

Balanced Cardinals take the offensive

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CARDINALS NOTEBOOK:
 Matt Leinart appears to have earned the No. 2 quarterback job for the Cardinals, completing 19-of-21 passes for 144 yards and his first touchdown pass.

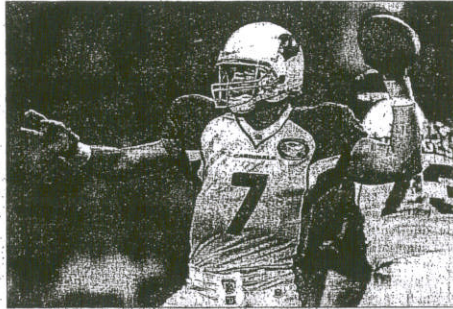
Warner, Leinart both look sharp in 23-16 win over Bears

By **DARREN URBAN**
 TRIBUNE

CHICAGO • The last significant dress rehearsal for the Cardinals' offense was looking like a miserable flop early Friday night, an echo of last week's 30-3 loss in New England. Then the Cards flipped the script. The resulting noise coming from Soldier Field was the Cards' collective sigh of relief,

after Arizona beat the Bears, 23-16, in front of 49,486 fans. The Cardinals' top two quarterbacks, Kurt Warner and Matt Leinart, posted spectacular combined statistics of 23-for-32 for 217 yards, two touchdowns and no interceptions while the running game piled up 127 yards — a 180-degree turnaround from the disaster against the Patriots. "I wasn't worried to begin with," Warner said. "It's nice to see the running game click, but I wasn't completely

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ON THE LOOKOUT: Cardinals quarterback Matt Leinart drops back to pass during the second quarter of Friday's game against the Bears in Chicago.

CARDS: Maligned running game shows signs of promise

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concerned. I know a lot of people were.

"Today, we overcame the adversities. ... Maybe there was a snag in the road last week, but I don't think it was as bad as people wanted to make it."

The breakthrough came on the Cards' third drive, as Warner directed a 13-play, 67-yard touchdown march that featured eight rushes by running backs. Those runs gained 40 yards, a refreshing change from the impotent ground game previously featured in the preseason.

The Cardinals (2-1) couldn't finish with the run — Warner hit 6-foot-8 tight end Leonard Pope with a nice touchdown pass in the back of the end zone — and a later TD drive by backup quarterback Matt Leinart also ended with a pass. But for now, that's being picky, especially with starting running back Edgerrin James playing little.

"You just have to mix the run with your passes," said coach Dennis Green, who acknowledged the Cardinals emphasized the run. "We worked at it, which you have to do. We know we are getting ready for when Edge is out there."

One guy who already looks ready is Leinart, who came in with 5:18 left in the second quarter and played the balance of the game. On his second series, Leinart recreated his late-first half magic of the Patriots game.

With 55 seconds left in the second quarter and again on his own 15-yard



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DOWN HE GOES: Cardinals quarterback Kurt Warner is sacked for a 9-yard loss by the Bears' Adewale Ogunleye during Friday's game in Chicago.

line (the same place his field-goal drive began in New England), Leinart completed all six of his passes for 54 yards, setting up a 49-yard field goal by Neil Rackers on the last play of the half.

Leinart also led the Cards on a touchdown drive to start the second half, throwing a four-yard TD pass to Bryant Johnson and completing 4-of-4 passes for 39 yards.

"I completed balls down the field, I didn't do that last week," said Leinart, who

finished 15-of-21 for 144 yards and his touchdown. "I told the coaches to call anything because I feel comfortable in the offense for the most part. They called a lot of stuff."

Warner, meanwhile, finished 8-of-11 for 73 yards and a score.

At first, it didn't look like any Cardinals would have such impressive stat lines.

James carried the ball on four of Arizona's first five offensive plays, gaining a total of minus-two yards in three

official attempts and having one wiped out completely on a Leonard Davis holding call.

The second offensive series was killed when the Bears put constant pressure on Warner, sacking him once and hitting him a second time as he threw.

"We had to give the fans back at home a little scare," receiver Larry Fitzgerald quipped.

Fortunately, the Cards' starting defense was effective from the start, holding the

Bears to just six points while playing and making a big fourth-down stop at their own 14 in the first half when safety Adrian Wilson stopped running back Adrian Peterson for a one-yard loss when Chicago needed two yards.

It was the kind of play absent last week for the Cardinals, who aren't as bad as in New England or probably as good as they were Friday night.

"Right now," Wilson said, "I'd say we are somewhere in between."

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Cardinals 23, Bears 16

Arizona	8	10	16	3	-23
Chicago	2	3	6	10	-16

- Chi—FG Gould 49
- Ariz.—Pope 4 pass from Warner (Rackers kick)
- Chi—FG Gould 59
- Ariz—FG Rackers 49
- Ariz—Br. Johnson 4 pass from Leinart (Povak kick)
- Ariz—FG Nevada 50
- Ariz—FG Nevada 19
- Chi—Grossman 2 pass from Griese (Gould kick)
- Chi—FG Gould 27
- A—60,828

TEAM	Ariz	Chi
First downs	22	19
Total Net Yards	328	257
Rushes-Yards	38-127	17-52
Passing	201	205
Fumbles	2-7	2-10
Kickoff Returns	5-85	4-68
Interceptions Ret.	3-4	0-0
Comp-Air-Yds	23-32-0	22-36-1
Sacked-Yards Lost	3-16	1-13
Points	4-0-0	3-47-0
Fumbles-Lost	0-0	1-0
Penalties-Yards	8-94	13-90
Time of Possession	35:19	24:41

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Arizona, Arrington 10-44, Anderson 9-43, Slipe 7-18, Leinart 4-16, Felt 3-10, Warner 1-5, James 3 (minus 2), Walters 1 (minus 7), Chicago, Peterson 7-24, Davis 5-14, P Pope 3-10, T-James 4-3, Grossman 2-1.

PASSING—Arizona, Warner 8-11-973, Leinart 15-21-0-144, Chicago, Grossman 13-21-1-117, Griese 10-14-131.

RECEIVING—Arizona, Walters 4-58, Fitzgerald 4-45, Bolden 4-42, Bry Johnson 3-48, L Pope 2-20, Arrington 2-1, Ayala/Johnson 2-6, Hargis 1-2, Chicago, Bennett 4-31, Muhammad 3-51, Reid 3-42, Bradley 2-44, Carle 2-24, Clark 2-4, T-James 2-3, P Pope 1-10, Muckle 1-14, Griese 1-4, Davis 1-4, Runnels 1-2.

MISSSED FIELD GOALS—None.

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