

Rashed nets 3 TDs as J-Hawks roll

Written by Clete Campbell

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Don't close the book on Jefferson's comeback season.

Bouncing back from one of the most discouraging losses in recent program history, the J-Hawks fought back into the Iowa Class 4A playoff picture Friday night.

A week after squandering a game-winning touchdown chance on a first-and-goal play from the 5-yard line, Jefferson returned to Kingston Stadium wiser, even more driven and in complete control from first snap to last in a no-doubt, penalty-plagued 35-0 throttling of winless and punchless Waterloo East.

Tavian Rashed turned a touchdown hat trick with scores of 13, 19 and 8 yards, Bryce Lund added a pair of touchdowns and Jefferson (4-4, 2-2 District 5) delivered a powerful rebound that kept it in contention for District 5's fourth and final playoff spot and its first postseason berth in six years.

“We want to make people proud,” said Rashed, who delivered a 129-yard rushing night. “We're trying to do something no Jefferson team has done for awhile.”

The J-Hawks, who matched their highest win total since 2008, still have some hard work to do before the playoffs are announced. They face No. 6-ranked Linn-Mar – a convincing 63-28

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winner over Waterloo West Friday – in next week's regular-season finale.

“This was the first round of the playoffs for us,” Jefferson Coach Brian Webb said. “Next week is the second round.”

The J-Hawks' mistake-riddled 23-17 loss to Waterloo West last week put their playoff life in jeopardy somewhat. Jefferson lost two fumbles in the red zone, dropped three critical passes and saw West return a blocked punt for a touchdown. The stunning, heartbreaking loss left Webb searching for words.

“I don't know if there's a word in the dictionary for that,” Webb said afterward. “... I'm kind of speechless.”

Friday night, Webb had nothing but superlatives to describe his team's character and resilience. Rashed and Lund (127 yards) both tallied over 100 yards to power the J-Hawks' 410-yard rushing train in a game Jefferson needed like air.

His driven team coming in like Cinderella's wannabe little sister, East Coach Richard Carter was hoping his team would play spoiler Friday night.

But averaging just four points per game coming in, the undisciplined Trojans (0-8, 0-4 District 5) failed to give Jefferson any kind of fight. Managing forward progress alone was an uphill battle for East, which had more penalty yards (31) than actual offensive yards (18) during a disastrous first half.



The Trojans had just 50 offensive yards for the night and their running game was dug into the

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ground and sent running in reverse by the J-Hawks defense. The Trojans' ugly final rushing yardage total: Minus-10 yards.

Lund's 29-yard breakaway touchdown put Jefferson on the board with 5:32 left in the first quarter. East kept the J-Hawks moving as yellow flags rained down on the Kingston Stadium turf. Trojan penalties set up Rashed's 13-yard touchdown run later in the quarter.

Rashed took the lead in the second quarter, following terrific blocking by his line to scores of 19 and 8 yards that put the game all but on ice and took much of the fight out of East.

"Our line played fantastic," Rashed said.

Lund's 1-yard third-quarter end zone break-in closed the scoring as the J-Hawks kept the clock running in the fourth quarter on the Iowa High School Athletic Association's 35-point mercy rule.

As good as the Senior Night triumph felt, Webb knows his club won't have any kind of shot at victory next week if it delivers a performance this sloppy against Linn-Mar.

"The scoreboard was irrelevant," Webb said. "We can't beat quality teams with things like that."

JEFFERSON 35, WATERLOO EAST 0

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East 0 0 0 0 - 0

Jefferson 14 14 7 0 - 35

J – Bryce Lund 29 run (Caleb Kesterson kick)

J – Tavian Rashed 13 run (Kesterson kick)

J – Rashed 19 run (Kesterson kick)

J – Rashed 8 run (Kesterson kick)

J – Lund 1 run (Kesterson kick)