

UW FOOTBALL

Cruickshank adds element

Joe Rudolph enjoys trying new ways to use speedster



No. 13 Badgers vs. No. 9 Minn.

When, where: 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Minneapolis.

TV: Ch. 27.

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Aron Cruickshank has been doing what feels natural to him on a football field in recent weeks.

The former high school quarterback and current wide receiver and kick returner for the University of Wisconsin football team has been getting the ball more frequently and it has paid dividends for the Badgers (9-2, 6-2 Big Ten Conference).

On Saturday against Purdue, Cruickshank took four snaps at quarterback in a Wildcat formation and picked up 47 yards, including a 27-yard touchdown run to open the scoring.

His 17-yard run in the second quarter allowed UW coach Paul Chryst to run one more quick play to set up Zach Hintze's school-record 62-yard field goal just before halftime.

That performance comes on the heels of what he did at Nebraska, returning a kick 89 yards for a touchdown and rushing for 13 yards on two carries.

"I'm just trying to show that I'm a threat," Cruickshank said. "When I'm on the field, when I step on that field, I just want to show that I'm a threat and that you have to look out for me. That opens up everything else."

Cruickshank, a 5-foot-9 sophomore from Brooklyn, New York, has explosive speed that he's showing more frequently for the Badgers, who moved up one spot to No. 13 in the AP Top 25 on Sunday.

His burst behind solid blocking on the kick return last week got him into open space, and he was able to outrun the kicker and another defender en route to the end zone.

On his touchdown against Purdue, he faked a handoff to tailback Jonathan Taylor, sprinted through a hole up the middle, then ran past two defenders at the 20-yard line to score.

"He's a dynamic player.

Those are fun things to keep experimenting with and to keep going with. There's no question, we talk about it each week. He's pretty special with the ball in his hands," UW offensive coordinator Joe Rudolph said.

Cruickshank took his first reps as a Wildcat quarterback against Ohio State last month. His 27-yard run on UW's first snap in the look was the team's second-longest play against Ohio State.

He has yet to throw a pass, but he said after the loss to Ohio State he was ready and willing to throw one.

After playing quarterback throughout high school, Cruickshank says being under center and making plays feels ordinary, even though the defenses are better in college.

"It's basically like I've been doing that all my life, so it was like second nature to me," he said. "So basically I was just making my right reads and not try to do too much."

His teammates enjoy the change-of-pace element Cruickshank offers. "He's a great playmaker. Obviously, kids from New York are great players," junior quarterback and fellow New Yorker Jack Coan said.

"But he's obviously really fast. Whenever you can get him the ball it's a good thing." Taylor — who has taken advantage of defenses' concern about the Wildcat and jet sweeps to rush for 676 yards and three touchdowns in the past three weeks — said defenses have to respect the plays Cruickshank can make.

"It definitely gives a teams a different look and makes them have to defend the whole field. When you've got a player as electric as Aron back there in Wildcat, you've got to make sure that you're playing all areas of the field," Taylor said.

was setting. Our transition game was pretty solid.

"You apply pressure by keeping the ball off the ground, the hitters working and the setter making real good choices and keeping things balanced. I thought it was pretty hard for them to figure out what she was doing."

As in their first meeting, the Badgers also controlled the serve-pass game, recording four aces while allowing none and keeping the Cornhuskers out of system much of the day.

In the two meetings Nebraska served 129 times without an ace against the Badgers. Only one other team, Penn State, held the Huskers to no aces.

"I think serve-pass is everything," Rettke said. "We put a lot of pressure on with our serves and we got them out of system a good amount. When you get teams out of system you can set up a really good block and a really good defense around that. I think we're finding our identity in that."

SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL

Table with columns: Professional, PREGAME.COM, FAVORITE, Line (O/U), UNDERDOG. Lists scores for various football games.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Table with columns: Professional, PREGAME.COM, FAVORITE, Line (O/U), UNDERDOG. Lists scores for college football games.

AMWAY COACHES TOP 25 POLL

Table with columns: Record, Pts, Pvs. Lists top 25 coaches and their records.

BIG TEN

Table with columns: W, L, PF, PA, W, L, PF, PA. Lists Big Ten conference standings.

AP TOP 25

Table with columns: Rank, Team, Record, Pts, Pvs. Lists AP Top 25 college football teams.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN 2019-20 Schedule

Table with columns: Date, Opponent, Location, Time. Lists UW's 2019-2020 football schedule.

LATEST LINE

Table with columns: FAVORITE, PREGAME.COM, Line (O/U), UNDERDOG. Lists latest betting lines for various sports.

Table with columns: Wisconsin 78, Wofford 65, Colorado 74, Wisconsin 57, Wisconsin 71, UW-Milwaukee 40. Lists scores for various games.

HOCKEY

Table with columns: BIG TEN, W, L, T, OT, Pts, GF, GA. Lists hockey scores and statistics.

COLLEGE MEN

Table with columns: BIG TEN, W, L, T, OT, Pts, GF, GA. Lists college men's hockey scores.

COLLEGE WOMEN

Table with columns: WCHA, W, L, T, OT, Pts, GF, GA. Lists college women's hockey scores.

Table with columns: W, L, T, OT, Pts, GF, GA. Lists women's soccer scores.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Table with columns: W, L, T, OT, Pts, GF, GA. Lists women's soccer scores and statistics.

PREP SPORTS

Table with columns: Schedule, Today's events, GIRLS BASKETBALL, Non-conference, GIRLS HOCKEY, Badminton, Women's soccer. Lists prep sports events.

CITY/AREA SPORTS

Table with columns: Bowling, SPORT BOWL, Sunday Neighbors, DREAM LANES, VIKING LANES. Lists city/area sports events.

GOLF

Table with columns: Professional, PGA RSM CLASSIC, AT ST. SIMONS ISLAND, GA, Sunday's final results, x-won on second playoff hole. Lists golf tournament results.