Written by Metro Sports Report Friday, 19 September 2014 23:46 - Last Updated Friday, 19 September 2014 23:47

Dakota Simonsen, a sophomore with absolutely no varsity experience, was minding his own business on the sideline Friday night when Cedar Rapids Prairie quarterback Trey Beckman was injured late in the third quarter and had to leave the game against North Scott.

Prairie Coach Mike Morrissey sent Simonsen into the game against the No.7 Lancers with the score tied, 7-7, and all the fans hooting and hollering.

"At first I was thinking, 'Oh crap,'" Simonsen confessed later. "I was nervous. First varsity game. Homecoming. And they're one of the better teams in the state."

Simonsen took a deep breath and made a gutsy call that resulted in the winning touchdown as Prairie topped North Scott, 13-7.

Simonsen originally stuck to the script after entering the game and gave the ball to star tailback Keagan Pinter five straight times on the winning drive and Pinter delivered with runs of 9, 15, 20, 7 and 5 yards that took the ball to the North Scott 3-yard line.

Morrissey called for the same play - give the ball to Pinter - but the quarterback has the option of reading the defense and throwing a bubble pass to a wide receiver if he thinks that's the smarter play in the situation.

Simonsen looked at the defense and did what he was trained to do. He faked a handoff to Pinter and threw a pass to the right side to Jojuan Simpson, who got a good block from Jalen Rima and stepped into the end zone for a 3-yard touchdown and a 13-7 lead.

"That was a decision I made," said Simonsen. "It's an option to either give it to Pinter or go (with a pass). All the linebackers were cheating over, so ... "

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So he threw the game-winning touchdown pass. And yes, it was the first pass he'd ever thrown at the varsity level.

"He made a gutsy read and made the throw," said Morrissey. "Not bad for his first varsity pass, I'd say.

"For a young kid to have the confidence to do that, it's pretty impressive. I almost went into panic mode for a second when I saw him pull it back. It was a great read."

Some fans may have wondered who he was. The No.12 who was listed on the varsity roster Friday night was Preston LaGrange, a defensive back and receiver. Simonsen, who actually played two quarters in the sophomore game Friday night as No.16, wore LaGrange's jersey for the varsity contest and made a memorable debut.

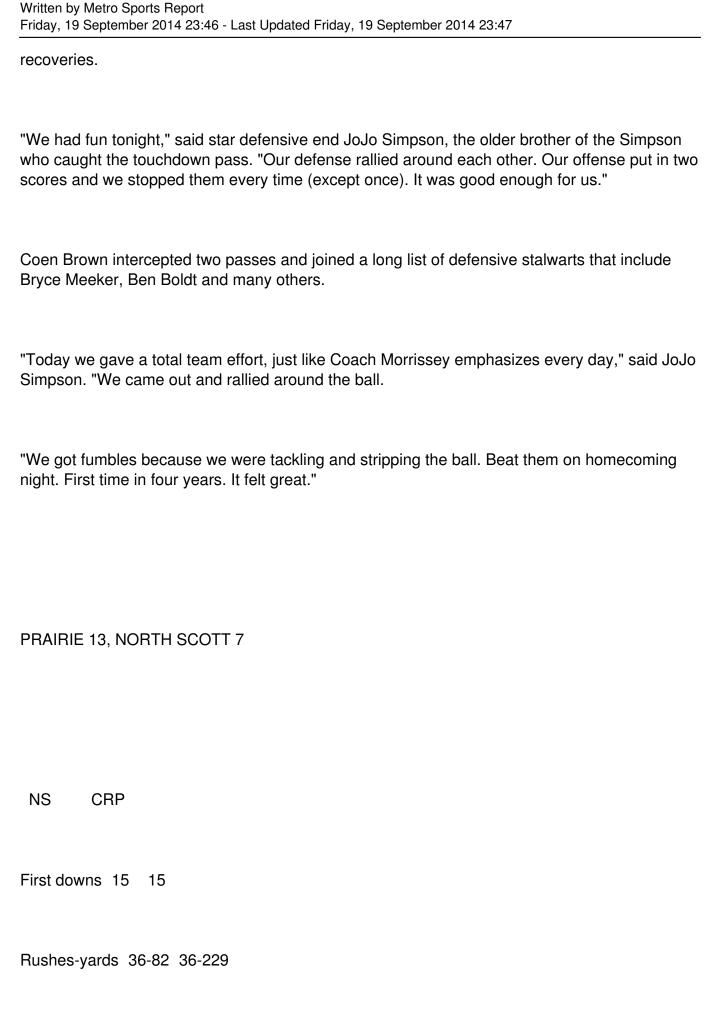
Pinter expected Simonsen to give him the ball at the 3-yard line with the game hanging in the balance, but was glad Simonsen did what he did. "That was pretty good," he said with a big smile.

