

Cougars knock off Assumption, 35-12

Written by Jim Ecker

Tuesday, 05 November 2013 00:08 -

DAVENPORT - The Kennedy Cougars danced the Hokey Pokey and celebrated their big 35-12 victory over Davenport Assumption in the visitors locker room at Brady Street Stadium Monday night, but once they stepped outside they were all business again.

They had the Xavier Saints on their mind.

Kennedy (8-3) earned a rematch with Xavier (10-1) in the quarterfinals of the Class 4A playoffs this Friday night at Saints Field.

Kennedy Coach Tim Lewis said the Cougars would not be celebrating on the ride home from Davenport after knocking the No.2 seed from the Eastern half of the state out of the playoffs.

"No, No, No. That's over," Lewis insisted. "We just got done celebrating in there. We won't even be thinking about Assumption on the bus."

The Kennedy coaches will award new stickers on Tuesday for Kennedy players to wear on their helmets in tribute to their impressive performance - and there will be a lot of stickers to go around - but that will be it.

"Other than that, we're 100 percent focused on Xavier," said Lewis.

Xavier stuffed the Cougars, 24-0, when they met Sept. 27 at Kingston Stadium, and the Saints were up to their old tricks again Monday night when they stuffed Iowa City High, 34-0, in the second round at Saints Field.

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Miles Moa scooted for 187 yards on 30 carries Monday for Kennedy and quarterback Derek Jacobus scored three times as the surging Cougars rallied from an early 12-7 deficit and blanked the potent Knights (9-2) in the second, third and fourth quarters.

"We're playing all-around good football," said Jacobus. "We're moving the ball up and down the field. We're getting good stops and making big plays."

For awhile, it looked like Assumption quarterback Jake Gervase might prove to be a one-man wrecking crew with his running, passing and 80-yard punt return in the first quarter, but the Cougars made adjustments and figured out ways to slow him down.

"It took them a half to adjust," said Lewis. "No matter how many times you tell somebody how quick and fast a kid is, there's no way we can show them exactly what it's going to be like in practice. It took awhile for them to think, 'This kid is the real deal.'"

So were the Cougars.

Kennedy grabbed a 21-12 lead at halftime, then sealed the deal with a pair of touchdowns by Jacobus in the fourth quarter.

The Cougars have won three straight games by comfortable margins against Iowa City High, Prairie and now Assumption, raising their record from 5-3 to 8-3.

"We're starting to peak at this time of year, which is what we expected to do," said Terrance Hall, a two-way contributor at fullback and linebacker. "It's what we wanted to do coming into the season. We're playing great football right now."

Lewis likes the way his team is playing the game.

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"At the beginning of the season when people were asking about our fast start - because we don't usually do that - I said check at the end and I'll tell you how I really feel about that, because this is where I wanted to be," he remarked. "I wanted to play as many games as we possibly could with this group of kids. I'm really excited for them.

"This is a group of kids that have bought into what we're selling," Lewis said. "The wins obviously help and give them momentum. This is a great group of personalities."

Kennedy began the playoffs as the No.7 seed in the Eastern part of Iowa, but the Cougars eliminated the No.2 seed Monday night.

"I'm really excited," Lewis said. "We always have to earn everything we get. Very few times are we ever talked about as one of the powerhouse 4A football programs. And that's 100 percent fine with me.

"There were people picking us to get beat tonight, because this is the best team in the MAC and I'm sure we were the underdog once again. We'll continue to be the underdog. That's fine, as long as our kids continue to buy into what we're telling them. That's all I care about."

The Cougars will be the underdogs again Friday night at Xavier.

"I'm ready. I'm ready, man," said Hall, looking ahead to Friday. "I've been waiting for this all year. I knew this was going to happen since the first time we played Xavier. It's going to be a grudge match, it's going to be a battle. We know that.

"We're going to come to play and they're going to come to play, so it's going to be a dogfight."

