

Lions enjoy homecoming romp, 42-17

Written by Mike Condon

Friday, 04 October 2013 23:21 -

Linn-Mar's defense has been much-maligned through the first half of the season. An undersized group, the Lion defenders have given up huge chunks of yards to some quality opponents.

In Friday night's homecoming game with Dubuque Wahlert, the defense was front and center.

The Lions held the Golden Eagles to 184 total yards, 45 in the first half, and the offense was its usual explosive self in a 42-17 win at Linn-Mar Stadium.

For a team that was giving up more than 40 points a contest, Linn-Mar was stingy all night. The Golden Eagles could never get a sustained attack going against a swarming Lions' defense.

"It feels good to finally shut somebody out," said junior linebacker Logan Benter. "We only gave up three points when I was in there. It just feels good."

The good feeling was felt throughout the team. The offense racked up 457 yards as the Lions had their most balanced effort of the season.

"We played really well on defense," said Coach Bob Forsyth. "Our kids have always given great effort and tonight we really executed."

"In the big picture, it is always about more than X's and O's," he said. "They have faced adversity, faced it head on and done their best to work through it. They care about their coaches and their coaches really care about them. It was good for us to finish off with a win tonight."

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Benter said it was the coaches who kept the defense focused during the tough times.

“Our coaches tell us 'good job' when we do good things,” he said. “I mean, they hammer us when we don’t play well, but they always pick us up. We have the same attitude every single practice. We’re a team and we stay together.”

Linn-Mar (2-4, 2-2) was in control from the start. If it weren’t for a couple of turnovers deep in their own territory, the Lions could have been looking at a shutout.

Junior quarterback Ryan Schmidt and senior tailback Ross Lembeck were both solid on offense again for the Lions. Lembeck got the Lions on the board on a nifty 36-yard run with 3:36 left in the first quarter, capping a 16-play, 55-yard drive.

The defense set up the next score, forcing a Wahlert fumble that was recovered by Griffin Brennecke on the Golden Eagles’ 37. Two plays later, Schmidt hit Brennecke on a 30-yard scoring toss, putting the Lions up 14-0.

Wahlert (2-4, 0-3) got on the board after Linn-Mar fumbled on its own 20. But again the Lion defense held, holding the Golden Eagles to a 37-yard field goal by Mitchell Gaul.

Following the field goal, the Lions drove it down the field again. Junior Perrion Scott capped the scoring march, taking the ball on a jet sweep 7 yards for a score on a fourth down and two play.

It was the first of two scores for Scott, a state sprint champion in track who has been fighting his way back from a stress fracture in his foot suffered during the summer.

“I hurt it during our summer camp just before practices started,” Scott said. “It has gotten a little better each week, thanks to our trainer (Jill Hendricks). She helps me out every day. I don’t

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know where I would be without her help.”

Linn-Mar put the game out of reach with two scores in the third quarter. Scott got his second TD on a 4-yard run. Schmidt followed with a beautiful swing pass to Lembeck out of the backfield for a 14-yard score.

Benter had Linn-Mar’s final TD on an 80-yard run that saw him make a couple of nifty cuts to avoid Wahlert defenders.

“I was pretty tired afterwards,” Benter said of his scoring run. “It felt good to finish it off.”

The Lions, who are still alive for a Class 4A playoff berth, face a tough stretch to end the season. Road games are next at Cedar Rapids Prairie and Iowa City High, before closing at home against top-ranked Xavier, which was upset at home Friday night by Cedar Rapids Washington.

“From a coaching standpoint, we have to make sure their heads don’t stay turned,” Forsyth said. “For the kids, to win the homecoming game and go to the homecoming dance after the win is a big deal.

“We’re really happy for them,” Forsyth continued, “but we have to come back next week and keep trying to get better. We have another tough game ahead of us on the road so we will have to keep working.”

LINN-MAR 42, DUBUQUE WAHLERT 17

At Linn-Mar Stadium

DW	L-M	
First downs	12	19
Rushes-yards	40-135	40-256
Passing yards	49	201
Comp-Att-Int	5-19-1	12-19-1

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Fumbles-lost	1-1	4-3
Punts-avg.	8-33.0	2-28.0
Penalties-yards	0-0	5-49

Dubuque Wahlert	0	3	0	14 – 17
Linn-Mar	7	14	14	7 – 42

LM – Ross Lembeck 36 run (Austin Wolter kick)
LM – Griffin Brennecke 30 pass from Ryan Schmidt (Wolter kick)
DW – FG Mitch Gaul 37
LM – Perrion Scott 7 run (Wolter kick)
LM – Scott 4 run (Wolter kick)
LM – Lembeck 14 pass from Schmidt (Wolter kick)
DW – Jared Walker 20 pass from Daniel Broderick (Gaul kick)
LM – Logan Benter 80 run (Wolter kick)
DW – Riley Hasken 11 run (Gaul kick)

Individual Statistics

Rushing

Dubuque Wahlert – Riley Hasken 23-102, Colin Smith 14-34, Danny Broderick 3-(minus-1)
Linn-Mar – Ross Lembeck 14-87, Ryan Schmidt 13-49, Tristan Freese 3-2, Logan Benter 3-95, Perrion Scott 6-30, Jordan Junkins 1-3.

Passing

Dubuque Wahlert – Danny Broderick 6-17-0-49, Jacob Nimmers 0-2-1-0
Linn-Mar – Ryan Schmidt 12-19-0-201

Receiving

Dubuque Wahlert – Jared Walker 4-46, Zachary Kapler 1-3
Linn-Mar – Griffin Brennecke 2-43, Andrew Gassmann 2-13, Ross Lembeck 4-62, Jon Schlotterback 2-29, Garrett Evans 2-62.