

Prairie thievery stuns No. 2 West, 49-28

Written by Guy Martino

Monday, 29 October 2012 23:24 -

IOWA CITY -- When Prairie played Iowa City West earlier this season, Jace Hanna leaned on his crutches and watched from the sideline as the Trojans dismantled his Prairie Hawks.

This time around, there were no crutches, and Prairie did the dismantling.

A rejuvenated Prairie team stunned the second-ranked and mistake-prone Trojans, 49-28, Monday night in a Class 4A second round football playoff game.

Prairie (8-3) advances to play No. 3 Xavier (11-0) in Friday night's quarterfinals at Xavier.

Prairie forced Iowa City West (10-1) into seven turnovers and three led to touchdowns.

Even though Hanna was in Monday's starting lineup, he was still nursing a sprained ankle that he suffered in last week's playoff opener against Dubuque Senior. That proved to be a minor setback, as the senior quarterback threw for 321 yards and four touchdowns against the Trojans.

"I felt good," said Hanna. "I didn't practice much this week, but we all came out with a bunch of energy and played really well."

Hanna and the Prairie Hawks played inspired football, and put on a passing clinic against the usually daunting West defense.

Whenever Prairie was in a bind and needed a big play, Hanna and his talented squad of receivers made it look easy. They would pepper the outside on long, but accurate fade routes, only to come right back to the middle seam. The Trojan secondary had its hands full.

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"They ran a lot of cover two, and the middle was wide open a lot of the time," said Hanna. "I pretty much took what they gave me."

Two of Hanna's touchdowns were on long fades deep to the corner, and two were seams up the middle of the field.

Hanna spread the wealth, finding five different receivers. Jarred Edmonds was his favorite target. The senior wideout caught 10 balls for 119 yards and two scores, running his season touchdown total to 16. Demetrius Harper caught four passes for a whopping 128 yards and a score.

"He is such a difference maker and there is a reason why we feel that he is a special player," said Prairie Coach Mike Morrissey said of Hanna. "When he is on, he is really tough. He manned up, too because he was hurt a little bit, but we are very proud of his performance."

Along with the aerial onslaught, Prairie quietly but effectively ran the ball with tailback Mitch Christensen. Christensen rushed 31 times for 110 yards and pounded the ball into the end zone three times.

The scrappy back went down to the turf with an injury with a minute left in the first half, only to come back after intermission and contribute to Prairie's dominance.

"He had a great game, and he gives us great balance," said Hanna. "He got banged up a little bit, but he is a tough guy and got back in there."

In the waning moments of the first half, Prairie made the momentous play of the game. With two seconds left, Hanna had Prairie down to the Trojan 18-yard line. He dropped back to pass and found Edmonds streaking to the center of the end zone, perfectly arching the ball over the outstretched hands of two Trojan defenders for a touchdown that put the Prairie Hawks up 28-21 at half.

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Then after the break, Prairie came out and slammed the door shut. They scored 21 unanswered points, and blanketed West's powerful offense.

Prairie picked off Trojan quarterback Nate Boland three times. Along with catching a touchdown pass from Hanna on offense, Kentrel Smith recorded two interceptions on defense. Over the past two playoff games Prairie has intercepted seven passes.

"It is the same thing they have been doing the past two weeks," said Morrissey. "They have been a gritty and tough group of kids. They are trusting each other more and more and I think that goes a long way."

Hanna and Prairie didn't worry much about their underdog status coming into the game.

"We knew that a lot of people were against us, so we had nothing to lose and came out and played like that."

And Morrissey acknowledged the feat his team pulled off.

"I am so proud of these guys, that is one heck of a football team we just beat."

Iowa City West beat the Hawks, 58-27, in Week 4 of the season. The Trojans were unbeaten in winning the MVC Mississippi Division and had a conference title showdown looming against Xavier, which won the Valley Division with an unbeaten mark.

Instead, Prairie will play the Saints with a chance to avenge another loss. Xavier beat the Hawks 48-14 in Week 3 at Prairie.

PRAIRIE 49, IOWA CITY WEST 28

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CRP	ICW					
Rushes-Yards	36-116		35-201			
Passing	20-34-0		15-30-3			
Passing Yards	321		195			
Punts	4-37.5		0			
Fumbles-Lost	1-0		5-4			
Penalties	5-45		7-60			
Prairie	7	21	14	7	--	49
West	7	14	0	7	--	28

SCORING PLAYS

CRP: Mitchell Christensen 1 run (Samuel Drysdale kick)
ICW: Ezra Reiners 9 run (Mueng Sunday kick)
CRP: Christensen 1 run (Drysdale kick)
ICW: Nate Boland 1 run (Sunday kick)
CRP: Kentrel Smith 17 pass from Jace Hanna (Drysdale kick)
ICW: Reid Bonner 69 punt return (Sunday kick)
CRP: Jarred Edmonds 18 pass from Hanna (Drysdale kick)
CRP: Christensen 5 run (Drysdale kick)
CRP: Demetrius Harper 24 pass from Hanna (Drysdale kick)
CRP: Edmonds 19 pass from Hanna (Drysdale kick)
ICW: Reiners 1 run (Sunday kick)

INDIVIDUAL STATS

Rushing

CRP: Mitchell Christensen 31-107, Jace Hanna 5-9
ICW: Ezra Reiners 20-130, Nate Boland 10-40, Reid Bonner 2-23, Mueng Sunday 1-11, Micah Kelsay 1-0, Tavian Smith 1- -3.

Passing

CRP: Hanna 20-34-0-321
ICW: Boland 15-30-3-195

Receiving

CRP: Jarred Edmonds 10-115, Demetrius Harper 4-128, Mitchell Dellamuth 2-53, Kentrel Smith 2-24, Mitch Christensen 2-1.
ICW: Ezra Reiners 5-82, Jeremy Morgan 5-51, Dondre Alexander 3-41, Anthony Batie 1-16, Reid Bonner 1-5