"We've got to come out fast and we've really got to set the tempo," said Jacobus. "Hopefully we'll move the ball a lot better this time."

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The winner of Friday's game will advance to the Class 4A semifinals in the UNI-Dome.

"We feel good about it," said Moa. "I'm just happy for us. I'm enjoying every second of it. We get to play some more."

Kennedy lineman and co-captain Austin Holzer twisted his ankle in the fourth quarter and left the game, but vowed to be ready Friday. "It's nothing serious," he said. "I'll be good for Friday."

Kennedy held a 21-12 lead at intermission following an odd 30 minutes of football.

Assumption burned the Cougars for an 80-yard punt return and a 54-yard kickoff return in the first half, but only the punt return hurt the visitors from Cedar Rapids.

Kennedy countered with an interception and 42-yard return of a fumble on the same play, leading to a touchdown by backup quarterback Sammy Lizarraga, who was in the game because Jacobus had to miss a play when his helmet came off.

The Cougars blocked both of Assumption's PAT attempts, giving Kennedy a nine-point lead at the break.

Assumption took a quick 6-0 lead when Gervase returned a punt 80 yards and James Hua scored from the 7-yard line on the Knights' first offensive play from scrimmage.

Jacob Shannon followed with a 38-yard kickoff return for Kennedy and the Cougars had to drive only 48 yards for their first touchdown. It came on a 3-yard keeper by Jacobus, who did not lose his helmet on that one.

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Assumption took a 12-7 lead on a 16-yard touchdown pass from Gervase to Ryan Coughlin, but Holzer blocked the PAT.

Kennedy promptly drove 65 yards and took a 14-12 lead on a 6-yard touchdown by Moa and the PAT by Mark Schulz. Moa broke loose for runs of 31 and 19 yards on the march.

Kennedy took a 21-12 lead when Lizarraga, subbing for Jacobus on one play, scored on a quarterback sneak and Schulz added the PAT.

The drive began with an odd play by the Kennedy defense. Logan Daughetee intercepted a pass by Gervase at the 12-yard line, but fumbled after gaining a few yards to the 15. Fortunately for Kennedy, Jordan Lunsford collected the loose ball and ran 42 yards to the Assumption 43-yard line before being tackled.

Jacobus hit Famiek Cook with a 20-yard pass to the 15-yard line, then Moa scooted 14 yards to the 1-yard line. Jacobus was stopped on a quarterback sneak and lost his helmet in the process, so he had to come out for a play. Lizarraga entered the game and promptly scored.

KENNEDY 35, DAVENPORT ASSUMPTION 12

CRK	DA	
First downs	19	14
Rushes-yards	49-282	33-182
Passing yards	60	103
Comp-Att-Int	4-7-0	6-16-2
Fumbles-lost	3/0	1/1
Punts-avg	2-29.5	0-0
Penalties-yards	7-56	9-42

Kennedy	7	14	0	14 - 35
Assumption	12	0	0	0 - 12

DA - James Hua 7 run (kick blocked)

CRK - Derek Jacobus 3 run (Mark Schulz kick)

DA - Ryan Coughlin 16 pass from Jake Gervase (kick blocked)

CRK - Miles Moa 6 run (Schulz kick)

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CRK - Sammy Lizarraga 1 run (Schulz kick)

CRK - Jacobus 1 run (Schulz kick)

CRK - Jacobus 24 run (Schulz kick)

Individual statistics

Rushing

Kennedy - Moa 30-187, Hall 6-40, Jacobus 9-59, Lizarraga 1-1, Team 3-minus 5.

Assumption - Gervase 14-88, Hua 15-77, O'Day 3-13, Hager 1-4.

Passing

Kennedy - Jacobus 4-7-0-60.

Assumption -Gervase 6-16-2-103.

Receiving

Kennedy - Cook 2-33, Blank 2-27.

Assumption - Coughlin 3-39, Hua 1-28, O'Day 1-24, Youngblunt 1-12.