

Battle-tested Cougars face No. 2 Bulldogs

Written by Jim Ecker

Sunday, 02 November 2014 19:41 - Last Updated Sunday, 02 November 2014 20:13



Nobody can accuse the Kennedy Cougars of ducking any of the top Class 4A football teams in Eastern Iowa this season.

In fact, the Cougars have played the toughest schedule of anyone in these parts. By far.

Kennedy will try to upset second-ranked Bettendorf in the second round of the Class 4A playoffs Monday night. But win or lose, it will mean the Cougars will have faced all four of the No. 1 seeds from Eastern Iowa and all four of the No. 2 seeds.

Nobody else can say that.

Kennedy played Washington, Linn-Mar and Pleasant Valley during the regular season, and all three of them are No. 1 seeds in the playoffs as district champions. Now Bettendorf will complete the set as another No. 1 seed and district champ.

The Cougars also have faced Cedar Falls, Iowa City West, North Scott and Muscatine this year. All four of them were No. 2 seeds in the playoffs as a district runner-up.

Kennedy had not defeated any of those No. 1 or No. 2 seeds until the Cougars knocked off Muscatine, 20-17, in the opening round of the playoffs last Wednesday night.

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Now the Cougars will be confronting Bettendorf, which along with Washington are the only 10-0 teams in Class 4A in the state.

Kennedy Coach Brian White thinks the rugged schedule helped his team defeat Muscatine last week on a last-second field goal.

"When you get in crunch time like that, it pays off," he said. "These kids have been through it. And they've been hardened because of it, and they've never quit."

Four Metro teams are still alive in the playoffs heading into the second round Monday night.

Washington hosts Cedar Falls, Linn-Mar entertains Iowa City West and Kennedy visits Bettendorf in Class 4A games. Xavier hosts Waverly-Shell Rock in Class 3A.

The quarterfinal round will be played Friday night.

CEDAR FALLS (8-2) at NO.1 WASHINGTON (10-0)

Kingston Stadium, 7 p.m.

KGYM 1600 AM

Tavian Patrick has rushed for 882 yards and six touchdowns for Washington. Johnny Dobbs has run for 591 yards and 11 TDs. Reid Snitker has rushed for 385 yards, passed for 758 yards and accounted for 19 touchdowns.

Cedar Falls quarterbacks Taylen Alexander and Trey Hansen have combined for 1,428 yards and 12 TDs through the air. Running backs Denison Harrington and Rodney Hinton have combined for 765 yards and eight touchdowns on the ground.

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IOWA CITY WEST (6-4) at NO.6 LINN-MAR (9-1)

Linn-Mar Stadium, 7 p.m.

Linn-Mar quarterback Ryan Schmidt has passed for 1,374 yards, run for 560 yards and accounted for 31 touchdowns. Perrion Scott has rushed for 853 yards and eight TDs. Trevor Noble has nine TD catches.

Aaron Bleit has passed for 1,897 yards and 15 touchdowns for Iowa City West. His favorite target is Oliver Martin, who has 52 catches for 677 yards and four touchdowns.

KENNEDY (3-7) at NO. 2 BETTENDORF (10-0)

TouVelle Stadium, Bettendorf, 7 p.m.

Kennedy tailback Tyler Dralle carried the ball 46 times for 234 yards in the victory over Muscatine. He has rushed for 892 yards and eight TDs. Sammy Lizarraga has thrown for 1,318 yards and 15 touchdowns.

Bettendorf quarterback Cyle Cox has passed for 1,174 yards, run for 539 yards and accounted for 17 touchdowns. Justice O'Conner has rushed for 892 yards and 15 TDs.

NO. 4 WAVERLY-SHELL ROCK (8-2) at NO. 10 XAVIER (7-3)

Saints Field, 7 p.m.

KMRY 1450 AM

Jay Kortemeyer has rushed for 1,065 yards and six touchdowns for the Saints. Quarterback Bryce Schulte has passed for 831 yards and 11 touchdowns. He's also rushed for 10 scores.

Waverly quarterback Jake Velky has passed for 1,195 yards and eight touchdowns. Ryan Sprain has rushed for 752 yards and six touchdowns. Riley Steckelberg has rushed for 630 yards and nine TDs.

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