

Dralle tops 1,000 as Cougars bop L-M

Written by Mike Condon

Friday, 02 October 2015 22:49 - Last Updated Saturday, 03 October 2015 06:56



Exactly one year ago, Kennedy walked off the field at Kingston Stadium with an 0-6 record after a 29-14 loss to a senior-laden Linn-Mar team.

Friday night, the Cougars amazing turnaround continued against those same Lions at Linn-Mar Stadium. Led by a physical offensive line and workhorse running back Tyler Dralle, Kennedy ruined the Lions' homecoming with a convincing 31-6 victory before an overflow crowd of about 5,000 fans.

The Cougars all but locked up a Class 4A playoff berth with the win. Kennedy (6-0, 2-0 District 5), ranked No. 5 by Des Moines Register, can make it official with a victory next week over winless Waterloo East. The six wins to start a season is believed to be the best start in school history.

"We have a little conflicting information on that," Kennedy coach Brian White said. "I know for sure that six straight at least is tied for the best start in school history.

Dralle lugged the ball 34 times for 236 yards, scoring a pair of touchdowns. He has already surpassed 1,000 yards rushing for the season.

"I love getting the ball," Dralle said. "If it takes 35 to 40 carries for us to win the game, I'm ready for it."

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White says Dralle doesn't get much work during the week at practice.

"I looked over to him in the fourth quarter and told him we had a lead and I was going to lean on him," White said. "We are very cautious with him during the week with practice and how hard he works."



"The 2's and 3's at tailback get a tremendous amount of work during practice," continued the second-year Kennedy coach. "He's good and doesn't need the amount of reps the others do. We rest him during the week so he is ready on game night."

White's Cougars also came up with big plays when they needed them. Linn-Mar had several opportunities to get off the field on defense, only to see Kennedy convert and keep drives alive.

"That's the difference for us this year," Dralle said. "Last year, we didn't make the plays. This year, we seem to make a big play when we need it the most."

Linn-Mar was able to move the ball in the first half, but saw its offense bog down inside the red zone. Kennedy led 14-6 at halftime as Shaun Beyer hauled in a 14-yard pass from Nick Duehr and Dralle went in untouched from the 4. The Lions had to settle for a pair of Alexy Boehm field goals from 33 and 47 yards out.

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A key play came midway through the second quarter with the Lions at the Kennedy 10. Junior quarterback Reese Phillips appeared to have an open receiver near the goal line, but Kennedy's Austin Coates stepped in and picked the pass off and returned it to midfield.

"I don't want to take anything away from Kennedy," Linn-Mar coach Bob Forsyth said. "They are a great football team and played a great game, but we have talked about needing to finish and we just weren't able to finish tonight.

"We were in a position to hang in there in the game and when we didn't finish, they just kind of ground us down in the second half," he continued. "You know, Reese makes a lot of good plays for us, but plays like that are part of the ebb and flow of a game.

"We just made too many mistakes to win against a good football team."

The Kennedy defense dug in during the third quarter, holding the Lions without a first down. Alex Stone nailed a 37-yard field goal to up the margin to 17-6.

With Dralle carrying the load, the Cougars put the game away in the final 12 minutes. He scored on the first play of the fourth quarter on a 3-yard run and the versatile Beyer moved from tight end to quarterback in a wildcat formation and raced 55 yards for the final touchdown with 5:55 remaining.

"Linn-Mar's first three drives of the night were pretty good," White said. "We held them to two field goals then made the big pick. After that, the defense played lights out. They are really playing well right now."

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Linn-Mar (2-4, 1-1) plays next Friday in the UNI-Dome against Cedar Falls. Forsyth said he continues to be impressed with the effort he is seeing out of his team.

"We're at the point now where we have to get better," he said. "I'm sure we probably did some things better than we have done. We just need to clean some things up.

"I couldn't be more encouraged by a lot of things," Forsyth continued. "We're getting better in a lot of phases and our kids are very hard workers. There's no magic way to make it happen. We're just going to go back to work and try to get ready for Cedar Falls."

KENNEDY 31, LINN-MAR 6

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First downs	18	12
Rushes-yards	47-320	27-69
Passing yards	142	160
Comp-Att-Int	6-12-0	12-20-1
Fumbles-lost	0-0	0-0
Punts-avg.	4-38.0	4-39.0
Penalties-yards	9-62	6-46

Kennedy . 14 . 0 . 3 14 - 31

Linn-Mar . . 6 . 0 . 0 . 0 - . 6

Scoring plays

K - Shaun Beyer 14 pass from Nick Duehr (Alex Stone kick)

LM - FG Alexy Boehm 33

K - Tyler Dralle 4 run (Stone kick)

LM - Boehm 47 FG

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K - Stone 37 FG

K - Dralle 3 run (Stone kick)

K - Beyer 55 run (Stone kick)

Individual statistics

Rushing

Kennedy - Tyler Dralle 34-236, Shaun Beyer 2-68, Nick Duehr 6-1, Zachary DeMaris 2-6, Tyler Jacobs 3-9.

Linn-Mar - Brennan McGaffee 9-39, Zach Luehring 2-15 , Reese Phillips 10-18 , Josh Gassmann 1-(minus 4) , Neme Siaway 5-1.

Passing

Kennedy - Nick Duehr 6-11-0-121, Shaun Beyer 1-1-0-21.

Linn-Mar - Reese Phillips 12-20-1-160.

Receiving

Kennedy - Shaun Beyer 2-18, Chase Baker 2-56, Austin Coates 1-21, Tyler Dralle 1-26, Todd Gusta 1-21.

Linn-Mar - Daniel Gorsich 3-39, Josh Gassmann 4-39, Jacob McNeil 1-12, Kirby Kerr 4-80.