

Beyer shines as Cougars top Warriors

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 06 November 2015 23:14 - Last Updated Saturday, 07 November 2015 00:07



Call him Mr. Fabulous. Call him Mr. Wonderful. Call him Mr. Marvelous.

His real name is Shane Beyer and he's a major reason the Kennedy Cougars are headed to the UNI-Dome next Friday afternoon to meet Bettendorf in the semifinals of the Class 4A playoffs.

Beyer hauled in a 61-yard touchdown pass and broke Washington's back with a spectacular 88-yard interception return for a touchdown on the play of the first half Friday night as the Mean Green Machine defeated the Warriors, 21-7, in the quarterfinals at Kingston Stadium.

Washington was hoping to score a touchdown in the final seconds of the first half and tie the score 14-14 at intermission, but Kennedy coach Brian White moved Beyer to free safety for one of the few times this season and Mr. Fabulous made a marvelous play.

Beyer snared the ball at the 12-yard line, angled toward the Kennedy sideline, broke toward the middle of the field and raced the final 15 yards into the end zone with Washington speedster Isaiah Nimmers in hot pursuit.

Beyer is normally a defensive end and outside linebacker on defense, but White wanted his best athlete in the defensive backfield as an extra precaution against Washington's swift receivers on the final play of the

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half.

"Coach put me back there at safety and he was like, 'If you can make a play on the ball, make a play,'" Beyer related. "And it just so happened they threw it up and I made a play on the ball and just took off and ran for my life."

Beyer starred Friday night as a receiver, running back, quarterback, defensive end, linebacker, safety and punter, booting the ball six times for a healthy 45.2-yard average. He sacked Washington quarterback TJ Vogel and seemed to be all over the field.

Washington coach Paul James got tired of seeing Beyer's No. 2 jersey at Kingston Stadium, especially on the 88-yard interception return that halted all of Washington's momentum.



"The play at the end of the first half really was a killer," James said. "He's obviously a very excellent player. And his skills showed up. He seems to get better and better."

"His speed, his strength, his athleticism, punting the ball. Whatever he does, he does it extremely well."

Beyer, 6-foot-5 and 210 pounds, has committed to North Dakota State, but Nebraska and Air Force offered scholarships this week and there could be more to come from other Division I schools.

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White heaped as much praise on Beyer as he could after the victory gave Kennedy a 12-0 record for the first time in school history.

"That pick right before the half was the back-breaker," White said. "That kid is just an athlete. He runs so hard.

"If you ever just watch him run, the knee drive and the power with which he runs ... And that's specifically what Nebraska told me on the phone. They just love his power when he runs. All I'll tell you what, he has it. I love the kid.

"I love them all right now," White said happily. "I'm so proud of these kids."

Kennedy reached the semifinals of the playoffs in 1993, but that game was played outside in Iowa City. This will be Kennedy's first trip to the UNI-Dome for the semifinals and they can't wait to get there.

"I've been dreaming of this since I was a little kid," Beyer said. "I'm just so happy to be on this journey with my brothers."

The greatest season in school history got even better Friday night.

"It's something we've talked about since we were playing junior Cougar football," said co-captain Dalles Jacobus, a rock-hard lineman. "It's a neat feeling."

The Cougars completely stuffed Washington's running game, holding the Warriors to just 10 yards on the ground on 25 carries. Tavian Patrick and

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Johnny Dobbs, who began the game with 1,721 yards and 27 touchdowns, spun their wheels and got nowhere against the Cougars. Dobbs carried the ball six times for four yards, while Patrick carried it five times for minus-4 yards.

"That's just effort," Jacobus said. "That's finding the ball."

Kennedy began the game with a little trickery after Matt Gardner raced 43 yards with the opening kickoff into Washington territory. The Cougars sent quarterback Nick Duehr in motion and snapped the ball directly to Tyler Dralle and Beyer for big gains, then Dralle finished the quick five-play march with a 17-yard burst and it was 7-0.

