

Minnesota analyzes breakdown in 23-17 loss to Ohio Saturday

By Jason Wolf
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MINNEAPOLIS — As the Gophers return to practice Monday and try to determine what went wrong in Saturday's 23-17 loss to Ohio, they can at least take comfort in knowing that no one is blameless. Of course, that also means that the surprising loss was a result of a total breakdown.

—The defense failed to contain Ohio's triple-option offense and got fooled by the Bobcats' speedy backs and a pivotal trick play.

—Dan Nystrom missed field goals from 25 and 37 yards. The 47-yarder he made in the fourth quarter was impressive, but meaningless to the game's outcome.

—Quarterback Asad Abdul-Khaliq was flustered by a heavy pass rush and as a result was inconsistent except on two brilliant long completions to Ron Johnson.

—Tellis Redmon gained 70 yards on 12 carries, but that included a 31-yard dash.

However without the long run, Redmon's

average was just 3.1 yards per carry.

—Thomas Tapeh made his highly-awaited debut after being academically ineligible last year and sitting out the season opener with an injured foot, but he rushed just 4 times for 30 yards.

The list could go on. "It's not one guy's fault, it's not," Minnesota coach Mason said. "There's enough guys to shoulder the burden of criticism in that loss. I promise you that."

Ohio ran the triple-option offense to perfection, as the Bobcats compiled 453 yards of total offense, including 363 rushing. It was the most rushing yards given up by Minnesota since Michigan ran for 381 yards in 1992.

Chad Brinker rushed for a touchdown, threw for one and also caught a scoring pass. He finished with 122 yards rushing, 50 receiving and 35 passing.

"You can never really stop (the option)," defensive end Karon Riley said. "You just hopefully go out and make the right reads and make all the plays. It's hard to get big

plays against the option," he added.

The loss was a major setback for the Gophers (1-1), who just a week ago in a 47-10 win over Louisiana-Monroe seemed back on the track they started last year when they went 8-4, their best record since 1967.

"It's like a reality check," Abdul-Khaliq said. "You've got to go out and play every team as if they're better than you."

Mason said the Ohio loss, Minnesota's first home non-conference defeat in four seasons, proves that his team isn't yet an elite group.

"It's something that's hard to describe. But when you got it, when it's really good, it's there and you know it," he said. "You can almost smell it. We don't have that right now."

If the Big Ten can be used as a yardstick, the Gophers may get "it" back soon, perhaps even by this weekend's game at Baylor.

Penn State last week lost to Toledo, which plays in the Mid-American Conference with Ohio, then came roaring back with a 67-7 win over Louisiana Tech on Saturday.

U.S. basketball teams escape rowdy protesters in Melbourne

By Chris Sheridan
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MELBOURNE, Australia — The U.S. basketball teams made a bizarre, pre-dawn exit yesterday (Monday night EDT) from their besieged hotel complex, but only after getting final clearance from a young protester with a mohawk.

With massive protests taking place outside their hotel, which also was the site of the World Economic Forum, the men's and women's teams were virtual prisoners inside. A decision was made late Monday night to get out of Melbourne and head to Sydney, and the teams got onto buses by 6:45 a.m.

About 100 protesters sat in the street and blocked the main exit near the front entrance of the Crown Casino and Hotel. The protesters decided by voice vote that they would not move aside to let the team leave.

The buses then turned around and headed toward a different exit, where another group of demonstrators had gathered.

Not believing that the buses held

Olympic athletes, the protesters initially refused to move. After the police asked them to come inside the concrete barricades and have a look for themselves, a 21-year-old with a punk rock haircut volunteered to do the job.

"I looked in the first bus and it didn't look like a basketball team, but then I looked inside the second bus," said the mohawk man, Yanni Cotis of Adelaide. "We had a quick discussion about whether to let them go through and decided to let them leave."

Players and team personnel were half-amused and half-shocked that their safe passage was in the hands of someone looking like a distant cousin of Billy Idol.

"Something I learned long ago was to expect the unexpected," U.S. coach Rudy Tomjanovich said, "and this was one of those cases. It was good we got out and got our freedom."

The players' family members had left a few hours earlier, before most of the protesters arrived at the hotel.

The teams had planned to stay in Melbourne until later this week, but the protests virtually shut down the hotel.

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