

WEEK TWO
WESTERN CAROLINA at NC STATE

NC State posts 41-0 shutout of Western Carolina

RALEIGH, N.C. -- N.C. State's defense held Western Carolina to 106 yards in a 41-0 shutout on Saturday and also was credited with helping get freshman running back Zonovan Knight on track.

Coach Dave Doeren said that Knight read too many of his press clip-pings during the summer. But after being challenged by the defense in training camp, Knight has bounced back quickly. He scored a touchdown on his first carry in the season opener, and ran for 119 yards and two touchdowns on 18 carries Saturday at Carter-Finley Stadium as N.C. State improved to 2-0.

"I think our defensive kids got after him and put him back in his place," Doeren said. "And he had a really good finish to camp. He thought it was going to be easy. But it's not easy. It's hard. It's hard to get yards."

Western Carolina (0-2) suffered its 10th straight loss in a streak that dates back to 2018, and was short-handed after suspending four players for the game for violating team policies. Starting quarterback Tyrie Adams, the preseason Southern Conference offensive player of the year, was suspended along with starting left offensive guard Matthew Bair, starting nose tackle Adam Henderson and reserve Elijah Hall.

"We had a lot of distractions this week with some stuff happen-ing within the program to where we left some guys back at home," said Western Carolina coach Mark Speir. "I thought we came out and played extremely hard in the first half. Our guys fought and bat-tled. We just ran out of gas in the second half."

After giving up two first downs on Western Carolina's first drive, the N.C. State defense dominated. The Wolfpack limited Western Carolina to six first downs and 8 rushing yards for the game to record its first shutout since a win over Eastern Kentucky in 2015.

"We just manhandled them," said N.C. State defensive tackle Alim McNeill. "We came out strong. We were striking the offensive line. We were just letting them feel our presence and letting them know they weren't going to run the ball on us."

N.C. State established a physical presence on offense, too, while rushing for 309 yards. Leading just 3-0 in the second quarter, the Wolfpack turned to the ground game to take control. Six straight running plays concluded with a 6-yard carry by Ricky Person for the game's first touchdown.

On N.C. State's next drive, Knight carried five consecutive times for 45 yards, with the final play a 2-yard scoring run. Knight has led the Wolfpack in rushing in each of the first two games.

"Having that experience the past two games, it's definitely boosted my confidence," he said.

THE TAKEAWAY

Western Carolina: Despite entering the game with debilitating sus-pensions, the Catamounts outgained N.C. State in the first quarter and trailed just 3-0 with nine minutes remaining in the second. The game was a struggle after that, but the start gives the team something to build on as the schedule gets easier.

N.C. State: After a slow start on offense, the Wolfpack got better results by relying on its running game and a fast-paced, no-huddle attack. Running backs Knight and Person appear ready to take the load off sophomore quarterback Matthew McKay.

STAR WATCH

Knight, whose nickname is "Bam," showed his quickness with his first 100-yard game and averaged 6.6 yards per carry. "He's phys-ical," Doeren said. "He gets north-south. He's not afraid to throw his body in there. You see him jumping over guys and diving through and running through contact. He's a 200-pounder, but he runs hard."

PLAY OF THE DAY

Defensive tackle Alim McNeill crashed into the backfield for a blind-side, first-quarter sack of Will Jones that set the tone for N.C. State's defense in its first shutout win since 2015.

STAT SHEET

In its last three home games, N.C. State has prevented its op-ponents from scoring a touchdown. That stretch includes lopsided wins over East Carolina in 2018 and in this year's season opener.

