

Wash tops Little Hawks for district title

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 16 October 2014 22:29 - Last Updated Friday, 17 October 2014 15:21

Conference champs one year, district champs the next.

The Washington Warriors have a good thing going with their football program these days.

The top-ranked Warriors spanked Iowa City High, 28-7, Thursday night at Kingston Stadium to capture the Class 4A District 6 title a year after claiming the final crown in the Mississippi Valley Conference.

"It feels pretty good," said Washington scatback Tavian Patrick, who scooted for a pair of touchdowns. "Last year we were conference champs, this year we're district champs. I think we've got something good going. We don't need to mess that up.

All of the Class 4A teams in Eastern Iowa switched from conference competition to districts this year. The Warriors surprised folks last season when they captured a league title, but they've been heavy favorites in their district since Day 1 this year.

"We're in a unique situation," said Washington Coach Paul James. "We won the last Valley divisional championship last year in the MVC and we open this year with the first district championship. I think it's a great accomplishment for these kids."

Washington raised its records to 8-0 overall and 4-0 in the district. The Warriors have clinched a No. 1 seed for the Class 4A playoffs that begin Oct. 29 and will play a No. 4 seed from another district in the opening round.

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The Warriors finish the regular season at Burlington next Friday night, but the district title is already theirs.

Isaiah Nimmers returned the opening kickoff 92 yards to give the Warriors a quick 7-0 lead. Nobody laid a mitt on the 5-foot-9 speedster as he broke toward his right and raced to the end zone.

Washington assistant coach Frank Scherrman, who is in charge of special teams, thought Nimmers had a chance to go all the way after studying the Little Hawks.

"Coach told me if I could get to the hash before they got to me, I was going to take it back," said Nimmers. "Everybody did a nice job blocking. I saw two or three pancakes. That was pretty good blocking."

The game was just 13 seconds old and the Warriors already had the lead.

"It was really a great way to start off," said James. "We kind of suggested that maybe we ought to do that. Maybe we ought to suggest that more frequently, I guess."

Washington owned a 14-0 lead at intermission thanks to a 16-yard TD scamper by Patrick, but the Warriors hardly dominated the first 24 minutes of action. Iowa City High had more first downs than Washington (10 to 4) and more total yards (146 to 90), but the Little Hawks missed two field goals after reaching the Washington 6-yard line and 15-yard line.

Landen Akers blocked one of those field goals and the other was wide left.

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Patrick gave Washington a 20-0 lead in the third quarter and placekicker Gunner Lenzen, who was 4-for-4 Thursday on PATs, made it 21-0.

The Little Hawks pulled within 21-7 on a 21-yard touchdown pass from Nate Wieland to Will Noack in the fourth quarter, but the Warriors played keep-away after that with their strong running game. Washington cemented the game on a 1-yard touchdown pass from Reid Snitker to Lance O'Rien after Johnny Dobbs broke loose for a 32-yard run to the 3-yard line.

James likes to alternate Patrick and Dobbs at tailback and the combo clicked again Thursday. Patrick carried 16 times for 96 yards and his two TDs, while Dobbs powered for 53 yards on eight carries.

Patrick, an elusive runner with good speed, and Dobbs, a power back, both play defense as well, so alternating them at tailback gives them a chance to stay fresh. Patrick has run for 781 yards and six touchdowns this season, while Dobbs has 490 yards and nine TDs.

"You get to play defense as hard as you can, knowing there's somebody back there that can run just as hard as you backing you up," said Patrick.

Patrick has carried the ball 86 times this season and Dobbs has rushed 88 times, so it's about as even as you can get. "It's nice to have those two running backs," said James. "Both of them have nice attributes."

Snitker completed only 3 of 5 passes for 17 yards as the Warriors stuck mostly to the ground.

Wieland, just a sophomore, played a solid game at quarterback for Iowa City High. He dented Washington's defense for 110 yards on 18 carries with a lot of quarterback draws, and he completed 7 of 17 passes for 65 yards.

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Washington is the top-ranked team in Class 4A in the Des Moines Register poll, but the Warriors have not been steam-rolling their opponents and they still have a spotty passing attack. James does not know if he truly has the No. 1 team on his hands or not.

"I don't know," he remarked. "We'll see when it gets done. We've got things to continue working on. We've got a few different pieces to the puzzle and we've just got to keep plugging them together. We'll see."

Iowa City High, suffering a rare losing campaign, fell to 2-6 overall and 2-2 in the district.

WASHINGTON 28, IOWA CITY HIGH 7

ICH CRW

First downs	14	11
Rushes-yards	35-155	37-236
Passing yards	65	17
Comp-Att-Int	7-18-0	3-6-1
Fumbles-lost	0-0	0-0
Punts-avg.	5-38.0	3-40.7
Penalties-yards	3-17	4-35

Iowa City High	0	0	0	7	-	7
Washington	14	0	7	7	-	28

Scoring plays

CRW - Isaiah Nimmers 92 kickoff return (Gunner Lenzen kick)

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CRW - Tavian Patrick 16 run (Lenzen kick)

CRW - Patrick 7 run (Lenzen kick)

ICH - Will Noack 21 pass from Nate Wieland (Ryan Brennan kick)

CRW - Vance O'Rien 1 pass from Reid Snitker (Lenzen kick)

Individual Statistics

Rushing

Iowa City High - Wieland 18-110, Fredieu 13-44, Noack 1-5, McKenny 2-minus 1, Ringen 1-minus 3.

Washington - Patrick 16-96, Dobbs 8-53, Snitker 3-36, Smothers 6-26, C.Vincent 3-22, Stewart 1-3.

Passing

Iowa City High - Wieland 7-17-0, 65 yards; Brennan 0-1-0 0 yards.

Washington - Snitker 3-5-0, 17 yards; Nimmers 0-1-1, 0 yards.

Receiving

Iowa City High - Smith 2-24, Fellows 1-15, Noack 1-13, Leigh 1-11, Ringen 1-2, Fredieu 1-0.

Washington - Akers 1-12, Nimmers 1-4, O'Rien 1-1.