

Wash trims Jeff for 4th in row

Written by Tom Fruehling

Saturday, 12 October 2013 00:17 -

A couple of old warhorses, Cedar Rapids Washington Principal Ralph Plagman and Coach Paul James, stood talking at midfield Friday night after the Warriors eked out a 14-7 win over Jefferson at Kingston Stadium.

They've been together 33 years now, and neither can remember a Cinderella football season like the one they're now enjoying.

James was brought back to coach a team with dim prospects after former coach Tony Lombardi resigned. They lost their first three games with very little flair.

Now, however, the Warriors have won four in a row, including a huge upset over then-No.1 Xavier last week.

At 4-3, they're pretty much assured of a playoff berth. Moreover, they're 3-1 in the MVC Mississippi Division and tied for first place.

"We're now playing for a conference championship," James said, perhaps even surprising himself with the observation. "We're tied with Xavier with one loss, and we control our own destiny.

"We just need to focus on what's ahead, next week at Prairie and then against Wahlert."

Coming down from the high of knocking off Xavier, Washington got a quick kick in the gut Friday from a gutsy but hard-luck Jefferson bunch.

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Taking the opening kickoff, the J-Hawks (1-6) methodically marched down field with a 17-play, seven-minute drive to take a 7-0 lead. Workhorse senior quarterback Layne Sullivan ran 10 times for 30 yards in the 80-yard trek and passed twice for short yardage. He scored from five yards out.

Facing Jefferson's hurry-up, no-huddle offense with runners in motion, Washington was back-pedaling much of the time. And on their first possession, the Warriors went three and out.

"I started wondering what was going on," James admitted afterward. "At that point, things looked a little bleak."

The Warriors got the ball back in good field position after an 8-yard shanked punt, but quarterback Reid Snitker's pass was picked off by Jefferson's Ben Baxter at the 8-yard line.

"We weren't having one of our better games on offense, not even close," said Snitker.

Through much of the first half, Jefferson was the dominant team, especially with big (6-foot-2, 321 pound) Michael Smith and agile William Orr clogging up the middle of the line and making it tough on Washington to move the ball.

As has been the case so often this season, however, the J-Hawks were their own worst enemy.

Halfway through the second quarter, Sullivan scampered around end for 29 yards to the Washington 6, only to have the play called back for holding. Jefferson ended up punting.

Snitker, who was 16 for 25 passing for 163 yards, put the two-minute offense in motion. His fourth-down pass from the Jefferson 29 was swatted down, but the play was nullified by a holding call on Jefferson.

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With 30 seconds left in the half and no timeouts, Snitker hit speedy sophomore Isaiah Nimmers at the 4-yard line and yet another J-Hawk penalty moved the ball halfway to the goal.

Snitker sneaked in for a score with 5.2 seconds to go, but the Warriors missed the PAT kick and trailed 7-6 at halftime.

Taking a cue from Jefferson, the Warriors started the second half by grinding out a seven-minute drive of their own and went ahead on another 1-yard plunge by Snitker. Washington bumped its lead to 14-7 on Snitker's two-point PAT pass to Clayton Bjornsen.

"Scoring on fourth down just before the half and then coming right back to open the second half was huge," James said. "And then we got a really solid defensive effort throughout the second half.

"I thought our line and our linebackers played really well."

In fact, Jefferson did next to nothing after halftime.

Sullivan carried the ball eight times for minus two yards, and the only other runner gained nothing on one attempt. Four pass completions netted just 12 yards.

After churning out 10 first downs in the first half, the J-Hawks could manage only two in the second. One of them was on a penalty.

"We didn't do anything different," James said. "Credit our players. They just played lights out that second half."

Snitker said it was a matter of concentrating on his counterpart for the J-Hawks.

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"Sullivan is a great athlete," he said. "But he has the ball 95 percent of the time. Our line just keyed on him the second half. The defense picked up the slack for our offense.

"They were playing some smash-mouth football."

WASHINGTON 14 JEFFERSON 7

CRJ	CRW
First downs	12 18
Rushes-yards	38-140 38-97
Passing yards	27 163
Comp-att-int	6-15-0 16-25-2
Fumbles-lost	0-0 4-0
Punts-avg.	4-36.5 1-21
Penalties-yards	7-52 8-75

Jefferson	7	0	0	0	-	7
Washington	0	6	8	0	-	14

CRJ – Layne Sullivan 5 run (Nick Rocha kick)

CRW – Reid Snitker 1 run (kick failed)

CRW – Snitker 1 run (Sniker pass to Clayton Bjornsen)

Individual statistics

Rushing

Jefferson – Sullivan 26-76, Jones 3-4, Frazier 2-8, Moncivais 3-8, Lund 4-44

Washington – Snitker 14-63, Dobbs 10-9, Taylor 9-10, C. Vincent 5-15

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Passing

Jefferson – Sullivan 6-15-0-27

Washington – Snitker 16-25-2-163

Receiving

Jefferson – Lund 3-12, Moncivais 3-15

Washington – Dobbs 1-5, Akers 4-58, Nimmers 5-43, C.Bjornsen 3-15, J.Bjornsen 3-40