

Cougars enjoy banner game against Hawks

Written by Jim Ecker

Wednesday, 30 October 2013 23:23 -

The Kennedy Cougars can go ahead and order their playoff T-shirts now and hang a banner in their gym.

The Cougars earned their postseason awards Wednesday night by thrashing Prairie, 42-14, in the opening round of the Class 4A playoffs at Kingston Stadium.

Kennedy Coach Tim Lewis, an old-school guy, does not let his team get their playoff T-shirts or hang a banner until they've actually won a playoff game. He's felt that way ever since the IHSAA expanded the tournament from 16 to 32 teams a few years ago, because merely making the playoffs is not good enough for the boss.

Now it's official.

"I'm very pleased with the overall effort," Lewis said after the Cougars turned their rematch with Prairie into a mismatch. "Just a great overall team effort."

Kennedy (7-3) will visit Davenport Assumption (9-1) in the second round Monday night.

Kennedy had to rally from a 10-point deficit to trim Prairie, 28-24, during the regular season, but it was a different story in the playoffs. The Cougars led 14-7 at halftime, then belted the Hawks 28-7 in the second half with a powerful ground attack, effective passing and a stout defense that swarmed all over the field.

"They were tough. They were really good tonight," said Prairie Coach Mike Morrissey. "It just seemed like they were clicking."

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"They're going to be a tough out," he said. "I'll tell you that: They're going to be a tough out."

Kennedy tailback Miles Moa carried the ball 24 times for 123 yards and two touchdowns despite getting banged in his right knee in the first half and temporarily leaving the game. Quarterback Derek Jacobus scampered 11 times for 79 yards and fullback Terrance Hall, playing with heavy padding on a broken right wrist, powered for 61 yards on 12 carries.

The Cougars, a power-running club, also stung the Hawks with their passing as Jacobus found Jacob Shannon for a pair of TD grabs, including a terrific leaping catch in the end zone when he out-jumped Prairie defensive back Mitch Dellamuth for the ball.

"Jacob Shannon," said Jacobus, beaming. "Give him all the credit. He makes plays."

Kennedy whipped Iowa City High, 35-14, in the final game of the regular season with an outstanding performance at Kingston this past Friday, then returned five days later and turned in another top showing.

"We had good practices all week. We stayed hungry," said Hall, who also starred on defense. "We played great football tonight."

Lewis wondered how his team would respond after the big victory over Iowa City High.

"I challenged them to continue to re-establish that bar, and they stepped it up," he said. "I'm very pleased with our kids."

The Cougars were a three-headed monster in the backfield. Jacobus ran the club superbly, Hall pounded the ball up the middle and Moa darted this way and that. Jacobus, who battled a kidney ailment last week, was cleared Monday and ran a top-notch show with his buddies.

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"We've got a bruiser with Terrance and we've got a scatback with Miles, which makes us effective," said Lewis. "Miles just continues to impress us."

Kennedy drove 80 yards for a touchdown on its first possession, but Prairie responded with a 65-scoring drive to knot the game 7-7 on a 4-yard touchdown by Mitch Christensen.

Kennedy came right back with a 72-yard drive and scored on a 10-yard pass from Jacobus to Shannon, and it looked like it might be a seesaw battle all night.

But Prairie lost a fumble on its next possession - the first of three costly turnovers - and the Hawks missed a chance to tie the game late in the first half when they reached the Kennedy 13-yard line before losing the ball on downs.

"I thought we missed a lot of opportunities early on," said Morrissey. "That's frustrating."

The second half belonged to the Cougars.

Moa scored on a 3-yard run, then Jacobus lofted his 24-yard touchdown pass into the end zone to Shannon for a 28-7 lead. Prairie responded with an 11-yard TD pass from Trey Beckman to Dellamuth to pull within 28-14 with 3:10 left in the third quarter, but the rally ended there.

Moa scored on a 2-yard run in the fourth quarter and Logan Daughetee intercepted a Beckman pass and raced 80 yards for a touchdown to ice the game. Moa has rushed for 1,248 yards this season after setting a school record with 300 against Iowa City High.

The Cougars played a strong all-around game, from start to finish.

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"It was energetic the whole game," said Shannon, who also excelled on defense. "There was no 'off' switch for the game. Everybody had enthusiasm and we shut them down."

Prairie (5-5) used Christensen and Jesse Vizzini as wildcat quarterbacks at times in the first half, temporarily fooling the Cougars, but Kennedy called a timeout and adjusted. Christensen, who rushed for 1,111 yards during the regular season, carried the ball 14 times for 65 yards.

Kennedy might be considered the underdog at Davenport Assumption Monday night, because the Cougars are seeded No.7 in the Eastern half of the Class 4A playoffs and Assumption is seeded No.2, but the seedings won't mean anything when the game begins.

"I know nothing about Davenport Assumption," said Lewis. "That's exciting that we get a chance to look at a different football team, and we'll start doing that tonight."

Assumption blanked Davenport Central, 26-0, Wednesday night in a battle of Mississippi Athletic Conference teams. Monday's game will match a club from the Mississippi Valley Conference against a Quad Cities team.

"The journey isn't over," said Hall.

KENNEDY 42, PRAIRIE 14

CRP	CRK		
First downs	14	19	
Rushes-yards	28-111	55-278	
Passing yards	213	53	
Comp-Att-Int	13-25-1	4-5-0	
Fumbles-lost	2-2	1-0	
Punts-avg	1-59.0	1-57.0	
Penalties-yards	5-41	2-21	

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Prairie	7	0	7	0	- 14
Kennedy	7	7	14	14	- 42

K - Terrance Hall 1 run (Mark Schulz kick)

P - Mitch Christensen 4 run (Sam Drysdale kick)

K - Jacob Shannon 10 pass from Derek Jacobus (Schulz kick)

K - Miles Moa 3 run (Schulz kick)

K - Shannon 24 pass from Jacobus (Schulz kick)

P - Mitch Dellamuth 11 pass from Trey Beckman (Drysdale kick)

K - Moa 2 run (Schulz kick)

K - Logan Daughetee 80 interception return (Schulz kick)

Individual statistics

Rushing

Prairie - Christensen 14-65, Beckman 4-16, Vizzini 4-17, Pinter 4-9, Kuchemann 2-14.

Kennedy - Moa 24-123, Jacobus 11-79, Hall 12-61, Foy 3-3, Blank 2-15, Team 3-minus 3.

Passing

Prairie - Beckman 10-20-1-155; Kuchemann 2-3-0-32; Vizzini 1-2-0-26.

Kennedy - Jacobus 4-5-0-53.

Receiving

Prairie - Dellamuth 4-99, Vizzini 4-38, Christensen 1-9, Grade 2-35, Beyer 2-32.

Kennedy - Shannon 2-34, Blank 1-14, Moa 1-5.