Final	1	2	3	4	T
WCU	0	0	0	0	0
NCST	3	21	10	7	41

Scoring Summary -----

		WCU	NCST
FIRST QUARTER			
NCST FG 5:06 Christopher Dunn 32 Yd Field Goal			
6 plays, 41 yards, 2:36	0	3	
SECOND QUARTER			
NCST TD 8:24 Ricky Person Jr. 6 Yd Run (Christopher Dunn Kick)			
7 plays, 65 yards, 2:21	0	10	
NCST TD 3:56 Zonovan Knight 2 Yd Run (Christopher Dunn Kick)			
6 plays, 62 yards, 2:23	0	17	
NCST TD 0:16 Cary Angeline 1 Yd pass from Matthew McKay (Christopher Dunn Kick)			
8 plays, 68 yards, 1:52	0	24	
THIRD QUARTER			
NCST FG 11:35 Christopher Dunn 25 Yd Field Goal			
10 plays, 65 yards, 3:25	0	27	
NCST TD 1:18 Zonovan Knight 2 Yd Run (Christopher Dunn Kick)			
17 plays, 98 yards, 7:57	0	34	
FOURTH QUARTER			
NCST TD 10:50 Jordan Houston 3 Yd Run (Christopher Dunn Kick)			
12 plays, 74 yards, 5:07	0	41	

Team Stats	WCU	NCST
First Downs	6	32
Passes for First	3	10
Rushes for First	2	20
Penalties for First	1	2
Third Down Efficiency	2-13	6-14
Fourth Down Efficiency	0-0	1-2
Total Yards	106	540
Total Plays	46	86
Avg Gain Per Play	2.3	6.3
Net Yards Rushing	8	309
Rushes	19	53
Yards Per Rush	0.4	5.8
Net Yards Passing	98	231
Comp-Att	15-27	22-33
Yards Per Pass	3.6	7.0
Times Sacked	1	3
Yds Lost To Sacks	-11	-17
Interceptions	0	0
Punts	10	3
Punt Average	0.0	0.0
Penalties	8	3
Penalty Yards	55	29
Fumbles	1	0
Fumbles Lost	1	0
Time of Poss	23:01	36:59

Individual Stats

RUSHING							
WESTERN CAROLINA	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Connell Young	7	26	3.7	0	12		
Donnavan Spencer	3	7	2.3	0	4		
Caleb Ferguson	2	3	1.5	0	2		
D.J. Atkins	2	3	1.5	0	3		
Bubba Williamson	1	-14	-14.0	0	0		
Will Jones	4	-17	-4.3	0	0		
NC STATE	Rush	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Zonovan Knight	18	119	6.6	2	21		
Jordan Houston	8	73	9.1	1	15		
Ricky Person Jr.	10	51	5.1	1	11		
Will Dabbs	9	43	4.8	0	11		
Keyon Lesane	1	22	22.0	0	22		
Tabari Hines	1	13	13.0	0	13		
Trent Pennix	3	-1	-0.3	0	1		
Team	1	-1	-1.0	0	0		
Bailey Hockman	2	-10	-5.0	0	1		
PASSING							
WESTERN CAROLINA	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Will Jones	15	27	98	3.6	0	0	--
NC STATE	Comp	Att	Yds	Y/A	TD	Int	QBRat
Matthew McKay	18	28	200	7.1	1	0	61.2
Bailey Hockman	4	5	31	6.2	0	0	20.1
RECEIVING							
WESTERN CAROLINA	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Mahari Stribling	3	28	9.3	0	12		
Kasimir Absolu	3	26	8.7	0	17		
Nate Mullen	3	18	6.0	0	10		
D.J. Thorpe	1	11	11.0	0	11		
Connell Young	2	7	3.5	0	5		
Austin Phillips	1	5	5.0	0	5		
Donnavan Spencer	2	3	1.5	0	3		
NC STATE	Rec	Yds	Avg	TD	LONG		
Cary Angeline	4	47	11.8	1	28		
Dylan Autenrieth	3	40	13.3	0	20		
Tabari Hines	3	36	12.0	0	19		
Emeka Emezio	2	32	16.0	0	16		
Devin Carter	2	21	10.5	0	18		
Keyon Lesane	2	19	9.5	0	17		
Trent Pennix	2	16	8.0	0	10		
Thayer Thomas	2	13	6.5	0	7		
Cecil Powell	1	8	8.0	0	8		
Eric Collins	1	-1	-1.0	0	0		