

Harper return a good one for Prairie

Written by Jake Koolbeck

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Prairie junior Demetrius Harper, playing his first game after breaking his collarbone Sept. 2, returned a kickoff 88 yards for a touchdown with less than two minutes left in a tie game and lifted the Hawks past Dubuque Hempstead, 35-28, Friday night in a Mississippi Valley Conference football game at John Wall Field.

"We just got him (Harper) back this week from a collarbone injury, he has been itching all week to get out there," Prairie Coach Mike Morrissey said. "He took advantage of what his 10 teammates on the field did. They really set him up well."

Prairie (2-4, 2-6) posted its second win in as many weeks and all but ended Hempstead's playoff hopes. The Hawks still entertain an outside chance of making the playoffs, but need to beat No. 3 Iowa City High in their finale next Friday at Iowa City.

Hempstead had tied the game on Layton Fritsch's 3-yard run with 1:56 to play. It was Fritsch's fourth touchdown run of the game.

Harper scooped up the ensuing kickoff at the Prairie 12, found a seam, and turned on the afterburners as he sped 88 yards for the winning touchdown.

"All the blockers did a good job, they opened up a huge hole I couldn't pass up," Harper said.

The Prairie Hawks sealed all but sealed the game on the next defensive play when Braeden Carlson intercepted a pass from Hempstead's Luke Ploessl. The Mustangs got another chance with about 20 seconds left in the game. But they fumbled the ball away on a sack to end the game.

After falling behind 7-0 early in the game, Prairie scored the next three touchdowns and led 21-7 in the third quarter. Hempstead's Fritsch had scoring runs of 33 and 6 yards to tie the game.

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Prairie reclaimed the lead, 28-21, on Harper's 8-yard touchdown run. But back came the Mustangs to tie the game.

"No doubt, we had lots of confidence in the offense and defense," Carlson and Harper said when asked about giving up a 14-point lead and still managing to win. "It turned into a shootout and we knew the offense could keep up."

Sophomore quarterback Dylan Kuchemann tossed a 28-yard touchdown pass to Jarrod Edmonds to tie the game at 7-7 in the first quarter. Kuchemann filled in for injured starter Jace Hanna, who suffered a concussion in the Hawks' 29-17 win over Jefferson last week.

"Dylan did a great job. He managed the game and made some big throws when we needed them," Morrissey said. "He did great for being thrown into it with only two days to practice."

Junior Cameron Rathje's 4-yard touchdown run gave Prairie a 14-7 lead with 50 seconds left in the first half.

Prairie then scored on the opening drive of the second half. Carlson got around the edge and spirited down the sideline for a 53-yard touchdown romp and a 21-7 lead.

PRAIRIE 35, DUBUQUE HEMPSTEAD 28

CRP HEMP

First Downs 14 17

Rushing 36-205 50-206

Passing 5-10-1 12-23-2

Passing Yards 151 140

Punts 5-34 4-36

Fumbles/Lost 1-1 1-1

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Penalties 5-45 2-30

Prairie 7 7 7 14 – 35

Hempstead 7 0 7 14 – 28

Scoring Plays

DH – Layton Fritsch 2 run (Chris Francis Kick)

CRP – Jarrod Edmonds 28 pass from Dylan Kuchemann (Austin Reutzel Kick)

CRP – Cameron Rathje 4 run (Reutzel Kick)

CRP – Carlson 53 run (Reutzel Kick)

DH – Fritsch 33 Run (Francis Kick)

DH – Fritsch 6 Run (Francis Kick)

CRP – Harper 8 Run (Reutzel Kick)

DH – Fritsch 3 run (Francis Kick)

CRP – Harper 88 kick return (Reutzel Kick)

Individual Stats

Prairie

Rushing: Zach Witte 8-25, Cameron Rathje 8-35, Demetrius Harper 4-25, Braeden Carlson 6-100, Dylan Kuchemann 6-22, Austin Dellamuth 1-(-4)

Passing: Dylan Kuchemann 4-9-1, 80. Braeden Carlson 1-1-0, 71.

Receiving: Jarrod Edmonds 2-49, Austin Dellamuth 1-71, Carson Goodale 1-22, Tristan Beyer 1-9.

Dubuque Hempstead

Rushing: Layton Fritsch 21-167, Jacob Hodge 16-75, Mark Owens 4-4, Luke Ploessl 8-(-38), Shane Smith 1-(-2)

Passing: Luke Ploessl 12-23-2, 140.

Receiving: Alex Smith 5-43, Conner Elhers 2-28, Layton Fritsch 1-18, Ben Goerdts 4-51

Sophomore Game – Prairie 0, Dubuque Hempstead 7