

No.6 Lions pounce on Prairie, 44-14

Written by Guy Martino

Friday, 23 September 2011 23:42 - Last Updated Friday, 30 September 2011 02:12

Linn-Mar Coach Bob Forsyth preached all week in practice that he wanted his team to come out strong in its upcoming game against Prairie.

Come Friday night, the word "strong" proved to be a bit of an understatement.

Led by senior gunslinger Mark Atwater, the sixth-ranked Lions ran out to a 37-0 halftime lead and cruised to a 44-14 victory over Prairie at John Wall Field.

"Our coaches and our kids did a great job of getting ready this week," Forsyth said. "We wanted to come out and explode and get at it right away.

"We knew this was a big rivalry with Prairie and we wanted to just get going and the kids were able to do that," he said. "We were able to get our jayvee team in there in the second half so it really worked out well."

Atwater was stellar despite playing only two quarters. He hit 13 of 19 passes for 176 yards and two touchdowns, and rushed for 33 yards and another score.

"We just had a really good plan coming in and up front we did really well," Atwater said. "We had five or six guys with our tight end pass protecting really well all night.

"We were really balanced, 170 yards passing and good rushing in the first half and I think that's about all you can ask for as far as balance."

Atwater is the beneficiary of several offensive weapons and a solid offensive line, but his individual play is not to be ignored.

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“Mark is an exceptional football player and he does a lot for this football team,” Forsyth said. “He just goes day in and day out and in practice. I’m just really happy for him. He played a great game.”

Not to be outdone by their offensive mates, the Lion defensive starters also put together an impressive first-half performance as they held Prairie to 21 yards of total offense.

“Our coaches had a great game plan on defense and we just executed really well in all phases of the game to begin with,” Forsyth said. “Then we had a chance to get our jayvee team in there and gave up a few touchdowns, but that’s okay, those kids were playing hard.”

Prairie (0-5) did not record a first down until six minutes were left in the second quarter, and quarterback Jace Hanna faced pressure from everywhere. Hanna completed 1 of 9 passes for three yards.

“We forced a lot of three-and-outs, and we put a lot of pressure on them,” Atwater said. “That was another great defensive performance and I was really excited about that.”

Linn-Mar (5-0) got on the board first when Quinn Treiber nailed a 23-yard field goal early in the first quarter.

The Lions then jumped on the back of running back Mitch Wantock, who dashed for a 25-yard score with five minutes remaining in the first period.

The Lions' defense flashed their claws late in the first when Zach Martins intercepted a Hanna pass. Atwater rewarded Martins a few plays later as the two connected for a 25-yard touchdown with one second left in the opening frame to put the Lions up 16-0.

Wantock struck again early in the second period, scoring from three yards out. Wantock ran for 133 yards and two scores in the first half.

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Atwater sealed the deal with a 40-yard scoring strike to Andy Henry with 6:51 left in the half and a 2-yard quarterback sneak as time expired to run the lead to 37-0.

Prairie got a spark in the second half from fullback Cameron Rathje and receiver Alex Nelson, but Linn-Mar's big first-half lead proved to be insurmountable.

Prairie tries to right the ship as it travels to Waterloo East on Friday. Linn-Mar hosts Dubuque Senior on the same night for its homecoming game.

LINN-MAR 44, PRAIRIE 14

LM CRP

First Downs	18	11
Rushing	35-212	28-141
Passing	13-19-0	1-11-1
Passing Yards	173	3
Punts	2-25	5-32
Fumbles/Lost	1/0	1/0
Penalties	4-20	3-30

LM - Quinn Treiber 23 FG

LM - Mitch Wantock 25 run (kick failed)

LM - Zach Martins 25 pass from Mark Atwater (Treiber kick)

LM - Wantock 3 run (Treiber kick)

LM - Andy Henry 40 pass from Atwater (Treiber kick)

LM - Atwater 2 run (Treiber kick)

LM - Jake Luerkens 27 run (Treiber kick)

CRP - Cameron Rathje 9 run (Austin Reutzle kick)

CRP - Zach Witte 2 run (Reutzle kick)

Individual Statistics

Linn-Mar

Rushing - Wantock 15-133, Atwater 7-33, Ophoff 5-12, Davis 4-13, Redmond 1-9, Jeffries 1-3, Luerkens 1-27.

Passing - Atwater 13-19-0 173.

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Receiving - Henry 4-76, Redmond 3-23, Hutchins 2-25, Kvach 2-20, Martins 2-31, Sanchez 1-6.

Prairie

Rushing - Witte 9-31, Rathje 7-43, Nelson 4-46, Wagner 3-32, Beyer 1-3, Hanna 2-minus 13, Goodale 2-minus 1.

Passing - Hanna 1-9-1, 3; Wagner 0-2-0, 0.

Receiving - Wagner 1-3.