Pinter did not touch the ball in the first quarter and was getting a little antsy, but he broke loose for a 54-yard touchdown in the second period and finished the game with 19 carries for 158 yards. He wanted the ball and finally got it.

"Yeah, I was impatient," he acknowledged, "but when I got it, I knew what to do with it."

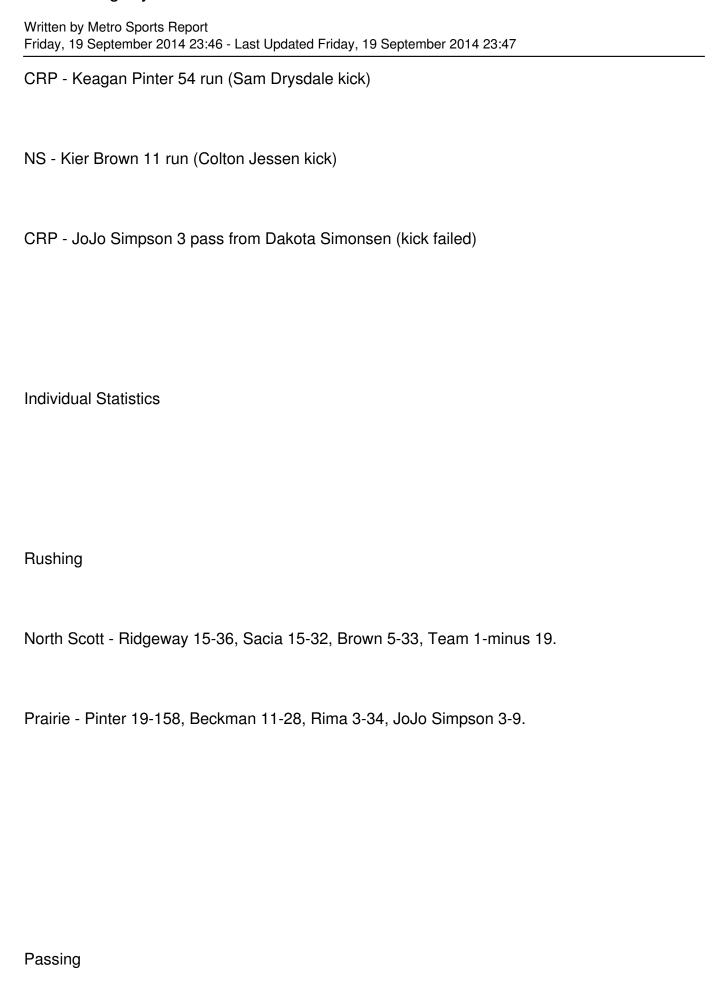
Beckman was knocked dizzy after running for 17 yards and a first down on the final play of the third quarter. He spent the rest of the game sitting on the bench as a precaution.

Simonsen stole the show with his gutsy performance, but the Prairie defense was the real show-stopper Friday night. The Hawks came up with seven turnovers against the No.7 team in the state with four interceptions of North Scott quarterback Matt Sacia and three fumble



Scoring plays

Written by Metro Sports Report Friday, 19 September 2014 23:46 - Last Updated Friday, 19 September 2014 23:47 Passing yards 145 84 Comp-Att-Int 18-28-4 17-31-4 Fumbles-lost 3-3 1-0 Punts-avg. 5-37.0 5-36.8 Penalties-yards 8-60 3-15 North Scott 0 0 7 0 - 7 Prairie 0 7 0 6 - 13



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Friday, 19 September 2014 23:46 - Last Updated Friday, 19 September 2014 23:47 North Scott - Sacia 18-28-4, 145. Prairie - Beckman 15-28-4, 84; Simonsen 2-3-0, 0. Receiving North Scott - Grimes 8-81, Steidler 1-11, Brown 3-19, Ridgeway 2-13, Gronewald 3-21. Prairie - Roma 5-24, Grade 4-34, Brown 2-14, Pinter 2-7, Jojuan Simpson 2-7, Alberts 1-1.