The nation's leading rushing QB hit the ground running, and made the difference in this important West Division matchup. Ball State led for most of the game, and made a late comeback attempt, but it was not enough as the Huskies improved to 2-0.

Northern Illinois travelled to Ball State in a pivotal game in the West Division race. In the first quarter junior QB Jordan Lynch put NIU on top with a 29 yard TD run. Ball State countered with a field goal. The Huskies got a second TD via ground in the second when Leighton Settle took it in from the one. The Cards countered with another field goal. BSU's Keith Wenning broke the cycle with a 12 yard pass to Willie Snead to bring the Cards within two. Eric Patterson forced a fumble on the ensuing kickoff and Ball State took advantage of it with a 43 yard FG to take the lead into halftime. They then started the second half with another scoring drive, capped off with a TD keeper from the one. BS 23 NIU 14.

NIU went three-and-out, Wenning threw and INT on the next drive, and NIU accepted the gift, with a five play 61 yard drive, Lynch running it in from the 12, reducing the lead to two (23-21). The teams took turns with scoreless drives before Lynch hit Akeem Daniels on a 54 yard TD

midway through the 4th to put the Huskies up for good 28-23. Lynch later added a 74 yard run to pad their lead, 35-23. Wenning mounted a long drive that stalled on the NIU 4 yard line. End of game.

The NCAA's leading rusher among QB's (583 yds.) added 207 yards and three touchdowns to his stats. He also threw for 195 yards and a touch. "Whatever the defense gives us, that's what we're going to take," said Lynch, who had 29 carries for a 7.1-yard average. "The quarterback running game is huge in this offense. If they need me to carry it 20 times, I'll carry it 20 times." Lynch rushed for more yards than the entire Cardinal offense (129 yds.).

His counterpart Keith Wenning broke the Ball State record with 71 passes thrown in one game. He connected on 42 of them for 434 yards but connected on two to the Huskies. Jamill Smith caught 14 of them for 146 yards. Jahwan Edwards was held to 65 yards on 10 carries.

The loss was a big hit to Ball State's run to join the West Division elite after besting EMU in the opener and upsetting Indiana and USF. The loss makes them 1-2 in the MAC, 3-3 overall. It doesn't get any easier as they host Western Michigan next week.

Northern Illinois improves to 2-0 in the MAC (5-1 overall) and hosts Buffalo next week before travelling to Akron. Their next serious test is Oct 27 at Western Michigan. In what could be the key game of the season, they host Toledo Wed. Nov 14, a game that should be the first loss to one of the teams, and should be on TV. Toledo faces the hapless EMU next week.

If both teams are upset along the way, Western Michigan may get back into the race. But as of right now, the spotlight is on the Huskies and the Rockets.