

J-Hawks squash Prairie, 55-37

Written by Tom Fruehling

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Last week against fifth-ranked Washington, Jefferson played the Warriors to a 14-14 tie for more than three quarters until fatigue admittedly set in and Washington collected a 27-14 victory.

On Friday night in a game that started late and was prolonged by a series of heat-related cramps on both sides, the J-Hawks never let up and poured it on Prairie, 55-37, on Prairie's home field.

"This was a huge, huge win for us," fourth-year Jefferson coach Brian Webb said. "It's been 14 years since we've beaten Prairie. And I know we haven't scored this many points against a Mississippi Valley team since I've been here.

"I'm so proud of these kids," he said. "Tonight, they just pushed and pushed and kept pushing."

Jefferson controlled the ball most of the night, running twice as many plays as Prairie and piling up 28 first downs.

Senior quarterback Jared Eivins, in only his second career start, was a savvy field general as his multi-back offense piled up almost 450 yards, mostly on the ground.

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Eivins himself topped 100 yards rushing in addition to netting 96 yards passing on 8 of 14 completions. Eivins threw for two touchdowns and ran for three more.

"The line made some great blocks all night," he said. "We had huge holes, and all we had to do was run through them.

"We had good schemes and a lot of good plays. Everything just clicked for us tonight."

Junior scatback Tavian Rashed also had 100 yards rushing, while fellow back Manny Olutunde had 73 in addition to a 98-yard kickoff return in the second quarter.

While Jefferson's scores mostly came on sustained drives, the Prairie Hawks relied on quick strikes. Among their scores were a 12-yard pass interception by lineman Taylor Mehman and three touchdowns from unstoppable speedster Jalen Rima.



Rima, a state champion sprinter, scored on a 21-yard run from scrimmage as well as a 68-yard punt return and a 93-yard kickoff return.

"For the most part, our defense was outstanding," said Webb. "But we need to work on our special teams. That hurt us tonight."

J-Hawk senior Valentino "Tino" Green led the defensive effort with four solo tackles and four

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assists from the secondary. He also copped an interception.

"I think last week we got a little tired," Green said. "We hydrated more this week. We were able to go the whole way.

"Winning this one is a huge momentum shift for us. We've got two games against Davenport teams, then we play Kennedy. I think we're gonna be ready for Kennedy this year."

Webb said the decisive victory over Prairie was a total team effort.

"It's been a long process in the making. We've gotten better every year, and it feels good to get a win like this," he said.

"You can't coach effort. And tonight our kids had it."

JEFFERSON 55, PRAIRIE 37

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First downs 24 10

Rushes-yards 62-325 26-124

Passing yards 97 72

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Comp-att-int 8-14-1 3-14-3

Fumbles-lost 2-2 0-0

Punts-avg 1-39 2-38

Penalties-yards 2-24 3-30

Jefferson □ 7 20 14 14 - 55

Prairie □ □ □ □ 0 24 □ 7 □ 6 - 37

Scoring plays

J – Eivins 2 run (Render kick)

J – Eivins 7 run (Render kick)

P – Rima 21 run (Collett kick)

P – Mehman 12 pass interception (Collett kick)

P – Rima 68 punt return (Collett kick)

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J – Olutunde 98 kickoff return (Render kick)

P – Collett 35 FG

J – Stafford 26 pass from Eivins (kick failed)

J – Hunt 18 pass from Eivins (Render kick)

J – Beaton 27 pass interception (Render kick)

P – Rima 93 kickoff return (Collett kick)

J – Short 5 run (Render kick)

P – Simpson 10 pass from Nunemaker (kick failed)

J – Eivins 3 run (Render kick)

Individual statistics

Rushing

Jefferson – Olutunde 10-74, Green 4-39, Short 4-18, Rashed 15-100, Eivins 24-102.

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Prairie – Northrup 8-53, Rima 3-34, Johnson 4-9, Nunemaker 11-28.

Passing

Jefferson - Eivins 8-14-1, 97.

Prairie – Nunemaker 3-14-3, 72.

Receiving

Jefferson – Hunt 2-30, Taylor 1-8, Green 1-13, Short 2-4, Stafford 2-42.

Prairie – Rima 2-41, Simpson 1-10.