

Rivalry brewing after Saturday's showdown

By Chad Courrier
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MANKATO — Before Saturday's game, Minnesota State coach Todd Hoffner talked with Winona State coach Tom Sawyer, and the two discussed that the annual game between these Northern Sun Intercollegiate rivals should be played for something, such as the Traveling Training Kit that's up for grabs when the Mavericks play St. Cloud State.

After Saturday's 35-32 victory for Minnesota State, a budding rivalry has been born.

"It started through football, and we've carried it onto the football field," Sawyer said. "It was a great game if you were watching. It wasn't a great game for us because we lost."

"We recruit the same kids, we even look the same (with purple jerseys)."

Hoffner said the proximity of the universities, about 130 miles apart, is important to a rivalry, and at least for the short term, it looks like the Mavericks and Warriors will be competing for South Division titles.

"It was a classic football game, with two teams that played exceptional football," Hoffner said.

MSU football notebook

Receivers aplenty

For the last couple of seasons, the Mavericks have been acquiring talented receivers who could flourish in the wide-open offense. But even with the change to a more traditional offense, the Mavericks' speedy receivers have been able to make big plays in this new league.

On Saturday, Vincent Flury made six receptions for 109 yards and a touchdown. He also had a 42-yarder early in the second half and an 11-yarder on a third-and-9 that moved the ball to the 2-yard line and allowed the Mavericks to score the winning touchdown with 2:05 remaining.

"I'm confident throwing to Vinny, just like I'm confident throwing to the other receivers," quarterback Ryan Fick said.

Chris Nowlin had three receptions for 53 yards, including a 32-yarder, and Omaar Balton made two catches, one of which was a 56-yarder that went to Winona State's 1 and set up a touchdown.

Derheim gets kicks

Every week, Minnesota State's



Pat Christman

Minnesota State running back Donte Shackelford gets knocked down near the goal line early in Minnesota State's homecoming game against Winona State. Shackelford was the Mavericks' leading rusher with 88 yards.

Spencer Goff and Grady Derheim compete for the kicking job in practice, but up until Saturday, Goff had gotten the nod for games. But Goff has struggled recently, missing two PATs and a short field goal last week at Wayne State, and despite Goff winning the competition in prac-

tice again this week, Hoffner chose Derheim Saturday.

"After seeing warmups, Spencer has had an injury thing, and I didn't feel comfortable putting him out there," Hoffner said. "Grady is very confident."

Derheim didn't attempt any field goals, but he was 5 of 5 on

PATs. Hoffner said that Derheim and Goff will compete again this week, but he hinted that Derheim will likely be kicking PATs and field goals next week at Augustana.

Penalties and turnovers

It appeared that penalties and turnovers were going to doom the Mavericks on Saturday. Minnesota State was flagged 15 times for 151 yards, with the biggest being an offside penalty that negated a possible game-clinching interception return for a touchdown by Kelvin Rodgers with about a minute remaining in the game.

"We left so many points out there today it wasn't even funny," Hoffner said.

The Mavericks also threw three interceptions, two of which led to fourth-quarter touchdowns by Winona State.

"We'd have a good play, and a penalty would take it away," linebacker Blake Freese said. "They had some, too, so it wasn't one-sided. It was frustrating, but we played through it and got the win."

Winona State had eight penalties for 80 yards, with a holding penalty wiping out a big gain on the final drive.