



Sports



Minnesota State quarterback Ben King threw for 505 yards and four touchdowns Saturday.

MAVS: South Dakota rallied to take lead

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scooped up the loose ball and trampled 28 yards for the game-winning score, igniting a long-overdue celebration as the Mavericks topped the Coyotes 44-39 Saturday.

"It was an incredible game," said MSU head coach Jeff Jamrog. "In 20 years of coaching I've never been a part of a game like that. It's a tremendous morale boost. These players and coaches deserve it; hats off to them in the way they battled."

In shootout fashion, both teams combined for a total of 1,111 yards on offense — MSU with 545 and USD with 566.

Most of the Mavericks' offensive success stemmed from Ben King, who threw 60 completions for 505 yards, breaking both MSU single-game completion and yardage records.

"There was a different feeling today," said the senior quarterback. "We felt confi-

dent, something we have been lacking, and executed the game-plan to perfection."

The Mavericks, who have struggled to score all season, set the game's tone on their opening drive after Josh Bryant snuck in for a 1-yard touchdown, capping a 12-play, 80-yard drive and giving the Mavericks a 7-0 lead.

"That was huge for our confidence," said King. "We came out and established ourselves right away."

But the Coyotes wasted no time on their first drive as Travis Mlady punched in a 16-yard touchdown, tying the game at 7.

From then on, MSU and USD exchanged punches like prizefighters.

After Spencer christened the second quarter with a 37-yard field goal, South Dakota countered with another Mlady touchdown run.

MSU then jabbed 10 plays down the field for 84 yards, ending in a 16-yard pass from King to Bryant, giving the

Mavericks a 17-14 lead heading into halftime.

Both teams continued to light up the scoreboard in the second half.

The Mavericks added to their lead with consecutive touchdown throws from King, including a 40-yard heave to Bryan Alberty to put MSU up 31-14 early in the third quarter.

The Coyotes hacked away at MSU's lead with back-to-back touchdowns of their own as Mlady galloped in for his third score of the game and Stefan Logan caught a 20-yard pass from Noah Shepard, which cut the MSU lead to 31-26.

Minnesota State responded with King feathering another 40-yard touchdown pass, this time to Tyrell Smith. But the Mavericks 38-26 cushion with nine minutes left in the fourth quarter wasn't as comfortable as it appeared.

After Mlady scored his fourth touchdown, the Mavericks' ensuing posses-

sion ended in a failed pass attempt on fourth-and-four, giving USD the ball on their own 40-yard line with 4 minutes left.

The Coyotes managed nine plays, including four fourth-down conversions, the final one resulting in South Dakota's go-ahead touchdown as Shepard found Logan in the back of the end zone.

After a third straight failed two-point conversion the Coyotes held a 39-38 lead.

And just when it looked like another potential victory was slipping through the Mavericks hands, Ben King conducted the game-winning drive that resulted in Fielders' unlikely rumble into the end zone.

"I just heard the thud," said Fielder, "And I looked down and the ball bounced right into my arms and I just took off running."

Minnesota State's victory snapped an 11-game losing streak in NCC play to bring its conference record to 1-5.

Fumble rumble nets Mavs NCC win

By Kaleb Roedel
Free Press Staff Writer

MANKATO — Blakeslee Stadium was brewing for a celebration as Minnesota State's Ben Spencer lined up for a 38-yard field goal with six seconds remaining, looking to propel MSU over the North Central Conference leading University of South Dakota.

But those brewing cheers quickly diluted into a faint hush when Spencer's field goal kick was blocked, seemingly sealing the game for South Dakota.

But wait.
MSU lineman Jeff Fielder

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