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Minnesota State University, Mankato

Young quarterback leads Mavericks past Wildcats

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The Minnesota State football team traveled to Northern State Saturday for its conference opener. The No. 18 Mavericks were coming off a defensive struggle, as they opened with a 7-6 win over Northern Michigan.

In the first quarter it looked to be more of the same for the Mavericks. The defense shut down the Northern State offense but MSU again had trouble moving the ball. This changed on the opening drive of the second quarter.

After getting his first action in the season opener, Will Brogan got his first start Saturday for the injured Steve Pachan. Just like in the opening game, Brogan looked calm and comfortable leading the MSU offense.

Brogan's first big connection in the season opener went to sophomore wideout Cody Rose and it was again Rose who would help Brogan and the MSU offense get into rhythm. Rose's fantastic catch on the fifth play of a second quarter drive turned the heads of fans and his scamper the rest of the way down the field got the Mavericks on the board first.

However, Northern State showed on its next possession that they were not going to go down without a fight. Northern State running back Montrel Richardson took a handoff on the ensuing series and turned it into a 47-yard touchdown.

The two teams went into half-time locked at 7-7. The defense was again impressive despite not having a lot of support from the offense.

"We're focusing on what we can control," said senior defensive lineman Don Thomas. "We just try to keep working to get our offense the ball back."

MSU was able to get the ball back midway through the third quarter. The Mavericks then proceeded to drive down the field 80 yards which was capped off by an Adam Thielen nine-yard touchdown reception.

The game appeared to be heading into a shootout when NSU again answered right away with a touchdown on its next drive. But another Thielen touchdown reception got the Mavericks a 21-14 lead and they didn't look back from there.

"I thought the offense did fine," said head coach Todd Hoffner. "We left a lot of points on the field today and we'll have to get better with that. We didn't turn the ball over, so that is great and I am very proud of our players' efforts."

Defensively, the Mavericks were led by senior linebacker Matt McQuiston who tallied 11 tackles on the day. Redshirt freshman Chris Schaudt also played a key role on the defensive line with three tackles for a loss.

Brogan was the story of the day though. One wouldn't have been able to tell that he hadn't started a game in three years. Despite some rust, Brogan



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Sophomore quarterback Will Brogan threw three touchdowns in place of senior Steve Pachan on Saturday afternoon.

looked the part of a starting quarterback. Depending how long Pachan is out for, the Mavericks are going to count on Brogan. Brogan's performance Saturday was a good sign.

The Mavericks are now 2-0 and will be on the road this Saturday as they travel to play Minnesota-Crookston. **R**