

## Lions overcome slow start to top Kennedy

Written by Mike Condon

Thursday, 02 October 2014 22:58 - Last Updated Friday, 03 October 2014 10:37

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Linn-Mar had to fight two tough opponents Thursday night at Kingston Stadium.

The first foe was no surprise. Despite coming in winless, Kennedy came out strong, grabbing a 14-0 second quarter lead.

Not only did the Lions have to overcome the Cougars, they had to overcome themselves. Linn-Mar was called for six penalties in the first quarter alone.

"The penalties killed us early," admitted Linn-Mar senior Trevor Noble. "Our defense was playing great, but once we got that turnover just before halftime, we knew we had to score."

Kennedy fumbled in the final 40 seconds of the half and Noble caught a 23-yard scoring strike from Ryan Schmidt, getting the Lions on the board. The second half was all Linn-Mar as the defense forced a pair of turnovers and the offense came alive. The No. 10 Lions ended up scoring 29 unanswered points en route to a 29-14 victory.

The Cougars dominated play for much of the first half. Sammy Lizarraga hit Shaun Beyer on a

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41-yard scoring strike early in the second quarter and Tyler Dralle capped a long drive with a 1-yard plunge, upping the lead to 14-0 with 1:31 left in the half.

Linn-Mar went three and out after the score and punted to the Cougars with just under a minute remaining. Kennedy Coach Brian White chose to be aggressive and it proved costly. Lizarraga fumbled and Sam Bries recovered at the Cougar 23.

Two plays later Schmidt connected with Noble in the end zone, cutting lead in half.

Linn-Mar Coach Bob Forsyth wasn't surprised by Kennedy's decision to be aggressive on offense just before halftime.

"Kennedy played a good football game tonight," Forsyth said. "For the position they were in coming into this game, their kids played really hard. Their coaches had a good game plan and they were aggressive.

"All we really had to do was stop making mistakes," he added. "That's not good (all the early penalties) and it is something we have to get corrected and I think we will."

Linn-Mar senior linebacker Austin McCulloh, who had an interception in the first half, said the Lions got a message from the coaches at halftime.

"We didn't play with the same intensity we had at the start of the season," he said. "We didn't have that in the first half, but we came out with the intensity we needed in the second half and got the job done."

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The Cougars continued their daring ways in the third quarter. Beyer ran for 25 yards on a fake punt, but Kennedy eventually turned it over on downs.

Schmidt, who took several sacks in the first half from a blitzing Cougar defense, found his stride late in the third quarter. He hit junior Daniel Gorsich over the middle on a 28-yard scoring pass early in the fourth quarter.

On the PAT, the Lions pulled out a trick play, pitching the ball to kicker Sean Zimmerman, who ran it in to give the Lions a 15-14 lead.

"The way Kennedy was playing, we honestly didn't know if we were going to get it down there again to score," admitted Forsyth. "It turned out to be a good gamble."

Linn-Mar's defense continued to stymie the Cougars and got the ball back with 9:36 to play. Schmidt and Noble hooked up on a key third and 20 play for 32 yards, keeping a drive alive that was capped off by a 1-yard dive from the Lions' QB.

Trailing 22-14, Kennedy's last chance was snuffed out when Linn-Mar senior nose guard Zach Huffman picked off a screen pass and returned 30 yards to the Cougar 5.

"It felt great to see all (5-foot-6) of him grab that ball," Schmidt said. "After that play, it seemed like we finally had the game under control."

Logan Benter scored untouched on the next play, salting away win No. 5 and setting up a Homecoming showdown next week for the District 5 lead with Cedar Falls, which downed Jefferson, 35-17, on Thursday night in

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Cedar Falls. The teams are both 2-0 in district play.

"We can enjoy this one for a little bit," said Noble. "It is nice to have the extra day, but we'll start getting to work Cedar Falls pretty quick."

Kennedy (0-6, 0-2) plays at Waterloo East next Friday.

### LINN-MAR 29, KENNEDY 14

#### LM □ □ □ KEN

First downs	15	13
Rushes-yards	32-111	37-117
Passing yards	142	136
Comp-att-int	10-17-0	12-26-2
Fumbles-lost	1-1	3-1
Punts-avg.	6-36.1	4-45.2
Penalties-yards	9-59	5-41

**Linn-Mar □ □ 0 □ □ 7 □ 0 □ □ 22 - 29**

**Kennedy □ □ 0 □ □ 14 □ 0 □ □ 0 - 14**

Ken – Shaun Beyer 41 pass from Sammy Lizarraga (Mark Schulz kick)

Ken – Tyler Dralle 1 run (Schulz kick)

LM – Trevor Noble 23 pass from Ryan Schmidt (Sean Zimmerman kick)

LM – Daniel Gorsich 28 pass from Schmidt (Zimmerman run)

LM – Schmidt 1 run (Zimmerman kick)

LM – Logan Benter 5 run (Zimmerman kick)

### Individual statistics

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### **Rushing**

Linn-Mar – Perrion Scott 10-81, Ryan Schmidt 15-minus 13, Logan Benter 8-33, Daniel Gorsich 2-20, Team 2-minus 4.

Kennedy – Tyler Dralle 21-66, Logan Wedo 4-18, Jay Blank 2-5, Sammy Lizarraga 3-0, Shaun Beyer 1-25.

### **Passing**

Linn-Mar – Ryan Schmidt 10-17-0-142.

Kennedy – Sammy Lizarraga 12-25-2-136, Shaun Beyer 0-1-0-0.

### **Receiving**

Linn-Mar – Trevor Noble 2-55, Daniel Gorsich 1-28, Andrew Gassmann, 2-27 Perrion Scott 3-1, Garrett Evans 1-23, Logan Benter 1-minus 3.

Kennedy – Shaun Beyer 3-64, Drake Brewster 5-53, Matthew Gardner 3-13, Ray'ez Bell 1-6.