

Hawks overcome sluggish start to whip Wahawks

Written by Tom Fruehling

Saturday, 20 October 2012 00:50 -

Wearing shorts on the sidelines in the cold drizzly rain Friday night, Prairie Coach Mike Morrissey watched his resurgent Hawks pour it on in the second half to douse Waterloo West, 31-7.

"I just don't like wearing long pants," explained the dripping wet, energetic and personable young coach afterward. "Year-round, I always wear shorts. It's stupid, I know."

In his second year at Prairie, Morrissey beat long odds to take a team that was 2-7 last year into next week's playoffs with a 6-3 mark. The Hawks are seeded 10th and will play at seventh-seeded Dubuque Senior (7-2) Wednesday night.

To win at home on John Wall Field on senior night, the Hawks had to regroup from a sluggish 7-0 halftime lead.

"We started out kind of slow," said huge sophomore offensive right tackle Bryce Meeker, who earlier this week was invited to the U.S. Army's All-American combine for underclassmen in January. "But once we figured out our blocking, we opened up the holes and our running game got a lot better. We finally made a statement with the run."

Waterloo West (3-6) outplayed Prairie in the first half with 183 yards rushing on several long runs.

But the visitors kept shooting themselves in the foot. Their first half was marred by bad snaps on a field goal attempt and an attempted punt, two fumbles on one play with one of them lost, seven plays for minus yardage and a pair of costly penalties.

West moved the ball to the Prairie 25 early in the second quarter. Two holding penalties and a sack by relentless Hawk linebacker Cam Rathje pushed them back to the 40.

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On fourth down punter Skyler Capelle tried to run after fielding a high snap and ended up losing another five yards.

Prairie marched right down the field for the only score of the half on a 3-yard burst by Mitch Christensen.

West's woes continued in the second half.

Trailing 10-0 after a Sam Drysdale 23-yard field goal, West benefitted from a roughing the kicker penalty on a punt to get to Prairie's 20 with inches to go for a first down. Two more penalties and a 16-yard loss after yet another bad snap gave the ball back to Prairie.

Once again, the Hawks struck right back with a 5-yard score by Trevor Northrup. The freshmen running back, hurt earlier in the season, played the whole second half after Christensen suffered a bruised thigh.

"We definitely took advantage of our opportunities on their mistakes," said Rathje, whose 31-yard return of an interception led to the Hawks' next touchdown. He picked off the ball at the 32 and was knocked out of bounds one yard short of the goal.

"I read the screen," said Rathje, "and just stepped in front of the receiver. I got knocked out diving for the pylon."

Quarterback Jace Hanna scored a play later, however, and Jarred Edmonds intercepted another pass on the next West possession and took it back 71 yards to the 4-yard line.

Hanna's short pass to pass to Caleb Davison closed out the scoring. Although West scored once in the fourth quarter, it was held to just 22 yards rushing in the second half.

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"I thought that defensively we played a very, very solid game," said Morrissey. "They got some big plays in the first half, but our kids buckled down and held them."

After a first half of only 36 passing yards, Hanna picked up the pace after the intermission. Morrissey said that helped.

"We threw the ball more effectively, and that kind of spaced them out on defense. And our run game started to click a little better."

West also qualified for the playoffs and will play at Iowa City West on Wednesday.

PRAIRIE 31, WATERLOO WEST 7

WW	CRP	
First downs	8	20
Rushing	38-205	48-227
Passing	5-15-2	13-28-0
Passing yards	69	120
Punts	3-34.1	4-31.2
Fumbles/lost	5/1	1/1
Penalties	5-45	7-70

Waterloo West	0	0	0	7	–	7
Prairie	0	7	10	14	–	31

SCORING PLAYS

CRP – Mitch Christensen 3 run (Sam Drysdale kick)

CRP – FG Drysdale 23

CRP – Trevor Northrip 5 run (Drysdale kick)

WW-- Michael Price 37 pass from Alexander Young (Skyler Capelle kick)

CRP – Jace Hanna 1 run (Drysdale kick)

CRP – Caleb Davison 3 pass from Hanna (Drysdale kick)

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING: Waterloo West – Dequayvious Martin 15-115, Lance Dunn 7-68, Alexander Young 12-20, Lajashiene Williams 2-13. Prairie – Mitch Christensen 14-63, Demetrius Harper 4-12,

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Trevor Northrup 11-60, Jarred Edmonds 1-3, Jace Hanna 9-46, Trey Beckman 3-21, Briar VanDraska 5-23.

PASSING: Waterloo West – Young 5-15-2-69. Prairie – Hanna 13-28-0-120.

RECEIVING: Waterloo West – Michael Price 2-44, Ross Jensen 2-18, Martin 1-7. Prairie – Harper 6-68, Mitch Dellamuth 1-17, Kentrel Smith 1-7, Christensen 1-15, Edmonds 2-7, Caleb Davison 1-4, Tristan Beyer 1-8.

Sophomore game -- Prairie 40, Waterloo West 21