

Prairie clips J-Hawks in opener, 24-7

Written by Jim Ecker

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The Prairie Hawks were struggling with their running game Thursday night when they decided to put 630 pounds of muscle on the right side of the offensive line.

Their names are Bryce Meeker and Christian Ohrt, and the two behemoths helped Prairie grind out a 24-7 victory over Jefferson in the season opener at Kingston Stadium on a humid night in southwest Cedar Rapids.

Meeker, who stands 6-foot-6 and 285 pounds, normally plays offensive tackle, but he shifted to guard to make room for Ohrt, a Jefferson transfer who measures 6-foot-8 and 345. They helped pave the way for a rushing attack that netted 246 yards as "Air Prairie" took most of the night off.

"It was just a big-man package," said Meeker, who has college offers from Northern Iowa and Illinois State. "We wanted to get the power game working and we got it running real well."

Mitch Christensen, a power tailback, ran for 119 yards and broke loose for a 44-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter that gave Prairie a 21-7 lead.

New quarterback Trey Beckman passed for only 55 yards, a far cry from Prairie's potent passing attack in 2012, but he sprinted 63 yards for a touchdown on Prairie's third play from scrimmage in the first quarter.

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