

Hawkeyes gashed by Wildcats in 28-17 loss

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

EVANSTON, Ill. – For the second consecutive week, the Iowa Hawkeyes dug themselves into a hole they couldn't get out of and left Ryan Field on Saturday with a 28-17 loss to Northwestern. This was the Wildcats' sixth win over Iowa in the last eight years and the Hawkeyes now find themselves at .500 both overall (4-4) and in Big Ten play (2-2).

From the opening minute to the final gun, Northwestern imposed its will. Even though Iowa clawed its way back in the second half with 14 unanswered points, it wasn't enough.

It began with the Hawkeyes winning the coin toss, but deferring to the second half due to strong winds coming from the North. The Wildcats took advantage of the opportunity by marching 75 yards on 11 plays and going up 7-0 on a 5-yard touchdown run from quarterback Kain Colter, the first of three he had on the afternoon.

Colter and Mark combined for 328 of Northwestern's 349 rushing yards against Iowa's defense on 42 combined carries between the two players.

"They just did a good job of executing," sophomore defensive tackle Louis Trinca-Pasat said.

Iowa initially responded with a 40-yard field goal from junior kicker Mike Meyer on its opening drive to trim its deficit to 7-3. The Hawkeyes had another stellar special teams play take place at the start of the second quarter when senior cornerback Micah Hyde downed a John Wienke punt going against

the wind at the Northwestern 1-yard line.

However, the Wildcats' first play from scrimmage ended up being a 72-yard scamper from Mark that would've been a 99-yard touchdown run if not for Hyde chasing him down. Colter would score his second touchdown from two yards out six plays later to extend the Northwestern lead to 14-3.

"You get a chance to change field position, and that's a big thing in our games," Hyde said. "It's tough. As a defense, you kind of had the momentum right there to try and stop them and then the very first play, they gash us."

One of the lone bright spots on the day for Iowa began to emerge during the second quarter in sophomore running back Damon Bullock. Playing in his first game since suffering a concussion Sept. 15 against Northern Iowa, Bullock finished with 107 yards rushing on 22 carries. He played the entire second half in place of sophomore Mark Weisman, who was injured in the second quarter.

"It's really nice to have Damon back and he has got some unique talents," senior quarterback James Vandenberg said. "We need to get Mark back healthy, too. But having both of those guys definitely really helps our football team."

Northwestern would go for the jugular early in the third quarter. First, reserve running back Tyris Jones blocked a Connor Kornbrath punt that was downed at the Iowa 4-yard line. The very next play, Colter notched the hat trick with a 4-yard score to make it 21-3. Following another Hawkeye 3-and-out, Colter tossed a 47-yard touchdown pass to wideout Christian Jones that put the Wildcats ahead 28-3 less than five minutes into the second half.

"On that one, I don't think it was by their design necessarily," Iowa head coach Kirk Ferentz said. "We had two new players in there. One new player totally, but two guys in different positions. As luck would have it, somehow we didn't

communicate well enough up there.”

Iowa would get two touchdowns late in the game, both of which were 1-yard touchdown runs by Vandenberg. Through eight games this season, Vandenberg has now run for as many touchdowns (3) as he has tossed touchdown passes. He finished 24-of-38 passing for 214 yards, but went without a touchdown pass for the second time in three weeks.

Trailing 28-17 late in the fourth quarter, Iowa called timeout facing a 4th-and-3 from Northwestern’s 24-yard line. Instead of taking the field goal to make it an eight-point contest, the Hawkeyes went for it on fourth down but ended up turning the ball over on downs.

“We were moving the ball well in that quarter and we just felt like that was our best shot,” Ferentz said on his decision to go for it on fourth down.

Iowa plays at Indiana Nov. 3. No kickoff time has been announced, but the game will be televised by BTN. The Hoosiers (3-5, 1-3) snapped a five-game losing streak Saturday, defeating Illinois, 31-17. It was Kevin Wilson’s first Big Ten win as Indiana’s head coach.