

Smothers 'brothers' power No.1 Warriors

Written by Jim Ecker

Monday, 03 November 2014 23:31 - Last Updated Monday, 03 November 2014 23:46



The Smothers Brothers was a popular television show in the 1970's that featured comedy, music and political satire by Dick and Tommy Smothers.

"I've heard a lot about it," Cedar Rapids Washington fullback Caleb Smothers said with a smile Monday night. "A lot of the older substitute teachers throw that at me."

The top-ranked Warriors had their own version of the Smothers Brothers Monday night in their 25-14 victory over Cedar Falls in the second round of the Class 4A playoffs at rainy Kingston Stadium.

Caleb Smothers and Connor Vincent are not really brothers, but the two fullbacks looked like twins in the Washington backfield Monday with their power running and absolute aversion to being tackled.

Smothers and Vincent are known more for their blocking and tackling than their running, but they played key roles as the Warriors (11-0) advanced to a date with Iowa City West (7-4) in the quarterfinals Friday night at Kingston.

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Smothers and Vincent normally combine for 42 yards in Washington's running attack, but they combined for 110 yards on 14 carries Monday and were especially effective on a 77-yard touchdown drive that clinched the game in the fourth quarter.

Smothers lugged the ball four times on that drive for 37 yards, including a 23-yard burst, and personally accounted for three first downs.

Vincent carried three times on the drive and finished the march with a 6-yard touchdown when he powered his way into the end zone.

"They're two prototypical fullbacks," said Washington Coach Paul James. "They've got power. They're tough and they've got good feet. Plus they're good blockers. That's the big thing."

Cedar Falls pulled within 18-14 with 11:09 left in the game on an 11-yard touchdown pass from Taylen Alexander to Ben Fienup and the PAT.

It was a far cry from last week's game, when Washington drilled Clinton 78-13, and suddenly Washington's perfect season was hanging in the balance against an old foe from the Mississippi Valley Conference.

Washington got the ball at its own 23-yard line and went to work. They drove 77 yards in 11 plays, all on the ground, and gobbled 5 minutes, 29 seconds off the clock.

Vincent's touchdown made it 24-14 and Gunner Lenzen added the PAT, the only successful

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PAT for the Warriors all night.

Smothers and Vincent are star linebackers for the stingy Washington defense, which held Cedar Falls to a grand total of only 71 yards, but they looked like stud running backs when it was crunch time in the fourth quarter.

"It was a lot of fun," said Smothers, who gained only 216 yards in Washington's first 10 games. "I don't know, I just get the ball and I keep going. If I'm not down, I'm going to keep going and do whatever I can to stay up and keep running the ball.

Vincent has the same philosophy and enjoys running with the ball when he's not smashing opposing tailbacks to smithereens.

"I love it," said Vincent, who had rushed for 211 yards in the first 10 games. "Every time I hear it (his number called) in the huddle, it gets me going. I just hit the hole hard. I love it."

Washington rushed for 253 yards on the soggy night and the workload was nicely distributed among Tavian Patrick (78 yards), Johnny Dobbs (61 yards), Smothers (59 yards) and Vincent (51 yards). By comparison, Cedar Falls managed only 31 yards on the ground on 35 carries.

The Warriors took a 6-0 lead when Tavian Patrick bounced outside and scored on a 22-yard run in the first quarter. The Warriors made it 12-0 in the second period when Patrick blocked a punt and Jared Thorson recovered the ball in the end zone for a touchdown.

Cedar Falls retaliated with a 46-yard drive at the end of the first half and pulled within 12-7 on a 1-yard run by Ben Fienup on fourth down with just 14.3 seconds left before intermission.

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Washington caught a break in the third period when Cedar Falls punter Tyler Schmidt could not handle a low snap from center and was tackled by Vance O'Rien and Thorson on his own 15-yard line.

The Warriors had trouble moving the ball and faced 4th-and-6 from the 11-yard line. James decided to go for broke and Reid Snitker found Landen Akers for an 11-yard touchdown pass and 18-7 lead. Once again, the PAT was unsuccessful.

Snitker completed only two passes all night, but he made it count when he found Akers for six points.

It was still 18-7 early in the fourth quarter when Chase Koch intercepted a tipped pass by Snitker and ran 14 yards to the Washington 11-yard line. Cedar Falls scored on the next play and the Warriors were fighting for their lives.

"Cedar Falls is a great team," said Vincent. "I think they really tested our ability to play against a well-coached team.

"Our defense came away in the second half and just held them back there. And our offense did what we're supposed to do. We played smash-mouth football and got it done."

Julian Good-Jones helped seal the victory for Washington when he intercepted a pass, a rare

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feat for a defensive lineman. O'Rien socked Cedar Falls quarterback Alexander as he was throwing the ball and it popped high in the air to Good-Jones for the interception.

"First career one," he said proudly. "It felt good, but I wanted a touchdown. That's all right. We sealed it after that."

WASHINGTON 25, CEDAR FALLS 14

CF CRW

First downs	7	16
Rushes-yards	35-31	51-253
Passing yards	40	23
Comp-Att-Int	5-11-1	2-6-1
Fumbles-lost	2-2	2-1
Punts-avg.	4-45.3	2-38.0
Penalties-yards	4-25	3-25

Cedar Falls	0	7	0	7	- 14
Washington	6	6	6	7	- 25

Scoring plays

CRW - Tavian Patrick 22 run (kick blocked)
CRW - Jared Thorson blocked punt recovery in end zone (run failed)
CF - Ben Fienup 1 run (Caleb lehl kick)
CRW - Landen Akers 11 pass from Reid Snitker (kick failed)
CF - Fienup 11 pass from Taylen Alexander (lehl kick)
CRW - Connor Vincent 6 run (Gunner Lenzen kick)

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Individual Statistics

Rushing

Cedar Falls - Diaz 18-46, Alexander 9-22, Fienup 5-6, Hansen 1-minus, Team 2-minus 34.
Washington - Dobbs 13-61, Patrick 15-78, Vincent 6-51, Herzog 1-9, Snitker 7-minus 4,
Smothers 8-59, Team 1-minus 1.

Passing

Cedar Falls - Alexander 5-10-1, 40 yards; Hansen 0-1-0, 0 yards.
Washington - Snitker 2-6-1, 23 yards.

Receiving

Cedar Falls - Middleton 2-20, Schmidt 2-19, Fienup 1-11.
Washington - Nimmers 1-12, Akers 1-11.