

Snitker carries Wash past Linn-Mar

Written by Mike Condon

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It has been a long time between wins for Paul James as a head coach.

James returned to the Cedar Rapids Washington sideline this season after a seven-year hiatus. In the first three games this season, his Warriors had ample opportunity to get a victory. They weren't about to let that chance slip away in Friday night's showdown with Linn-Mar at Kingston Stadium.

Washington scored a pair of touchdowns in the third quarter to break a 14-14 deadlock, then held off a final drive from the Lions to come away with a hard-fought 26-21 win.

"It's kind of like getting the monkey off your back a little bit," James said amidst the celebration on the Kingston turf after his first win in his second stint as head coach. "We've come close in a couple of the games and didn't finish. We had some mistakes again tonight, but in the end did what we had to do to win."

What the Warriors did best against the Lions was stymie their high-powered offense along with busting out a little offense of their own. Washington (1-3, 1-1) racked up over 400 yards of offense, 343 of which came on the ground. Junior quarterback Reid Snitker had 161 yards on 18 carries, many coming off a read-option play that repeatedly caught the Lions with no defensive support on the back side once Snitker cleared the line.

"Their alignment let us take a little advantage of that," James said of Snitker's success. "If I was

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on the field I probably wouldn't have been able to see that. At halftime we dabbled around with about four different groupings of players . . . and found something we liked so at halftime we went with that."

Snitker's explanation was a bit more simple.

"We ran it the first time and it worked so we just kept running it and they couldn't find a way to stop it," said the junior quarterback. "Our linemen really blocked it and all I had to do was keep following them and I didn't get touched very often.

"In the second half I thought they would adjust to it," he continued. "It kept on working so we just kept pounding the ball."

Snitker did much of his damage in the second half. Both of his scoring runs (58 and 15 yards) came in the third quarter, on, you guessed it, the read option.

Linn-Mar Coach Bob Forsyth complimented Washington's resolve.

"Their kids came to play and they had a good game plan, their coaches did a nice job and our kids just couldn't get it done."

And then there was the defense for the Warriors. They held Linn-Mar to under 300 total yards, never allowing the Lions to get into a rhythm. A big reason for that was the play of junior Royal Silver. At 6-foot-3, 275 pounds, Silver was a load for the Lions' offensive line to block. That allowed some of Silver's teammates to make several key tackles.

"Our D-line practices every Tuesday and Thursday and we go real hard," he said. "The coaches just teach us to stay low and make the plays."

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Despite their struggles, the Lions (1-3, 1-1) had the ball with a chance to win in the final three minutes. Schmidt hooked up with Griffin Brennecke on a 79-yard scoring strike midway through the fourth quarter to bring Linn-Mar back within five.

After the defense held, the Lions got the ball with just under three minutes remaining. But on a fourth and 2 play near midfield, Linn-Mar's Ross Lembeck was stopped short of the first down and the Warriors ran the clock out from there.

"I think they played harder than us, that's the reality of it," Forsyth said. "We didn't execute very well, penalties kill us and we are still doing stuff to hurt ourselves."

The game was a typical Washington/Linn-Mar affair. Both teams gave great effort and the final score was again close.

"There's just a tradition of close games," James said. "It dates way back to when Greg Purnell was at Linn-Mar and we had some great battles. There's a lot of rivalry between Wash and Linn-Mar and there was a lot action out there on the field between the two teams."

C.R. WASHINGTON 26, LINN-MAR 21

L-M	CRW	
First downs	11	14
Rushes-yards	41-90	49-343
Passing yards	188	65
Comp-Att-Int	9-16-0	5-14-2
Fumbles-lost	2-1	3-0
Punts-avg.	8-33.0	5-29.9
Penalties-yards	8-80	8-64

Linn-Mar	7	7	0	7 – 21
Washington	7	7	12	0 – 26

LM – Ross Lembeck 5 run (Austin Wolter kick)

CRW – Johnny Dobbs 8 run (Joseph Lenzen kick)

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CRW – Landon Akers 47 pass from Reid Snitker (Lenzen kick)

LM – Ryan Schmidt 6 run (Wolter kick)

CRW - Snitker 58 run (kick failed)

CRW – Snitker 15 run (pass failed)

LM – Griffin Brennecke 79 pass from Schmidt (Wolter kick)

Individual Statistics

Rushing

Linn-Mar – Ross Lembeck 21-71, Ryan Schmidt 16-20, Tristan Freese 3-0, Logan Benter 1-(minus 1).

Washington – Johnny Dobbs 13-44, Connor Vincent 2-13, Reid Snitker 18-161, Mason Taylor 12-89, Colin Hale 1-8, Caleb Smothers 2-8, Jacob Bjornsen 1-5.

Passing

Linn-Mar - Ryan Schmidt 11-16-0-188

Washington – Reid Snitker 6-13-2-65

Receiving

Linn-Mar – Trevor Noble 1-18, Griffin Brennecke 2-87, Andrew Gassmann 2-27 Ross Lembeck 3-47, Jon Schlotterback 1-9.

Washington – Landon Akers 1-47, Clayton Bjornsen 2-12, Connor Vincent 1-2, Isaiah Nimmers 1-4.