Kennedy reached into its bag of tricks again later in the quarter when Beyer, normally a receiver, lined up in the backfield again and came streaking down the field on a pass pattern. Duehr hit him perfectly in stride and it was 14-zip.

Washington was on its heels, but the Warriors made it 14-7 with 1:20 left in the first half on a pretty 22-yard touchdown pass from Vogel to Drew Dostal in the end zone. The Warriors got the ball again with 11 seconds left and Vogel hit Dostal with a 21-yard pass to the Kennedy 44-yard line with 0.8 seconds left on the clock.

James decided to go for a touchdown and called for a long pass from his perch in the press box.

"We were down 14-7 and we had a chance to tie it up," James said. "You've got to go for it. You don't just sit on the ball."

But instead of a tie game or 14-7, Beyer made a terrific play and it was suddenly 21-7.

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Not much happened in the second half. Kennedy was happy to kill as much time as possible with a 14-point lead, and Washington was never able to find the end zone against Kennedy's relentless defense.

The Cougars intercepted four passes, including two by Brandon Neimeier.

"I'll tell you what, that defense played lights-out tonight," White said. "Washington is just a big play waiting to happen. You just keep gritting your teeth for that big one, and the defense rose to the occasion and didn't give it up."

Kennedy trimmed Washington, 28-24, in the second game of the regular season. The Warriors had revenge on their side, but the Cougars were determined to keep their season alive.

The Warriors finished with an 10-2 record after going 13-1 last year and reaching the championship game of the Class 4A playoffs, making them 23-3 the past two seasons.

"I told the kids, I thanked them for their commitment, dedication, their hard work," James said. "They're great young men. They listen, they're coachable, they have respect. They made a lifetime of memories."

The Cougars are still building their happy memories. The next stop is the UNI-Dome for the semifinals against Bettendorf at 4:06 p.m. next Friday in a battle of teams with 12-0 records. Dowling will face West Des Moines Valley in the other semifinal at 7:06 p.m. Friday.

Kennedy began the 2014 season with six straight losses in White's first year as head coach after succeeding Tim Lewis. Now they are 12-0 and going

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to the Dome.

"When we were 0-and-6 last year, I sat down at school with Tim and Mary Wilcynski, our old principal," White related. "I've known them both for a long time and I said, 'What am I doing wrong?'"

"They both said, 'Keep plugging away. Things are going to turn for you.'"

Dralle finished with 117 hard yards on 33 carries for Kennedy, giving him an unofficial total of 1,951 yards this season, the second-best total in Metro history. Andrew Dawson of Washington holds the Metro record with 2,212 yards in 2009.

Dralle passed Jer Garman of Linn-Mar (1,861) and Alex Carr of Washington (1,925) Friday night.

KENNEDY 21, WASHINGTON 7

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First Downs 11 15

Rushes-Yards 25-10 48-195

Passing yards 208 96

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Comp-Att-Int 12-27-4 4-13-0

Punts 6-36.2 6-45.2

Fumbles-Lost 2-0 1-1

Penalties-Yards 7-40 7-50

Washington 0 7 0 0 - 7

Kennedy 14 7 0 0 - 21

Scoring plays

K - Tyler Dralle 17 run (Alex Stone kick)

K - Shaun Beyer 61 pass from Nick Duehr (Stone kick)

W - Drew Dostal 22 pass from TJ Vogel (Ross Kennedy kick)

K - Beyer 88 interception return (Stone kick)

Individual statistics

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Rushing

Washington - Dostal 2-24, Dobbs 6-4, Patrick 5-minus 4, Vogel 12-minus 14.

Kennedy - Dralle 33-117, Duehr 6-48, Beyer 4-22, DeMaris 3-9, Jacobus 1-1, Team 1-minus 2.

Passing

Washington - Vogel 12-26-3, 208; Dostal 0-0-1, 0.

Kennedy - Duehr 4-13-0, 96.

Receiving

Washington - Nimmers 6-91, Dostal 4-64, Stewart 1-44, Patrick 1-9.

Kennedy - Beyer 2-74, DeMaris 1-15, Coates 1-7.