

# Hawkeyes retain possession of Floyd

By Brendan Stiles

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MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – For the past week, the talk surrounding Iowa's game Saturday against Minnesota was it being a battle of strengths vs. strengths. Both teams entered with strong rushing attacks and both had defenses that were stingy against the run.

In a game where a bronze pig was at stake, the stronger team was going to survive. That stronger team was the Hawkeyes, who defeated the Golden Gophers 23-7 and left TCF Bank Stadium retaining possession of Floyd of Rosedale for the second consecutive year. The victory gives Iowa a 1-0 mark to start Big Ten play and the Hawkeyes also moved to 4-1 overall.

Both strength battles went Iowa's favor Saturday afternoon. When the Hawkeyes had the ball, they were able to run up and down the field on Minnesota's defense. Junior running back Mark Weisman led the attack with 147 yards rushing on 24 carries.

Conversely, the Golden Gophers' ground game got absolutely nothing going against Iowa's defense. An offense that ran the ball almost three quarters of the time entering this game could only compile 30 yards rushing on 27 carries.

"We knew that they were basically a vertical team. They go Point A to Point B," said junior defensive tackle Louis Trinca-Pasat, who had four tackles, one sack and alongside fellow D-tackle Carl Davis made it nearly impossible for the Golden Gophers to penetrate inside the hashes. "We were just getting off blocks, taking on blocks and just making plays

inside. They had a good O-line, but we were just able to shed blocks well.”

This game took a turn in the Hawkeyes’ favor during the second quarter. Leading 3-0, sophomore quarterback Jake Rudock connected on a 3rd-and-3 play-action dump-off to fullback Adam Cox, who picked up 35 yards on the play before being brought down at the Golden Gophers’ 27-yard line. Rudock would cap the drive with a four-yard rushing score of his own to extend Iowa’s lead to 10-0.

“I thought he was going to score on it,” Weisman said about Cox’s catch. “It was a great play and it really sparked the offense. I think it was a huge turning point.”

The Hawkeyes missed a chance to go for the jugular following a highlight reel interception from senior linebacker Christian Kirksey when a 39-yard field goal attempt by senior kicker Mike Meyer hit the left upright. But Iowa would get the ball back minutes later and appeared to put the game out of reach when Rudock completed a tunnel screen pass to junior wide receiver Damond Powell, who proceeded to scamper 74 yards to pay-dirt and give Iowa a 17-0 lead it would take with it into halftime.

“Big plays are hard to come by and I was just hoping,” Rudock said. “I’m thinking, ‘He’s fast. Let’s hope he can outrun them.’”

Following another field goal by Meyer – who made three of them on the day – a 66-yard kickoff return by Minnesota’s Marcus Jones set up the Golden Gophers’ lone touchdown of the game when quarterback Philip Nelson connected with Derrick Engel for a 23-yard strike. Nelson ended up starting and playing the entire game even though the anticipation was Mitch Leidner starting his second straight game due to Nelson having a hamstring injury.

But even with Nelson back playing, there wasn’t much for

Minnesota on this day. Senior linebacker James Morris would seal the victory with a interception in the final minutes of the fourth quarter and instead of sprinting to the opposite sideline, the Hawkeyes got to huddle around Floyd of Rosedale on their own sideline before celebrating with Iowa fans who made the trek.

“Didn’t have to run too far. We like it that way,” Morris said. “We didn’t have to carry it so far to the crowd.”

Iowa returns to action Oct. 5 when it plays its Homecoming game against Michigan State. The Spartans visit Kinnick Stadium after having a bye this week. Kickoff is slated for 11 a.m. Central and the game will be televised nationally on ESPN2.