

Henry shines as No.8 Lions top J-Hawks, 35-10

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 25 August 2011 23:32 - Last Updated Friday, 26 August 2011 01:21

Linn-Mar quarterback Mark Atwater offered a good scouting report a few weeks ago on his new favorite receiver.

Watch out for Andy Henry, he said shortly after practice began in early August. The kid can play.

True enough.

Atwater connected with Henry for three touchdown passes Thursday night as the eighth-ranked Lions topped Jefferson, 35-10, in the Mississippi Valley Conference opener at Kingston Stadium.

Henry had touchdown grabs of 23, 42 and 18 yards to help Linn-Mar shake a determined effort by the J-Hawks.

"The kid is really good," Atwater said after the game. "Now he's not the best-kept secret here anymore.

"He's fast, he's got athleticism, he goes up and gets the ball. He is going to be a target for us the rest of the season. Henry can flat-out play."

Henry ranked seventh on the team in receptions with four catches for 115 yards and two touchdowns last year. The six guys ahead of him graduated, leaving him Numero Uno.

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"It was fun out there," he said after his big night.

Atwater and Henry worked together during the spring and summer on their timing. It showed Thursday.

"Mark got my confidence up a lot," he said. "And Coach Casebolt (assistant coach Matt Casebolt) talked to me a lot about how I could be a star on this team, and I'm trying to fill that role."

Linn-Mar Coach Bob Forsyth liked what he saw from Henry.

"He did a great job tonight. His first real game," Forsyth said. "We have a lot of confidence in him and really like what he can do. Hopefully we can keep getting him the ball."

Atwater completed 11 of 19 passes for 164 yards and three TDs. He also carried the ball 11 times for 65 yards and scored on an 11-yard run in the second quarter.

Jefferson lost its 14th straight game since 2009, but the J-Hawks gave the Lions a good battle and pulled within 21-10 in the third quarter after trailing 21-0. They appeared to be much improved after going 0-and-9 last year.

"We're not happy with the outcome, obviously, but the kids played hard," Jefferson Coach Jim Womochil said. "Like I said before, it's a different group. You saw fight in them."

"The one thing I can say is, we never stopped playing. They fought hard, stuck around for four quarters."

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The J-Hawks had a chance to make the Lions nervous in the fourth quarter when they drove into the red zone, trying to chip away at a 28-10 deficit, but they lost the ball on downs at the 11-yard line with 11 minutes left to play.

A touchdown or field goal would have made it a two-possession game, but they fell short.

Womochil complimented his team after the game, saying their goal of making the Class 4A playoffs is within reach this year.

"This could be a good team," he said. "In this league, we're going to be competitive. We competed tonight. That's something we didn't see last year."

Jefferson quarterback Alex Baxter completed 11 of 15 passes for 128 yards and hit Austin Goodell with a 25-yard pass for a touchdown in the third quarter as the J-Hawks pulled within 21-10. He also carried the ball 12 times for 26 yards and would have finished with glossier numbers if not for a few sacks.

"That kid is a good player," said Atwater, who also plays linebacker for Linn-Mar. "He was bouncing all over the place. He's quick."

Baxter battled cramps during the game and missed a few plays, but he kept returning to the field at quarterback and defensive back. He was disappointed with the outcome, but proud of his team's effort on opening night.

"We had big expectations, we were really excited, but we can't get our heads totally down," he said. "We all remember the games last year, and this was completely different. We were in the game, we were playing well. It's encouraging."

Jefferson severely hurt its chances in the second quarter when it botched a play on offense. The J-Hawks, operating in the shotgun, sent wide receiver Christian Knox in motion, but the

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snap hit Knox, eluded Baxter and rolled around.

Baxter got possession, but the ball got loose again and Zach Martins raced 47 yards for a touchdown to give Linn-Mar a 20-0 lead with 5:41 left in the second quarter. "There was miscommunication on the snap count," Baxter said.

Andrew Patience kicked a 30-yard field to pull the J-Hawks within 21-3 at halftime, and the crowd came alive when Baxter connected with Goodell for the 25-yard touchdown to make it 21-10 in the third.

Linn-Mar responded with a pair of touchdown passes from Atwater to Henry to pull away.

Jefferson plays Washington at Kingston Stadium next Friday night and Linn-Mar hosts Kennedy in the first game at the new Linn-Mar Stadium.

Linn-Mar also won the sophomore game, 20-6.

LINN-MAR 35, JEFFERSON 10

L-M	CRJ
First Downs	20 13
Rushes-Yards	33-196 32-129
Passing	11-19-1 13-19-1
Passing Yards	164 163
Punts/Avg.	2-33.0 3-35.3
Fumbles	0/0 2/2
Penalties	7-50 3-30

Linn-Mar 7 14 7 7 - 35

Jefferson 0 3 7 0 - 10

LM - Andy Henry 23 pass from Mark Atwater (Quinn Treiber kick)

LM - Atwater 11 run (Treiber kick)

LM - Zach Martins 47 fumble return (Treiber kick)

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CRJ - Andrew Patience 30 FG

CRJ - Austin Goodell 25 pass from Alex Baxter (Patience kick)

LM - Henry 42 pass from Atwater (Treiber kick)

LM - Henry 18 pass from Atwater (Treiber kick)

Individual Stats

Linn-Mar

Rushing - Wantock 10-70, Atwater 11-65, Trabucco 3-25, Burbridge 2-13, Feller 1-9, Kvach 2-9, Martins 1-6, Ophoff 1-1, Darden 2-minus 2.

Passing - Atwater 11-19-1, 164.

Receiving - Henry 4-83, Hutchins 3-56, Kvach 2-9, Martins 1-12, Luerkens 1-4.

Jefferson

Rushing - Short 16-89, Baxter 12-26, Lund 3-13, Dee 1-1.

Passing - Baxter 11-15-0, 128; Dee 2-4-1, 35.

Receiving - Lund 3-32, Knox 3-26, Klubec 3-17, Goodell 2-54, Jones 1-29, Short 1-5.