

Soph QB sparks No. 6 Warriors

Written by Tom Fruehling

Thursday, 08 October 2015 23:18 - Last Updated Thursday, 08 October 2015 23:42



Cedar Rapids Washington's star players came through as always in Thursday night's 39-14 Kingston Stadium romp over Prairie.

But who would have thought the game-breakers would end up being a 5-foot-7 linebacker who scored his third touchdown in two weeks and a novice quarterback who warmed up by throwing five touchdown passes earlier in the evening in the sophomore game.

Bryan Kunde played only the first half in the sixth-ranked Warriors' one-sided win in the sophomore contest but ran for one touchdown besides throwing for five. He was then called into duty for the varsity early in the second quarter when starting signal-caller Andrew Dostal was knocked out of the game with a hit to the stomach on a hard tackle.

(Dostal himself was subbing for TJ Vogel, who was in a brace after hurting his knee last week against Ottumwa.)

Coming in with Washington ahead just 14-7, Kunde directed the team from then on and even tossed another touchdown pass for his sixth of the night.

"It was a gutsy performance," Washington coach Paul James said. "He'd taken maybe 15 snaps with varsity at practice on Tuesday. But he just stepped right in tonight."

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Midway through the third quarter, Kunde lofted a perfect 26-yard spiral that fleet-footed receiver Isaiah Nimmers ran under and caught over his shoulder for a score that put the Warriors up 26-7.

"I was a little nervous," Kunde admitted. "There was a lot bigger crowd. And I didn't want to let the varsity down.

"But the team gave me a lot of confidence. And I just settled down pretty fast."



His steady play, along with strong rushing efforts from Tavian Patrick and Johnny Dobbs, kept Washington (6-1) unblemished in Class 4A, District 6 at 3-0.

Prairie (2-5, 1-2), playing without injured do-everything scoring machine Jalen Rima, never did mount much of a consistent offense. And the Hawks shot themselves in the foot in the fourth quarter by losing two fumbles that were returned for touchdowns.

The first came when quarterback Tyler Nunemaker threw behind the line of scrimmage to Hunter Johnson at Washington's 35. Warrior head-hunter Patrick knocked the ball loose for junior linebacker Ian Thomas to pick up and rumble 65 yards for the score.

"I saw the play coming," explained Thomas, who packs 175 pounds of muscle onto his 5-foot-7 frame. "TP (Patrick) was about to belt him and I was yelling for him to strip it. I just scooped it up, got a key block at

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about the 20 and ran it on in.”

Thomas scored on a 5-yard run last week against Ottumwa and had another TD last week when he blocked a punt and ran it in for a touchdown.

For his part, Patrick said he didn’t pay attention to how the fumble recovery developed. “I just knew I laid the wood to the guy,” he said.

Patrick earlier scored from 15 yards himself to give Washington a little breathing room with a 20-7 advantage. “When our QB went down,” Patrick said, “I just knew I had to make some plays to get our team back.”

On the next series after Thomas scored, Nunemaker coughed up the ball and Warrior linebacker Matthew Ackerman ran that one back 13 yards to finish the scoring.

“Those two scoop-and-scores took the pressure off,” James said. “But I thought our offensive line was effective all night.

“And our defense played really well in the second half. We got a lot of contributions tonight.”

WASHINGTON 39, PRAIRIE 14

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First down 13 19

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Rushes-yards 39-188 35-216

Passing yards 70 112

Comp-att-int 5-10-0 8-13-1

Fumbles-lost 4-3 2-1

Punts-avg 3-32 1-40

Penalties-yards 3-35 4-20

Prairie 0 0 0 0 0 0 7 7 0 - 14

Washington 14 6 6 13 - 39

Scoring plays

W – Nimmers 11 pass from Dostal (Kennedy kick)

W – Vance 23 pass from Dostal (Kennedy kick)

P – Ganske 3 pass from Nunemaker (Collette kick)

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W – Patrick 15 run (kick failed)

W – Nimmers 26 pass from Kunde (pass failed)

P – Johnson 15 run (Collett kick)

W – Thomas 65 fumble recovery (Kennedy kick)

W – Ackerman 13 fumble recovery (kick failed)

Individual statistics

Rushing

Prairie – Northrup 12-92, Nunemaker 14-72, Johnson 10-30.

Washington – Patrick 11-90, Dobbs 11-76, Dostal 5-44.

Passing

Prairie - Nunemaker 5-10-0 70.

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Washington – Dostal 4-5-0-41, Kunde 4-8-1-71.

Receiving

Prairie – Ganske 2-12, Pinter 2-54, Johnson 1-4.

Washington – Nimmers 5-60, Steweart 1-9, Vance 1-23.