



Sunday,  
October 23, 2005  
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# Sports

Bethany's season ends  
with loss to Northland



## MSU hangs tough in 26-7 loss to No. 2 UND

Mavericks defense keeps team in game

By Denny Weller  
Special to The Free Press

**MANKATO** — For nearly three quarters Saturday afternoon at Blakeslee Stadium the Minnesota State University football team slugged it out with undefeated and No. 2-ranked North Dakota.

The Mavericks' rugged defensive unit — led by senior linebacker Jimmie Gunn and senior defensive back Kevin Adams — held the high-powered North Dakota offense to only a pair of Jeff Glas field goals in an attempt to gain a victory on Senior Day.

However, a shanked punt and an interception over a three-

minute stretch enabled North Dakota to go short distances for touchdowns in a 26-7 North Central Conference win before a crowd of 2,612.

"We expected it would be a tough, challenging game and it was," North Dakota coach Dale Lennon said. "Mankato has been very close in the past and have played the top teams in the NCC very, very tight down the stretch. Going in at halftime with a 3-0 score wasn't completely surprising to us.

"It was at a point though where we needed to challenge the team. That was a defining moment for us because that was



Pat Christman

Please see MSU, Page D4 North Dakota's Digger Anderson tackles Minnesota State's D.J. Porter during the first half Saturday at Blakeslee Stadium.

## MSU: Only TD on return

Continued from Page D1

the closest point we've been at halftime. We said all along that their front seven was very athletic. We had to find a way to establish the run game so that we could set up the rest of the offense."

Minnesota State (2-7 overall, 0-4 in NCC) was in a position to spring an upset because of the spirited play of its swarming defense. Gunn was in on 17 tackles while Adams came up with 11 stops and a key interception on UND's opening possession deep in Mavericks' territory.

"Actually, it was kind of a busted play," Adams said. "We adjusted to it and the came on an underneath route. He dropped the ball and I was there to make a play. Our game plan was to stop the run and force them into passing situations.

"It was just a battle of field position. They kept getting it deep on us and we just couldn't seem to keep them out of the end zone in the second half. I don't know whether it's the intensity coming out after halftime but we get cold or something. ... We just have to keep fighting"

Trailing 6-0 late in the third quarter, Mavericks punter

Jamie VanDenElzen drifted to the right before sending a 1-yard boot which was caught by a UND fan midway up the bleachers. On the next play, Chris Belmore lofted a 31-yard TD pass to fullback Trent Christensen.

Moments later, VanDenElzen's errant pass was picked off by Dan Ullsperger, giving North Dakota a first down at the Minnesota State 21. Chris Beatty, who rushed for 91 yards on 31 carries, banged the middle for 5 and 2 yards before Belmore raced 14 yards untouched for a touchdown on a bootleg around right end.

Dan Smedberg, a 6-foot-2, 238-pound fullback, then came up with the Mavericks' lone offensive highlight as he took a short kickoff and rambled 85 yards down the middle of the field for a score. It was Minnesota State's first kickoff return for a touchdown since Reggie Patterson went the distance in 1996.

"North Dakota came out with a little pooch kick and everyone on the return team made their correct adjustments," Smedberg said. "There happened to be a hole there and I just took it. I saw the kicker and one other guy and I knew if I could beat those guys I would score."

North Dakota (9-0, 4-0) finished off the 26-7 win when Beatty's 4-yard TD run capped an 8-play, 51-yard drive with 4:48 remaining. UND totaled 310 yards with Belmore connecting on 17 of 31 for 191 yards with three interceptions.

Minnesota State could generate only 156 total yards led by Sean Treasure's 81 yards rushing in 20 attempts.

VanDen Elzen ended up 12 of 21 for 85 yards with two interceptions.

The Mavericks managed just 71 net yards on the ground against the nation's top-ranked rushing defense (43.6 yards per game).

"We haven't put a complete game together yet," Minnesota State coach Jeff Jamrog said. "It was a solid effort by our guys defensively, but in the end you have to make more plays to win games. Not only do you have to compete hard, you've got to make plays at critical times.

"I knew for us to be in the game it would have to be low scoring because they don't give up many points. It was a game of field position. For the most part we shut down the run but we gave up a couple of passes that were disappointing."

Minnesota State plays at Augustana Saturday.