

Scotty U's football preview

Written by Scott Unash

Tuesday, 18 October 2011 20:27 - Last Updated Tuesday, 18 October 2011 21:05



Four Metro football teams have qualified for the 2011 IHSAA football playoffs.

Prairie still has an outside chance of becoming the fifth team, but would have to pull off a big upset against Iowa City High and get some help (a Clinton loss) Friday night when the final games of the regular season are played.

Here's my assessment of the four teams, in alphabetical order, that already have qualified for the playoffs and their chances for postseason success.

Kennedy Cougars

Record: 5-4 or 4-5. Friday game: vs. Dubuque Wahlert (5-3) at Kingston Stadium.

Probable playoff points, seed and first-round opponent: If the Cougars beat Wahlert - 355, No. 11, at Pleasant Valley. If Kennedy loses - 335, No. 14, at Bettendorf.

After a tough schedule to start to the year, the Cougars have been steadily improving from week to week. Quarterback Chico Lizarraga has been improving as a passer and is capable of engineering a passing game that can carry Kennedy.

But, the bottom line is the Cougars will probably go as far as their running game takes them. Both Alex Hillyer and Trevor Heitland have had solid years splitting carries and have around 1,200 yards between them.

The draw looks somewhat favorable in the first round for Kennedy. And the Cougars have had success the last two years playing MAC teams, winning two out of three. Many experts will not have the Cougars advancing far into November, but that also was the thinking last year when

Scotty U's football preview

Written by Scott Unash

Tuesday, 18 October 2011 20:27 - Last Updated Tuesday, 18 October 2011 21:05

Kennedy put together a nice run that ended in the quarterfinals.

Linn-Mar Lions

Record: 9-0 or 8-1. Friday game: at Xavier (5-3).

Probable playoff points, seed and first-round opponent: If the Lions beat Xavier - 430, No. 1, vs. Clinton or Prairie. If Linn-Mar loses - 410, No. 3, vs. Waterloo East or Kennedy.

The Lions are coming off perhaps the program's biggest win since the Greg Purnell era when they knocked off Iowa City High for the first time since 1994. With the win the Lions have put themselves in a position to reap the benefits: a perfect regular season and the No. 1 seed in the Eastern half of the state in the playoffs.

It won't be easy, however. The last game is Friday night at Xavier against a hungry Saints team with something to prove.

While Linn-Mar may not have the state's best offense, defense, special teams, etc., the Lions certainly are very good in each facet of the game and that's what makes them a contender for a title.

Mark Atwater is a terrific two-way player, while Andy Henry, Mitch Wantock and others are helping the Lions to re-live their football glories of the past. If everything continues as is, this team can contend for the a trip to the Dome and the state championship.

Washington Warriors

Record: 6-3 or 5-4. Thursday game: vs. Waterloo West (0-8) at Kingston Stadium.

Scotty U's football preview

Written by Scott Unash

Tuesday, 18 October 2011 20:27 - Last Updated Tuesday, 18 October 2011 21:05

Probable playoff points, seed and first-round opponent: If the Warriors beat West - 370, No. 9, at Iowa City West. If Washington loses - 345, No. 13, at North Scott.

I say this in the nicest of ways, but if anyone can figure out the Washington football team, would they please let me know! And let Coach Tony Lombardi know, too.

Washington can look as good as any team in Iowa one week and the next get blown out of the water. That's the type of season it has been since the start of camp for the Warriors.

Perhaps it is good that adversity has been one of the top traits of Warrior football this season, because that is what each team faces in the postseason. Washington has seen pretty much everything and has been through pretty much everything, so nothing should phase these guys.

Washington also is getting healthy at the best time of the year. Tailback Will Griffin is nearing 100 percent physically and so is cornerback/receiver Ryan Cain, and both are integral parts of this team.

The Warriors may be the scariest team in the Eastern half of the state entering the postseason because each coach in the tournament knows exactly what Wash is capable of doing. No coach wants to see them on the on the other line of the bracket.

Xavier Saints

Probable record: 6-3 or 5-4. Friday game: vs. Linn-Mar.

Probable playoff points, seed and first-round opponent: If the Saints beat Linn-Mar - 375, No. 9, at Iowa City West. If Xavier loses - 355, No. 10, at Davenport Assumption.

Scotty U's football preview

Written by Scott Unash

Tuesday, 18 October 2011 20:27 - Last Updated Tuesday, 18 October 2011 21:05

This is very much a typical Xavier football team heading into the postseason. Solid.

The Saints have a good running attack led by Carter Valentine, and have shown the ability to throw the ball very well this year behind quarterback Reggie Schulte and receivers Corbin Woods and Jordan Hoffman. Defensively, the Saints have been stingy for the most of the season and opponent points have come at a premium.

Friday's game against Linn-Mar is a big one, I feel, for Xavier. The Saints each year seem to peak at the playoff time and usually find a way to move along down the playoff line. Last year they were upset at home in round one, and they do not want a repeat of an early exit again in 2011.

The Saints struggled against City High, Cedar Falls and Iowa City West during the middle of the season. They need a good showing, win or lose, against Linn-Mar to take some good vibes into the postseason.

Much like Washington, Xavier is a team a coach never wants to see on the other line of their bracket in the tournament.

Good luck to all of the teams in the Metro and the area. It should be a great run to the Dome!

(Scott Unash is the sports and program director at KGYM-AM 1600. He is a six-time winner of the Iowa Broadcast News Association play-by-play Announcer of the Year Award. Scott and Mark Dukes co-host the Gym Class weekdays from 3-4 p.m. on KGYM)