing for fall camp and Champing at the bit to get the chance to play against somebody else," Jackrabbits coach John Stiegelmeier said. "That stings a little bit, the fact that we could've won on the road against a Big Ten school -- and I think a pretty good Big Ten program -- stings a little bit."

Minnesota entered the season with plenty of hopes built on an offense with nine returning starters and four running backs that brought 6,503 combined rushing yards into this season.

The Gophers were tested by one of the best in FCS. South Dakota State ranked third and fourth, respectively, in the two major pre-season FCS polls. Minnesota finished with 132 yards rushing on 42 carries for a 3.1-yard average.

"We were tested tonight and our players passed the test," Fleck said. "Whether we won by 40 or 20 or seven, we won. Now, are there a lot of things we have to get better at? Yes."

Tanner Morgan was 13-of-18 passing for 176 yards, one touchdown and one interception for Minnesota.

BATEMAN'S BITTERSWEET NIGHT

Rashod Bateman had five catches for 132 yards for the Gophers, including a one-handed, 42-yard touchdown pass from Morgan in the first half. The performance comes two weeks after the sophomore receiver's uncle died.

"He was like a father figure to me," Bateman said. "It was tonight just going out there and playing for him. He was pretty special. I know he's always there with me, so I've just got to continue to ball for him."

NEW QB IN TOWN

In his first start for the Jackrabbits in replacing Taryn Christian, the program's all-time leading passer, Gibbs was 13 of 26 for 193 yards passing and a touchdown and he added another touchdown rushing. But the redshirt freshman threw an interception that was returned 43 yards for a touchdown by Chris Williamson.

"The ball was snapped on the ground, so I was trying to pick it up and throw it away, not obviously throw it to him," Gibbs said. "I was trying to throw it away. Coach was telling me, when that happens, just fall on it and go on to the next play. That's what happened."

THE TAKEAWAY

South Dakota State: The Jackrabbits were looking to be the latest FCS team to post a win over an FBS team. Nicholls State was the last FCS team to beat a Power 5 conference team when it beat Kansas last season. North Dakota State was the last FCS team to beat a Big Ten opponent when it handed No. 13 Iowa a loss in 2016. Mistakes ultimately proved the difference. South Dakota State had the fumbled handoff and the interception returned for a touchdown. It also had a kickoff return for a touchdown nullified due to a penalty.

Minnesota: The Gophers can exhale. This was not the start Minnesota fans likely envisioned, another lackluster performance against a neighboring school. But the Gophers come away with a win. The defense will need examining after giving up 367 yards. Part of the trouble running the ball offensively was due to a down game from the offensive line. Fleck noted the line will need to play better.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
SDSU	0	7	14	0	21
MINN	0	13	7	8	28

Scoring Summary -----

	SDSU	MINN
SECOND QUARTER		
MINN TD 9:52 Seth Green 1 Yd Run (Michael Lantz Kick)		7
18 plays, 91 yards, 10:05	0	
SDSU TD 3:23 J'Bore Gibbs 1 Yd Run (Chase Vinatieri Kick)	7	
6 plays, 66 yards, 2:40		7
MINN TD 0:49 Rashod Bateman 42 Yd pass from Tanner Morgan (Michael Lantz PAT failed)		13
6 plays, 75 yards, 2:34	7	
THIRD QUARTER		
MINN TD 13:42 Chris Williamson 43 Yd Interception Return (Michael Lantz Kick)		20
4 plays, 21 yards, 1:18	7	
SDSU TD 9:04 Mikey Daniel 1 Yd Run (Chase Vinatieri Kick)	14	
10 plays, 92 yards, 4:38		20
SDSU TD 3:26 Zach Heins 13 Yd pass from J'Bore Gibbs (Chase Vinatieri Kick)		20
7 plays, 57 yards, 3:31	21	
FOURTH QUARTER		
MINN TD 5:39 Mohamed Ibrahim 1 Yd Run (Tyler Johnson Pass to Tanner Morgan for Two-Point Conversion)		28
5 plays, 34 yards, 2:33	21	

Team Stats	SDSU	MINN
First Downs	23	17
Passes for First	9	8
Rushes for First	13	9
Penalties for First	1	0
Third Down Efficiency	3-9	6-13
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	1-1
Total Yards	367	308
Total Plays	60	60
Avg Gain Per Play	6.1	5.1
Net Yards Rushing	174	132
Rushes	34	42
Yards Per Rush	5.1	3.1
Net Yards Passing	193	176
Comp-Att	13-26	13-18
Yards Per Pass	7.4	9.8
Times Sacked	1	2
Yds Lost To Sacks	-7	-14
Interceptions	1	1
Punts	4	5
Punt Average	40.3	34.0
Penalties	4	3
Penalty Yards	32	40
Fumbles	2	0
Fumbles Lost	1	0
Time of poss	27:48	32:12

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
S DAKOTA ST							
Pierre Strong Jr.	12	53	4.4	0	13		
C.J. Wilson	7	47	6.7	0	11		
Mikey Daniel	7	33	4.7	1	12		
Cade Johnson	1	25	25.0	0	25		
J'Bore Gibbs	7	16	2.3	1	14		
MINNESOTA							
Rodney Smith	21	92	4.4	0	15		
Mohamed Ibrahim	12	36	3.0	1	9		
Tanner Morgan	5	8	1.6	0	14		
Seth Green	1	1	1.0	1	1		
PASSING							
	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
S DAKOTA ST							
J'Bore Gibbs	13	26	193	7.4	1	1	--
MINNESOTA							
Tanner Morgan	13	18	176	9.8	1	1	62.9
RECEIVING							
	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
S DAKOTA ST							
Cade Johnson	6	90	15.0	0	19		
Pierre Strong Jr.	2	59	29.5	0	39		
Jaxon Janke	2	20	10.0	0	11		
Zach Heins	1	13	13.0	1	13		
Adam Anderson	1	8	8.0	0	8		
Blake Kunz	1	3	3.0	0	3		
MINNESOTA							
Rashod Bateman	5	132	26.4	1	42		
Tyler Johnson	3	28	9.3	0	18		
Chris Autman-Bell	2	17	8.5	0	10		
Demetrius Douglas	1	1	1.0	0	1		
Mohamed Ibrahim	2	-2	-1.0	0	2		