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# Sports

## Coordinator sees optimism for MSU's offense

Struggling Mavericks rank second in NCC in passing; UMD ranks first

By Chad Courrier  
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**MANKATO** — Having seen the offense score just 33 points in the last three games, you'd think Minnesota State offensive coordinator Dan Ragsdale would be a little dis-

appointed.

However, he hasn't felt this good about the offense all season.

"The numbers don't reflect it, but I'm optimistic," Ragsdale said. "We have five games left, and if we play well, no one will remember

the first six."

Minnesota State (2-4, 0-3 in North Central Conference) hosts Minnesota Duluth (4-2, 2-2) at 1 p.m. today at Blakeslee Stadium, trying to show improvement on what's been some dismal offensive numbers. Minnesota State ranks last in the conference in rushing and scoring offense. In three conference games, the Mavericks have rushed for

just 19.7 yards and scored 11.0 points per game.

By contrast, Nebraska-Omaha has the best offense in the NCC, averaging 410.3 yards and 39.1 points.

"We've played well enough to win at times, but for four quarters, we haven't played well enough to win," coach Jeff Jamrog said.

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## MSU: Ragsdale fifth offensive coach in five years

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"The mistakes hurt. Some are mental, some are physical."

The reasons for the offensive woes are many, from quarterback decisions to blocking to personnel. The most obvious is that Ragsdale is the fifth Mavericks' offensive coordinator in five seasons, implementing a pass-first offense that is the opposite of the scheme used in 2005.

"Continuity of the system is huge," Jamrog said. "It hasn't been there. Instead of practicing and improving skills, the kids are learning new schemes."

Ragsdale said this offensive plan, which includes about 40 passes and 20 rushes per game, took about a half-season before it started to click when he was at Minnesota Duluth last season.

"It's been disappointing that we can't run the ball," Ragsdale said. "But we don't



Pat Christman

Minnesota State quarterback Ben King (12) is averaging 258.7 yards passing per game with 10 touchdowns, but he has also thrown 10 interceptions.

have offensive linemen that are man-eaters or a running back that can pound it into the line all game."

Senior Bryan Albery, who was a receiver at spring practice, is the leading rusher with 187 yards on 43 carries,

and he also leads the team with 39 receptions. But he's just 5-foot-8 and 165 pounds, unable to run over defenders.

The offensive line seems better suited to pass blocking, and the Mavericks have struggled on short-yardage situations. Last week against North Dakota, the Mavericks ran 11 plays from inside the North Dakota 5-yard line and didn't score a touchdown.

Senior quarterback Ben King is throwing for big yardage, averaging 258.7 yards per game, with 10 touchdowns, but he's completing only 56.3 percent of his passes with 10 interceptions.

Ragsdale hinted that there could be changes in the personnel today, but there isn't enough depth to make many moves. He thinks most of the players are showing enough improvement to warrant his optimism.

"It's only a matter of time until it clicks," Ragsdale said. "Hopefully, something changes quickly."