

J-Hawks fumble away shot at victory

Written by Tom Fruehling

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What a win it would have been.

But Jefferson's high homecoming hopes died Friday night at Kingston Stadium on a fumbled hand-off five yards from the goal line with nine seconds left in the game.

Waterloo West, which seemed to have things sealed just 30 seconds earlier with a score of its own, jumped on the loose ball to save a 23-17 victory.

"Missed opportunities and lack of execution," said Jefferson Coach Brian Webb in trying to explain what went wrong at the end and throughout the night as a whole.

Behind from the start, the J-Hawks rallied back to tie the score at 17-17 with 4:38 left on a 21-yard field goal by Caleb Kesterson. A dropped pass in the end zone would have given them a touchdown the play before.

On its next possession, shifty Wahawk sophomore quarterback Devon Moore threw a bomb from midfield that Jefferson's Benjamin Baxter appeared to intercept at the 14-yard line only to have it grabbed out of his hands by intended receiver Demetrius Caddell.

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A face mask penalty two plays later moved the ball five yards more, and Moore sneaked in from the 3 with 41.5 seconds on the clock for a 23-17 lead. Sure-footed kicker Adijan Muhamedagic missed the extra point, though, leaving Jefferson with a glimmer of hope.

Instead of kicking deep to J-Hawk jackrabbit Many Olutunde, who'd run a kickoff back 92 yards for a TD in the closing seconds of the first half, Muhamedagic punched a squibbler that Jefferson's Dakota Tomkins covered near midfield.

With no time to spare, cool and calm Jefferson quarterback Jesse Furrow hit Tavian Rashed for 20 yards. Following a 15-yard personal foul penalty on Waterloo, J-Hawk receiver Brady Bernauer just missed a Furrow pass on the goal line.

Rashed rushed through the middle to the five, though, setting up the potential game-tying score with 19.6 seconds left.

Then came the disastrous fumble as Furrow tried to hand off to Rashed.

"We still had time on the clock and a timeout left," Webb pointed out. "And on that play, we had a back wide open in the end zone.

"Another case of a missed opportunity and lack of execution. We had a chance to score and didn't do it."

It was the final but not the first blown opportunity of the night.

On its very first possession, after Moore had scored, Furrow and receiver/running back Bryce Lund together marched Jefferson downfield only to have Mason Furnish lose a fumble on the four.

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