

## Schulz delivers as Cougars top Muskies

Written by Jim Ecker

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MUSCATINE - Mark Schulz was so distraught after missing a game-winning field goal against Jefferson earlier this year that he parked his car alongside the Kennedy practice field after the game, shined his headlights on the goal posts and worked on his kicking until 2 o'clock in the morning.

Practice made perfect.

Schulz split the uprights with a 27-yard field goal as time expired Wednesday night as Kennedy stunned Muscatine, 20-17, in the first round of the Class 4A playoffs at Muscatine.

Tailback Tyler Dralle had an immense game for the Cougars with 45 carries for 229 yards, sending Kennedy (3-7) into the second round at second-ranked Bettendorf (10-0) Monday night.

Schulz did not want to sleep after he misfired on a 33-yarder against Jefferson at Kingston Stadium and the J-Hawks prevailed, 27-24, in overtime.

"I put the ball back where it was at Kingston and I just practiced over and over until I hit 10 in a row, 15 in a row," he recalled.

Redemption was sweet Wednesday night.

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Kennedy entered the game with a 2-7 record, compared to a glossy 7-2 mark for the host Muskies, but the Cougars controlled most of the game and could have won easily if not for costly penalties within spitting distance of the end zone.

Nonetheless, the Cougars hung tough and prevailed.

"It feels great," Schulz said. "Everyone was doubting us, but it feels great to be the underdog because you have no pressure. Why not go win it?"

Muscatine tied the game, 17-17, on a 22-yard field goal with 6:12 left in the fourth quarter after a magnificent goal-line stand by the Kennedy defense kept the Muskies out of the end zone after they had first-and-goal at the 1-yard line.

Kennedy got the ball at its own 39-yard line with 2:20 left in the game and quarterback Sammy Lizarraga went to work. He hit 5-for-9 passes for 41 yards, moving the Cougars to the Muscatine 20-yard line with 58 seconds left in the contest.

Lizarraga found Drake Brewster with a clutch 13-yard pass on 4th-and-5 during that sequence to keep the drive alive.

Dralle carried five yards to the 15-yard line and six more yards to the 9-yard line. He was stopped for no gain on his next attempt and Kennedy Coach Brian White let the clock tick all the way until there was just one second left in the fourth quarter before calling a timeout on third down.

Schulz lined up for the 27-yard field goal, but Muscatine called its final timeout to ice him.

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"The whole timeout I was just picturing the ball going straight down the middle," said Schulz. "I didn't want to picture anything else."

Kennedy botched a field goal earlier in the game, but not this time. Jacob Hauschild made a perfect snap, Matt Gardner spotted the ball and Schulz blasted Kennedy into the Sweet 16.

"I was looking at the ground and I saw the ball going right down the middle," said Schulz, grinning ear to ear. "I started running backwards. I knew that ball was going through."

The Cougars, hard-luck losers in several games this season, celebrated the victory on the field, then ran toward the bleachers and celebrated with their fans who sat through a 40-degree night.

White praised his club for hanging tough during the tough times this season. Kennedy lost its first six games, but made the playoffs with two victories in the final three weeks of the regular season.

"These kids don't quit," he said. "This is a good football team. They just had some back luck.

"And we're going to make some noise," he vowed, looking toward the second round. "And I'll tell you what, these kids can't wait until Monday. I know they can't.

"What have we got to lose?"

White thought Kennedy might play Linn-Mar in the second round. Instead, the Cougars drew Bettendorf.

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Dralle has split much of the season at tailback with Logan Wedo, but Wedo has been sidelined with a separated shoulder. That left Dralle with a heavy workload.

"I love the kid. He's tough," said White. "We told Dralle, we're going to have to lean on you. I said I'm going to give you the ball. And he goes, give it to me. That kid wants the ball."

Dralle saluted the horses up front.

"I was just trusting my blockers, running behind my blockers," he said. "Then Sammy led us down the field, like a leader should do and we won the game.

"We came close a lot of games, but we just had to tough it out," said Dralle. "I knew this group would come together at the end and get the win."

Kennedy could have taken a commanding lead earlier in the game, but penalties killed them.

They reached the 1-yard line, but a personal foul cost them 15 yards and they did not score. They reached the 1-yard line again in a later drive, but a holding penalty set them back and they came away scoreless again.

Later, they reached the 5-yard line and had to settle for 28 field goal by Schulz for a 17-7 lead in the third quarter.

Two pass interference penalties against Kennedy helped Bettendorf pull within 17-14, but the Cougars never rattled.

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Gardner made a nice over-the-shoulder interception to give Kennedy the ball at its own 39-yard line and the scored tied, 17-17, with 2:20 left.

Lizarraga looked like a cool customer as he led the Cougars on a two-minute drill to the winning field goal. He emulated an NFL mega-star on that winning drive.

"Peyton Manning is one of my favorites and I kind of take after him a little bit, because I like how he plays," said Lizarraga.

Kennedy hopped on three yellow school buses for the trip to Muscatine, but one of the buses had mechanical problems near Iowa City and they had to condense the travel party onto two buses.

They arrived at Muscatine later than expected and had only 15 minutes to get dressed for the pre-game practice, but the ordeal had a happy ending.

Jay Blank carried the nine times for Kennedy and scored on a 25-yard run.

Kennedy finished with 463 yards of total offense, compared to 204 yards for Muscatine. The Muskies managed only 16 yards on the ground.

Kennedy had 26 first downs, compared to 11 for the hosts.

**KENNEDY 20, MUSCATINE 17**

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First downs	26	11
Rushes-yards	61-297	17-16
Passing yards	166	188
Comp-Att-Int	15-26-1	9-22-2
Fumbles-lost	0-0	1-0
Punts-avg.	3-39.3	6-37.3
Penalties-yards	8-85	3-26

**Kennedy 7 7 3 3 - 20**

**Muscatine 0 7 7 3 - 17**

### Scoring plays

K - Tyler Dralle 1 run (Mark Schulz kick)  
M - Kolby Reed 19 pass from Matt Wieskamp (Tyler Yates kick)  
K - Jay Blank 25 run (Schulz kick)  
K - FG Schulz 28  
M - Davonte Ellis 10 run (Yates kick)  
M - FG Yates 22  
K - FG Schulz 27

### Individual Statistics

#### Rushing

Kennedy - Dralle 45-229, Blank 9-78, Beyer 1-8, Hall 2-5, Kubovec 1-0, Lizarraga 1-minus 9, Team 1-minus 14.  
Muscatine - Ellis 5-13, Weiskamp 11-3, Johnson 1-0.

#### Passing

Kennedy - Lizarraga 15-26-1, 166 yards.

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Muscatine - Wieskamp 9-20-2, 188 yards; Beatty 0-1-0, 0 yards; Mussehl 0-1-0, 0 yards.

### Receptions

Kennedy - Brewster 4-66, Beyer 4-46, Blank 4-29, Dralle 2-21, Bell 1-9.

Muscatine - Beatty 3-49, Neda 2-57, Roberson 2-33, Aguilera 1-40, Reed 1-19.