

Davis nets 5 TDs as Lions drub Wahlert

Written by Jim Ecker

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DUBUQUE - Rhys Davis sat on the bench last year as Linn-Mar's third-string quarterback and watched Mark Atwater steer the Lions to the Mississippi Valley Conference title.

Davis is the starting quarterback now and he looked a lot like Atwater Friday night when the Lions faced Dubuque Wahlert at the Rock Bowl in Dubuque.

Better yet, he played like Atwater.

Davis ran for three touchdowns and passed for two others as Linn-Mar drubbed the crippled Golden Eagles, 49-6, to keep their playoff hopes alive.

Davis accounted for all five of his touchdowns in the first half as the Lions rolled up 408 yards and 42 points by intermission.

Atwater was one of the top QBs in school history, an all-state pick who's playing at Coe College this season as a freshman. Comparing Davis to Atwater is a stretch, but it was an apt comparison in this contest.

"Oh, I don't know," said Davis, laughing. "I did learn a lot from Mark. I'm trying to work his magic out there."

Davis, a 6-foot-3 senior, has rushed for 496 yards and eight touchdowns this season for the Lions (2-4, 2-2). He's also passed for 550 yards and four TDs, making him a dual threat.

Just like Atwater.

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"He does have some talent," said Linn-Mar Coach Bob Forsyth. "He really worked hard in the offseason and during the summer and worked at his skill. He's really improved.

"We've been really happy with the way he's played."

Davis hit John Schlotterback with a 14-yard touchdown pass to begin the scoring and followed with a 25-yard TD strike to Zach Martins. He ran for three touchdowns in the second quarter from 7, 12 and 5 yards.

Tailback Ross Lembeck rambled for 167 yards on 17 carries for the Lions, including a weaving 82-yarder on a draw play late in the second quarter. Lembeck ran more than 100 yards on that carry as he cut across the field, but had enough gas to carry the ball on the very next play.

"I think my adrenaline was kicking in so well I was ready to go again," he said.

The Lions scored touchdowns on their first seven possessions and grabbed a 49-0 bulge in the third quarter before Forsyth emptied the bench.

"The kids did a great job," the coach said. "It started on Monday. We had great practices."

Linn-Mar has suffered some tough losses this season, including a triple-overtime setback against Dubuque Senior the last time they visited the Key City, but the Lions keep bouncing back for more.

"The kids have really been resilient," said Forsyth. "They come every day ready to work, they come to let us coach them. I'm happy for them."

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It's never a good sign when your favorite team begins the game with No. 83 at quarterback, but that's what happened to Dubuque Wahlert (1-5, 0-3) Friday night. Normally a wide receiver, Danny Broderick took all the snaps at quarterback with Jared Walker (broken ankle) and John Burgmeier (shoulder injury) lost for the season.

The Golden Eagles did not collect a first down until midway through the second quarter, and by then the Lions were sitting on a fat 28-0 lead. Wahlert finished with 180 yards of total offense, but collected only 57 yards in the first half when the Lions scored six straight times.

Wahlert looked like a MASH unit when the game began. Three guys were on crutches, one guy had his foot in a walking boot and Burgmeier had his right arm in a sling.

It got worse late in the first quarter when tailback Jake Decker broke his leg and had to be taken off the field on a stretcher. The Golden Eagles finished the game with a guy wearing uniform No. 54 at tailback, which isn't a good sign either.

Forsyth was as gentle as possible on Wahlert and declined to call a timeout in the final seconds of the first half with his team inside the 10-yard line, not wanting to rub a 35-0 score in the home team's faces.

The Lions didn't need the timeout, however, as Davis ran for a 5-yard touchdown on the final play of the half.

Forsyth liked the way his team performed.

"We have tons of things to play for," he said. "I think the kids understand that and have responded well to it.

"We're fighting for the playoffs, is what we're doing. We took a pretty good step toward that tonight."

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LINN-MAR 49, WAHLERT 6

LM	DW
First Downs	18 10
Rushing	45-335 16-70
Passing	9-12-0 8-21-2
Passing Yards	121 110
Punts	1-36.0 4-36.0
Fumbles/Lost	0/0 0/0
Penalties	5-50 4-22

Linn-Mar	14	28	0	7	-	49
Wahlert	0	0	0	6	-	6

SCORING PLAYS

LM - Jon Schlotterback 14 pass from Rhys Davis (Austin Wolter kick)
LM - Zach Martins 25 pass from Davis (Wolter kick)
LM - Davis 7 run (Wolter kick)
LM - Davis 12 run (Wolter kick)
LM - Nick Trabucco 1 run (Wolter kick)
LM - Davis 5 run (Wolter kick)
LM - Lembeck 1 run (Wolter kick)
DW - Weslee Haynes 23 pass from Danny Broderick (pass failed)

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

PASSING

Linn-Mar: Davis 9-12-0, 121 yards.
Wahlert: Broderick 8-21-2, 110 yards.

RUSHING

Linn-Mar: Lembeck 17-167, Davis 18-121, Meier 2-32, Trabucco 4-9, Ramsey 1-4, Brennecke 1-3, Flieder 1-0, Pashyk 1-minus 1.
Wahlert: Allendorf 7-35, Reimer 2-16, Broderick 3-11, Nauman 2-9, Decker 2-minus 1.

RECEIVING

Linn-Mar: Trabucco 3-28, Martins 2-28, Brennecke 1-32, Schlotterback 1-14, Ramsey 1-14, Lembeck 1-5.
Wahlert: Steines 2-38, Sullivan 2-25, Haynes 1-23, Balk 1-8, Oglesby 1-8, Kroeger 1-8.