

WEEK TEN
RUTGERS at ILLINOIS

Swarming Illinois defense leads to 38-10 win over Rutgers

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. -- Three defensive takeaways, including a pick-6, and timely offense carried red-hot Illinois past Rutgers 38-10 on Saturday.

Dele Harding had 12 tackles and an interception return for a touchdown late in the game to lead Illinois (5-4, 3-3 Big Ten Conference).

"Dele, he's been that for us all year," Illinois coach Lovie Smith said. "He was feeling a little sick before the game, but he's one of our captains and a motivator for us. He's productive."

Brandon Peters was 6-of-11 passing for 120 yards and one touchdown. Dre Brown carried eight times for 31 yards and two touchdowns. Josh Imatorbhebhe had three receptions for 56 yards and a score.

Johnny Langan was 5-of-10 passing for 86 yards and a touchdown for Rutgers (2-7, 0-6). He also threw one interception.

"Turning the ball over twice for touchdowns is obviously tough," said Rutgers interim coach Nunzio Campanile. "But I honestly thought Johnny played a pretty good game."

Campanile, named to the interim spot when coach Chris Ash was fired after four games this season, coached Langan in high school in New Jersey.

Aaron Young carried the ball 12 times for 67 yards to lead the Scarlet Knights. Mohamed Jabbie had three receptions for 64 yards and Rutgers' only touchdown.

The game was tied 10-10 at the half, but Peters unleashed a 54-yard scamper midway through the third quarter to the Rutgers' 2-yard line to set up a 2-yard touchdown run by Brown. On the next Rutgers possession, Nate Hobbs recovered a Langan fumble and ran it 32 yards for a touchdown to put Illinois up 24-10.

Harding forced a fumble with 4:48 left in the third quarter and Illinois scored on the next play, a 52-yard touchdown pass to Imatorbhebhe. Early in the fourth quarter, Harding picked off a Langan pass and ran it back 54 yards for a touchdown.

FLIP THE SWITCH

The Illinois defense was a force all afternoon, The Illini led the nation in fumble recoveries, was second in forced fumbles and second in turnovers gained coming into the game and did nothing but pad those numbers.

"We needed to flip the switch at halftime," Smith said. "We had opportunities early, but the takeaways just jump-started us when we needed it most."

Campanile knew what his team was facing coming into the game.

"We have a lot of young players out there, and we knew that they are kind of a turnover (forcing) machine," Campanile said. "They really caught us in the third quarter and the game got away from us."

BOWL BOUND?

Illinois now needs just one win out its three remaining games to secure a bowl appearance for the first time since 2014.

"We like how we have played in the second half of the season, going 3-0 against Big Ten teams," Smith said. "We have to be pumped up now, maybe more so than at any time since I got here. We're one game from being bowl eligible and that is going to lead us the rest of the season."

That path includes road games against Michigan State and Iowa before finishing up at home against Northwestern.

THE TAKEAWAY

After a slow first-half start, Illinois' defense helped open the offensive floodgates. Many wondered how Illinois would handle its newfound success on the heels of a one-point comeback win over then-No. 6 Wisconsin two weeks ago and a decisive victory over Purdue last week.

Illinois answered those questions and then some, giving Smith, whose job had been in question just a few weeks ago, some breathing room.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
RUTG	0	10	0	0	10
ILL	10	0	21	7	38

Scoring Summary -----

	RUTG	ILL
FIRST QUARTER		
ILL TD 8:38 Dre Brown 10 Yd Run (James McCourt Kick)		7
8 plays, 78 yards, 3:02	0	
ILL FG 2:28 James McCourt 33 Yd Field Goal		10
11 plays, 56 yards, 4:14	0	
SECOND QUARTER		
RUTG TD 12:25 Mohamed Jabbie 31 Yd pass from Johnny Langan (Justin Davidovicz Kick)		10
11 plays, 75 yards, 5:03	7	
RUTG FG 0:15 Justin Davidovicz 25 Yd Field Goal		10
9 plays, 66 yards, 4:44	10	
THIRD QUARTER		
ILL TD 9:08 Dre Brown 2 Yd Run (James McCourt Kick)		17
2 plays, 56 yards, 0:43	10	
ILL TD 7:29 Nate Hobbs 36 Yd Fumble Return (James McCourt Kick)		24
3 plays, 11 yards, 1:39	10	
ILL TD 3:30 Josh Imatorbhebhe 52 Yd pass from Brandon Peters (James McCourt Kick)		31
3 plays, 55 yards, 1:18	10	
FOURTH QUARTER		
ILL TD 14:09 Dele Harding 54 Yd Interception Return (James McCourt Kick)		38
8 plays, 23 yards, 4:21	10	

Team Stats	RUTG	ILL
First Downs	13	14
Passes for First	4	5
Rushes for First	8	8
Penalties for First	1	1
Third Down Efficiency	6-16	6-14
Fourth Down Efficiency	1-2	1-1
Total Yards	271	324
Total Plays	61	55
Avg Gain Per Play	4.4	5.9
Net Yards Rushing	185	204
Rushes	51	44
Yards Per Rush	3.6	4.6
Net Yards Passing	86	120
Comp-Att	5-10	6-11
Yards Per Pass	8.6	10.9
Times Sacked	2	3
Yds Lost To Sacks	-13	-8
Interceptions	1	0
Punts	6	5
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	2	3
Penalty Yards	18	35
Fumbles	3	0
Fumbles Lost	2	0
Time of Poss	34:09	25:51

Individual Stats

RUSHING	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
RUTGERS					
Aaron Young	13	67	5.2	0	17
Johnny Langan	23	41	1.8	0	9
Kay'Ron Adams	10	40	4.0	0	17
Elijah Barnwell	4	33	8.3	0	11
Mohamed Jabbie	1	4	4.0	0	4
ILLINOIS					
Reggie Corbin	13	51	3.9	0	15
Brandon Peters	3	41	13.7	0	54
Dre Brown	8	31	3.9	2	10
Ra'Von Bonner	4	26	6.5	0	14
Chase Brown	3	18	6.0	0	14
Kenyon Sims	5	13	2.6	0	5
Coran Taylor	2	11	5.5	0	6
Conner Lillig	2	8	4.0	0	8
Jakari Norwood	2	6	3.0	0	5
Dominic Stampley	1	1	1.0	0	1
Team	1	-2	-2.0	0	0

PASSING	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
RUTGERS							
Johnny Langan	5	10	86	8.6	1	1	22.0
ILLINOIS							
Brandon Peters	6	11	120	10.9	1	0	82.0

RECEIVING	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG
RUTGERS					
Mohamed Jabbie	3	64	21.3	1	31
Bo Melton	1	14	14.0	0	14
Elijah Barnwell	1	8	8.0	0	8
ILLINOIS					
Donny Navarro	2	57	28.5	0	48
Josh Imatorbhebhe	3	56	18.7	1	52
Dre Brown	1	7	7.0	0	7