

Cougars upset Muscatine, 20-17

Written by Guy Martino

Thursday, 25 October 2012 00:08 -

MUSCATINE -- After four quarters of pulse-pounding, hard-fought football, Wednesday's Class 4A playoff game between Kennedy and Muscatine came down to the final second.

Muscatine placekicker Daylan Oldfield lined up for a 42-yard field goal to tie the game and potentially put it into overtime.

Oldfield, who earlier kicked a 52-yard field goal, made good contact, but the ball immediately sailed into the teeth of a blustering wind, falling well short of the goalpost.

And Kennedy players and coaches rushed the field in celebration as they hung on for a 20-17 victory at the Muscatine High School Field.

The win was the fifth straight for Kennedy (5-5) and sends the Cougars into a second-round game against Cedar Falls (9-1) at the UNI-Dome on Monday night at 8:45.

This was a game where Kennedy was an underdog, facing a prolific passing attack on the Muskies' home field. The Cougars threw out pretenses, and simply played football. The Kennedy defense came up with several big plays, and the offensive unit did their usual ground and pound, but also mixed in some effective passes.

"It is hard to describe how I feel right now," said defensive/offensive lineman Austin Holzer. "Going from 0-5, to right now, I am at a loss for words."

"We knew it was going to be a battle tonight," said Kennedy Coach Tim Lewis. "Muscatine is a great team with a very explosive offense. Our defense stepped up when they needed to and we got out of here with a win."

With the victory, Lewis moved ahead of Kennedy coaching great Don Knock as the all-time

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Kennedy wins leader.

“Someone told me the other day, and that is the only reason I know. I am just happy we got out of here with a win, that’s a big win for these kids.”

On an unusually balmy and windy October night, Kennedy started strong. The Cougars received the opening kickoff and marched down the field for the game’s first score. The usual rushing suspects Alex Hillyer and Miles Moa each gained good chunks of yards as the Cougars ate up clock and drove down the field.

Then, Riley Fergus ran a bootleg to the left and found a wide-open Partick Martin for a 19-yard touchdown. The Cougars took six minutes off the first quarter clock and jumped to an early lead.

With the way the Cougars ran the ball, they were able to successfully utilize the play-action pass.

“I read somewhere that said we have no passing game and all we do is run the ball,” said Fergus. “So it’s just one of those things where you have to step up and accept the challenge.”

Fergus passed for 84 yards and a touchdown.

The Muskie’s powerful passing attack didn’t start as such. On their first drive of the game, quarterback Jon Crowe threw an easy interception right to Cougar linebacker AJ Carter. Carter returned the ball to midfield, setting the Cougars up nicely. But Kennedy was unable to capitalize, settling for a missed field goal.

Then, Crowe and his aerial crew got it together. On the next drive, he found several different targets, gaining huge chunks of yards. He capped it with a one-yard touchdown pass to Drake Kulick, knotting the score at 7-7. Crowe finished the game with 246 yards through the air.

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"We knew their passing attack was going to be really good," said Fergus, who also plays free safety for the Cougars. "They got a few big ones on us."

With less than one minute remaining in the first half, Kennedy was threatening in Muskie territory. A barrage of bootleg passes mixed with power runs put the Cougars inside the 10-yard line with 30 seconds left. Hillyer took a toss the right and basically walked in for a touchdown. A missed extra point made the score 13-7.

But the half wasn't over. The Muskies got the ball with 20 seconds left, and Crowe flicked a few easy completions, setting them up in field goal range. Oldfield nailed this one from 52 yards to bring the game within 13-10.

The third quarter was a stalemate, as both defense were trading blows. Kennedy forced a fumble and intercepted another Crowe pass, preserving its precious lead.

"Our defense was phenomenal," said Holzer. "All the talk was that they were going to be able to throw the ball and we wouldn't be able to stop them, but our defense really stepped up when we needed to."

Going into the fourth quarter, with the score still 13-10, Kennedy received the ball and put together the eventual game winning drive. As had been the trend of the night for the Cougars, they ran for a few first downs, and then Fergus passed for one.

"The plan going in was that we were going to throw just enough to keep them on their heels," said Lewis. "We did it just enough tonight to keep them back a bit."

Hillyer pounded in a 2-yard touchdown to make the score 20-10 with seven minutes left in the ballgame.

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Kennedy forced Muscatine to turn the ball over on downs with four minutes left. With the ball and a 10-point lead, Kennedy could have won the game with a few first downs. Instead, the Cougars went three and out, and were forced to punt, giving Muscatine the ball back with three minutes.

Crowe marched his team down the field, and scrambled in for a touchdown with 2:09 left, making the score 20-17.

With less than a minute remaining, the Muskie defense proved to be valiant, and forced Kennedy to punt again.

Muscatine got the ball at Kennedy's 44-yard line with 15 seconds on the clock. Crowe completed a 15-yard pass to Tyler Lloyd and spiked the ball to stop the clock at seven seconds. Crowe completed another 15 yarder to Lloyd and hurried to spike the ball again, stopping the clock with one tick left on the clock.

Muscatine was at the 25-yard line and had a chance to tie the ballgame and send it into overtime. The rest is history.

"I am just happy to get out of here with a win," said Lewis. "That is a great football team that we just beat, and it doesn't really matter how you win at this stage as long as you get the win."

KENNEDY 20, MUSCATINE 17

CRK	MUS		
First Downs	13	11	
Rushes-Yards	47-161	25-100	
Passing	7-11-1	18-26-2	
Passing Yards	84	246	
Punts	3-40	3-41	
Fumbles-Lost	1-0	2-1	
Penalties	6-30	5-25	

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Kennedy	7	6	0	7	--	20
Muscatine	0	10	0	7	--	17

SCORING PLAYS

CRK -- Patrick Martin 26 pass from Riley Fergus (Eric Bertroche kick)

MUS -- Drake Kulick 1 pass from Jon Crowe (Daylan Oldfield kick)

CRK -- Alex Hillyer 5 run (kick failed)

MUS -- FG Oldfield 52

CRK -- Hillyer 2 run (Bertroche kick)

MUS -- Crowe 7 run (Oldfield kick)

INDIVIDUAL STATS

Rushing

CRK: Alex Hillyer 30-121, Miles Moa 12-30, Riley Fergus 3-3, Terrance Hall 2-7.

MUS: Jon Crowe 12-25, Austin Moss 8-44, Drake Kulick 3-25, Jerson Neda 2-6.

Passing

CRK: Fergus 7-11-1 84 yards

MUS: Crowe 18-26-2 246 yards

Receiving

CRK: Jacob Frazier-Flores 3-40, Patrick Martin 2-20, Terrance Hall 1-19, Miles Moa 1-5.

MUS: Tyler Lloyd 7-91, Drake Kulick 4-12, Jake Shoultz 3-82, Luke Rauenbueler 3-51, Austin Moss 1-15