

Schmidt's 7 TDs help Lions roll

Written by Mike Condon

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WATERLOO - When a football player puts in the time over the summer, working to get better, they think about having the perfect game.

Linn-Mar's senior duo of Ryan Schmidt and Trevor Noble had that kind of night Friday at Memorial Stadium in Waterloo.

Noble caught three touchdown passes from Schmidt and returned an interception for a score for a 24-point performance.

Schmidt finished with four TD tosses and ran for three of his own as the Lions dropped Waterloo West, 63-28, earning the Class 4A District 5 title and first-round home game in the playoffs.

The No. 6 Lions (7-1, 4-0) host Jefferson next Friday in the regular-season finale, but even if they were to lose, they hold the tiebreaker over second-place Cedar Falls, whose only district loss was last Friday at Linn-Mar.

"The district championship has been our goal since the beginning," Noble said. "Nobody thought (after going 2-7 in 2013) that we could do it. Look today, we did it. I'm proud to be a part of this team. It's a great group of guys."

The game was an offensive carnival. There was over 1,000 yards of total offense as both teams moved the ball up and down the field. The difference was the key turnovers forced by the Lions, twice taking the ball away inside the red zone.

Noble had the third takeaway and it gave the Lions a much-needed cushion.

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West took the opening kickoff and drove the ball down the field to score. Schmidt tied the game on a 59-yard run and then connected with Perrion Scott on a 16-yard swing pass to give the Lions a 14-7 lead. West tied it on a 2-yard Devon Moore run early in the second quarter.

Schmidt tallied his second touchdown on a 3-yard run with 6:59 left in the first half. Then it was Noble's time to shine. On the first play after the kickoff, he jumped a corner route and picked off a Moore pass. He raced untouched 55 yards for the score.

"Our defense didn't play the best tonight," Noble said, "but we have relied a lot this year on turnovers and it helped us again tonight.

"On that play, we switched from zone to man," he continued. "I saw their QB (Moore) look at the receiver, so I jumped it and made a play."

Moore scored the second of his three TDs on a 2-yard run, cutting the gap to 28-21. Then Schmidt dropped back and found Noble with a 49-yard scoring strike with 1:01 left in the half and it was 35-21 at the break.

"That was big to score before the half," Schmidt said. "We just went out and executed like we know we can do."

Linn-Mar needed just three plays after halftime to increase its lead as Schmidt broke loose for a 53-yard scoring run. He finished with 142 yards rushing and 260 yards passing. "It was the offensive line and the wide receivers blocking downfield," Schmidt said. "They work hard in practice and everyone blocked very well tonight."

West's offense continued its fine play, driving right back down for Moore's third scoring run of the night, cutting the margin to 42-28.

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"We've played really good defense all along this season, but we were a little flat-footed tonight," said Linn-Mar Coach Bob Forsyth. "I think the kids may have got a little of the big head on defense, but we'll be all right. They will respond and get back to work on Monday."

The Linn-Mar offense continued to respond against the Wahawks. On the first play after the West score, Schmidt dropped back and found Noble, who made a couple nice cuts and completed the 50-yard scoring play.

Schmidt and Noble hooked up again, this one a 36-yard catch and run. Daniel Gorsich closed the Lion scoring on a 9-yard run. The three TD catches were Noble's only three catches of the night.

"Those are the kind of things we look for from our more key players," Forsyth said of the performances turned in by Noble and Schmidt. "We need big games from our big people as we head into this stretch."

Noble said the fact he and many of his teammates experienced the rough times of last fall's 2-7 finish was a key factor in the big turnaround.

"I can't explain how much experience helps," he said. "Last year, we were inexperienced. This year, we were more confident and confidence is key. We have all come together and the results are there."

LINN-MAR 63, WATERLOO WEST 28

LM WWest

First downs 20 27

Rushes-yards 30-293 47-335

Passing yards 260 156

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Comp-Att-Int 13-15-0 13-21-2

Fumbles-lost 0-0 2-1

Punts-avg. 0-0 2-18.0

Penalties-yards 9-58 9-77

Linn-Mar 14 □ 21 □ 21 □ 7 □ - 63

Waterloo West □ □ 7 □ 14 □ 7 □ □ 0 □ - 28

WW - James Draine 2 run (Adijan Muhamedagic kick)

LM - Ryan Schmidt 59 run (Sean Zimmerman kick)

LM - Perrion Scott 16 pass from Schmidt (Zimmerman kick)

WW - Devon Moore 1 run (Muhamedagic kick)

LM - Schmidt 3 run (Zimmerman kick)

LM - Trevor Noble 55 interception return (Zimmerman kick)

WW - Moore 2 run (Muhamedagic kick)

LM - Noble 49 pass from Schmidt (Zimmerman kick)

LM - Noble 36 pass from Schmidt (Zimmerman kick)

LM - Schmidt 53 run (Zimmerman kick)

WW - Moore 6 run (Muhamedagic kick)

LM - Noble 50 pass from Schmidt (Zimmerman kick)

LM - Daniel Gorsich 9 run (Zimmerman kick)

Individual Statistics

Rushing

Linn-Mar - Perrion Scott 14-82, Ryan Schmidt 7-142, Logan Benter 1-2, Daniel Gorsich 6-48, Jordan Junkins 2-19

Waterloo West - John Draine 26-170, Devon Moore 15-86, Zackery Thune 3-22, Leevondas Bell 3-57

Passing

Linn-Mar- Ryan Schmidt 13-15-0-260

Waterloo West - Devon Moore 13-22-2-149

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Receiving

Linn-Mar - Trevor Noble 3-135, Daniel Gorsich 5-68, Perrion Scott 1-16, Jordan Junkins 2-13, Andrew Gassmann 2-25

Waterloo West - Trey Burt 9-119, Mitchell Paeper 3-29, Lincoln Conrey 1-8.