

Cougars top Warriors in thriller

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Kennedy Cougars have supplanted the Washington Warriors as the new kings of Metro football.

By a whisker.

The ninth-ranked Cougars edged the fifth-ranked Warriors, 28-24, in a see-saw thriller Friday night at Kingston Stadium in a battle of Metro powers.

Washington rallied from a 21-3 deficit to grab a 24-21 lead in the fourth quarter, but Kennedy responded and scored the winning touchdown on a 3-yard run by Shaun Beyer with 5:22 left in the game.

The Cougars and Warriors could meet again in the Class 4A playoffs in two months, but for now the Cougars have bragging rights against a club that reached the state finals last year.

Beyer switched from tight end to wildcat quarterback to score the winning touchdown, leaning his 6-foot-5 body over the goal line for his first victory over Washington in four tries.

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"I feel amazing," Beyer said. "Ever since freshman year we've lost to Wash. This year I knew we had it. We worked hard. I can't say much more."

"I love everyone on my team," he exclaimed. "It's a great feeling."

The Warriors showed the heart of a champion when they rallied for the 24-21 lead with three straight touchdowns after trailing by 18 points, but the Cougars showed the heart of a champion as well with their own comeback.

"I'm just so proud of our kids," Kennedy coach Brian White said. "They've worked hard to get to this point, they've bought into what we were selling, they believed in themselves, they believed in us as coaches, we believe in them."

"When you have that chemistry, something special is going to happen. And I think tonight something special happened."

Washington quarterback TJ Vogel steered the Warriors with his arm and legs during the big comeback, but the Cougars intercepted four of his passes and turned three of them into touchdowns.

"Going into it, that's one thing I told the players: A game like this will be decided by turnovers, how many we can take away or how many we give up," Washington coach Paul James said. "And that kind of ended up being the case."

"I was proud of our kids the way they came back," he said. "You'd like to think we wouldn't get

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ourselves in that kind of position that requires a comeback. We've got things to work on, obviously."

Kennedy (2-0) used a bit of trickery to score two of its touchdowns in goal-line situations when it moved Dalles Jacobus, a 260-pound offensive lineman, into the backfield for extra power. The Cougars used Jacobus as a blocking back on a play against Iowa City West last week, but this time he got the ball and scored on a 4-yard and a 1-yard run in the second quarter.

Jacobus had not carried the ball in a game in a long, long time.



"Fourth grade with the 49ers in MYFA," he said, harkening back to his days in the Metro Youth Football Association. "I was about two ounces under the weight limit to carry the ball."

There's no weight limit in high school football and the big guy came through for Kennedy.

"I'll tell you, when you have 260 pounds of muscle bearing down on you on the goal line, he's tough to tackle," White said. "He's our freight truck. We like him and you might see him there a little bit more."

Kennedy nearly squandered a 34-17 lead in its 34-31 victory over Iowa City West last week. This time, its entire 21-3 lead disappeared as the Warriors got a pair of touchdown runs from Johnny Dobbs and a touchdown pass from backup QB Drew Dostal to Trey Leonard.

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Washington had the ball and the 24-21 lead in the fourth quarter when Vogel threw a pass right into the lap of Kennedy defensive back Matt Gardner, who returned it 30 yards to the Washington 24-yard line.

Kennedy quarterback Nick Duehr hit Beyer with a key 11-yard pass on 4th-and-6 from the 20-yard line, giving the Cougars a first down at the 9.

Duehr carried twice for six years to the 3, then Beyer moved to the wildcat quarterback position and smashed into the end zone for the go-ahead touchdown.

Washington picked up a first down on its next possession, but then a pass by Vogel was deflected by Beyer into the waiting arms of Nolan Hromidko for Vogel's fourth interception of the night with 3:43 remaining.

The Warriors kept Kennedy tailback Tyler Dralle under wraps for most of the game, but this time Dralle and the Kennedy offensive line cemented the victory

with power running in the final minutes until time expired. Dralle carried the ball seven straight times on the final drive before Duehr ended the suspense by getting a first down on a quarterback sneak with 90 seconds to go.

Kennedy answered the call in the fourth quarter when it mattered.

"I just kept my heart in it. And that's what we do. The whole family," Beyer said. "Nobody stopped believing and we just kept driving. No-one had their heads down. We all had our heads up and we just got after it."

Duehr played another good game for Kennedy. He hit 8 of 13 passes for 140 yards, including a 39-pass to Payton McCarty to begin the scoring in the first quarter.

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Dralle, who ran for 265 yards against Iowa City West, was held to 63 yards on 21 carries.

Vogel passed for 170 yards and ran for 66 yards. Dobbs and Tavian Patrick, who ran for more than 2,000 yards last season for the Warriors, combined for only 51 yards Friday night.

Kennedy hosts North Scott next Friday night. Washington visits Iowa City West next Friday.

KENNEDY 28, WASHINGTON 24

.	CRK	CRW
First downs	13	19
Rushes-yards	43-86	26-126
Passing yards	140	196
Comp-Att-Int	8-13-1	14-29-4
Fumbles-lost	0-0	0-0
Punts-avg.	4-46.8	2-41.0

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Penalties-yards 2-10 7-47

Kennedy □ □ □ 6 15 0 7 - 28

Washington □ 0 10 6 8 - 24

Scoring plays

K - Payton McCarty 39 pass from Nick Duehr (kick blocked)

K - Dalles Jacobus 4 run (Duehr run)

W - Ross Kennedy 27 FG

K - Jacobus 1 run (Alex Stone kick)

W - Johnny Dobbs 1 run (Kennedy kick)

W - Dobbs 19 run (kick failed)

W - Trey Leonard 26 pass from Drew Dostal (Aries Davis 2-point conversion)

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K - Shaun Beyer 3 run (Stone kick)

Individual statistics

Rushing

Kennedy: Dralle 21-63, McCarty 3-11, Jacobus 2-5, Duehr 10-4, Berry 1-4, Beyer 1-3, Jacobs 1-2, Team 3-minus 6.

Washington: Vogel 10-66, Dobbs 12-35, Patrick 2-16, Dostal 1-15, Nimmers 1-minus.

Passing

Kennedy: Duehr 8-13-1, 140.

Washington: Vogel 12-28-4, 170; Dostal 1-1-0, 26.

Receiving

Kennedy: Beyer 4-74, McCarty 1-39, Dralle 1-16, Gardner 1-6, Jacobs 1-5.

Washington: Dostal 6-82, Herzog 2-35, Nimmers 2-33, Leonard 1-26, Patrick 1-14, Kaiser 1-6.

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