

Tovey, Heald star as Warriors foil Prairie

Written by Jim Ecker

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Flynn Heald never panicked when A.J. Puk quit the Cedar Rapids Washington football team three weeks ago.

Heald and Puk are buddies, but he was confident Braedon Tovey could take over at quarterback and give the Warriors a chance to win games.

He was exactly right.

Tovey passed for 253 yards and two touchdowns Friday night as the Warriors spanked Cedar Rapids Prairie, 51-26, in the Mississippi Valley Conference opener on the new artificial turf at Prairie's John Wall Field.

Washington spoiled Mike Morrissey's debut as Prairie's head coach and served notice that it's still a dangerous team without Puk and injured tailback Will Griffin.

Heald caught nine balls for 238 yards and snared both of Tovey's TD passes as Washington rolled up 502 yards and 23 first downs.

"Braedon is a great leader, and he just does everything right," Heald said. "He does everything well in the classroom as well as on the football field. And as you saw tonight, he did exactly what he was supposed to do."

Puk was Washington's starting quarterback last year as a sophomore, but he left the team this month to concentrate on baseball. That thrust Tovey into the starting lineup.

"Two weeks ago I felt a lot of pressure," Tovey said. "I was feeling it a little bit this morning, but by the time I got on the bus I was ready to go."

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"We like Puk, but we're over him," he said. "We had to move on, we had to move forward with who we have."

The Warriors were split almost 50-50 between the passing game and running game Friday. They threw for 253 yards and ran for 249 with Mitch Bredeson (115 yards), David Tann (72 yards) and Walter Short (61 yards) doing most of the work.

Last year, Washington ran for 2,328 yards and passed for only 612 with Puk at the helm.

"We're a lot more balanced this year," Tovey noted. "We can throw the ball whenever we want, and then we have three running backs plus David Tann (the fullback). And then when Will comes back"

Griffin was supposed to be Washington's starting tailback, but he had preseason ankle surgery and will miss at least half the season. His right ankle is encased in a walking boot and he used crutches to get around Friday night.

Washington Coach Tony Lombardi liked what he saw Friday and credited his big, experienced offensive line for making it possible.

"Braedon Tovey was terrific," he said. "I was very pleased with how he played, how he managed our team, with how he maintained his composure all day."

Tovey and Heald looked like they've been playing pitch-and-catch all their lives. They're both seniors, but Heald has been at Washington for only a few years after transferring from Xavier.

The Warriors scored on their first possession when Tovey hit Heald with a 33-yard TD pass on a quick march. They combined for a 68-yard score in the third quarter after Prairie had rallied

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within 30-19.

"Flynn Heald is a darn fine high school football player," Lombardi said. "I don't think anyone knows that, so it's nice for him to have a chance to go out and show that."

Short scored on a pair of 1-yard runs for the Warriors. They also got touchdowns from Tann (11-yard run), Sean Bredl (40-yard interception return) and Bredeson (6-yard run).

Demetrius Harper scored on a 74-yard sprint for the Prairie Hawks and also caught a 32-yard TD pass from Jace Hanna. Drake Brunscheen snared a 26-yard touchdown pass from Peyton Wagner to finish the scoring for the Hawks.

Prairie collected 378 yards of total offense, but committed four turnovers and had breakdowns on defense.

"We had some good moments, we had some bad moments," said Morrissey, Prairie's 28-year-old head coach. "The problem was, we had too many turnovers and we had too many mental mistakes. And when you do that against a good team like Washington they're going to make you pay."

The Hawks could have pulled within 30-23 in the third quarter, but one of their receivers dropped a wide-open touchdown pass and they had to settle for a 35-yard field goal by Austin Reutzel.

Washington then scored three straight touchdowns to put the game out of reach.

"We are a young team. We made those young mistakes, and we made mistakes all over the place," Morrissey said. "The nice thing is, they're correctible."

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"I thought our effort tonight was outstanding. I really do. I felt the guys left it all on the field."

Harper, a speedy flanker, carried the ball seven times for 123 yards and caught three passes for 63 yards. Zach Witte rushed for 88 yards, mostly on a 66-yarder in the third quarter when he got caught from behind by Noah Dostal.

Hanna completed 6 of 18 passes for 102 yards and three interceptions. Several of his best passes were dropped.

Washington plays Jefferson at Kingston Stadium next Friday night. Prairie visits Xavier next Friday.

Prairie won the sophomore game 15-0.

WASHINGTON 51, PRAIRIE 26

CRW CRP

| | | |
|---------------|---------|--------|
| First Downs | 23 | 14 |
| Rushing | 49-249 | 32-232 |
| Passing | 11-18-1 | 8-20-3 |
| Passing Yards | 253 | 146 |
| Punts | 1-34.0 | 3-37.7 |
| Penalties | 4-40 | 10-60 |
| Fumbles/Lost | 1/0 | 1/1 |

| | | | | | | |
|------------|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| Washington | 7 | 23 | 14 | 7 | -- | 51 |
| Prairie | 2 | 7 | 7 | 10 | -- | 26 |

W - Flynn Heald 33 pass from Braedon Tovey (Michael Daugherty kick)

P - Safety (Tovey tackled in end zone by Andrew Netolicky)

W - Safety (Jace Hanna intentional grounding in end zone)

W - Walter Scott 1 run (Daugherty kick)

W - Short 1 run (Daugherty kick)

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P - Demetrius Harper 74 run (Austin Reutzel kick)

W - David Tann 11 run (Daugherty kick)

P - Harper 32 pass from Hanna (Reutzel kick)

P - Reutzel 35 FG

W - Heald 68 pass from Tovey (Daugherty kick)

W - Sean Bredl 40 interception return (Daugherty kick)

W - Mitch Bredeson 6 run (Daugherty kick)

P - Drake Brunscheen 26 pass from Peyton Wagner (Reutzel kick)

Individual Stats

Washington

Rushing: Bredeson 17-115, Tann 8-72, Short 15-61, Tovey 4-4, McBride 5-minus 3.

Passing: Tovey 11-18-1, 253.

Receiving: Heald 9-238, Blades 1-9, Oney 1-6.

Prairie

Rushing: Harper 7-123, Witte 11-88, Wagner 4-9, Hanna 7-6, Reutzel 1-4, Rathje 1-3, Beyer 1-minus 1.

Passing: Hanna 6-18-3, 102; Wagner 2-2-0, 44.

Receiving: Harper 3-63, Brunscheen 2-50, Edmonds 1-18, Witte 1-10, Goodale 1-5.