

Revived J-Hawks top Cougars in OT

Written by Jim Ecker

Thursday, 25 September 2014 23:34 - Last Updated Friday, 26 September 2014 12:08



The hugs never felt so sweet. The band never sounded so good. The cheerleaders never looked prettier.

After too many years of misery and misfortune, the Jefferson J-Hawks finally had a great reason to celebrate at Kingston Field Thursday night.

Jesse Furrow hit Valentino Green with a 2-yard touchdown pass on a gutsy call on fourth down in overtime as the revived J-Hawks topped Kennedy, 27-24, to snap all sorts of negative streaks.

Jefferson had lost 25 straight games to Metro opponents and had not beaten Kennedy in 12 years, but all that negativity was washed away on a balmy night at Kingston.

The J-Hawks trailed, 24-21, in overtime with the ball resting on the 2-yard line. It was fourth down and a field goal would have tied the game and forced a second overtime, but Coach Brian Webb wanted nothing to do with that.

"Guys, I wasn't going for the tie. I was going for the win!" he yelled at his jubilant players during the post-game celebration. "I'm here to win games!"

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"Great throw, great reception, great defense," said Webb as the Jefferson Band of Blue played "Sweet Caroline" in the stands.

Webb's teams went 2-16 during his first two years in town, but the J-Hawks are 3-2 this season and have an excellent chance of making the playoffs after claiming the Class 4A district opener for both teams.

The winless Cougars (0-5) had nine defenders crowding the middle of the field when Webb, working from the Bob Brooks press box, called for a play-action fake on the final play of the game. Furrow pretended to give the ball to tailback, Tavian Rashed, but he kept the pigskin and rolled to his left away from trouble.

"Don't mess up the throw. That's all I was thinking: Don't mess up the throw. Give him the ball," said Furrow. "It doesn't have to be perfect," he related. "Give him the ball and let him have it. He's a big boy. He can score."

Green said he was the second option on the play and wasn't sure if Furrow would find him or not.

"I took awhile to get open," said Green. "I had to go around the whole line to get open. When he rolled out and I saw him coming towards me, I knew he was going to throw me the ball.

"I was kind of nervous," said Green, "because I didn't think I was going to get over the (goal) line. But once I got it, I knew what to do."

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The J-Hawks went bonkers after Green scored the winning touchdown, hugging and screaming and jumping all around. For a while it looked like Jefferson offensive lineman Caleb Borseth was so overcome with emotion that he wanted to lie on the ground for awhile and enjoy the moment, but he was actually injured on the play and needed a few minutes to recover.

Borseth thinks he took a helmet to the side of his head.

"It made me a little dizzy," he said. "I felt nauseous and I blanked out, maybe, a little bit. But I'm up and walking now. I feel fine.

"We're doing big things this year," said Borseth, flashing a big smile. "And hopefully we'll make it to the playoffs."

Both of Jefferson's victories in 2012 and 2013 came on the road, so this was Webb's first triumph at Kingston. And it was Jefferson's first victory over a Metro opponent since topping Linn-Mar in 2008.

Webb told his players to celebrate and relish the moment, but don't be satisfied.

"This is not my Super Bowl," he told them. "I have a taste in my mouth for more."

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Kennedy had a golden opportunity to win the game on the final play of the fourth quarter, but Mark Schulz missed a 33-yard field goal from the middle of the field after Jefferson had called two straight timeouts to make him think about it. So instead of the Cougars celebrating a 24-21 victory, they went to overtime and put the ball at the 10-yard line.

Kennedy went first in overtime and this time Schulz booted a 25-yard field to give the Cougars a 24-21 edge.

Jefferson got the ball at the 10-yard line and gave the ball to Rashed three straight times for eight yards, putting the ball at the 2-yard line and making everyone wonder what Webb was going to do.

The answer came quickly when Furrow spotted Green and it was Happy Valentino's Day.

The outcome spoiled a fine performance by Kennedy quarterback Sammy Lizarraga, who hit Shaun Beyer with three touchdown passes that covered 41, 32 and 15 yards. The 15-yard strike in the fourth quarter gave the Cougars a 21-14 lead with 6:09 left in the game, but the J-Hawks were not done yet.

Furrow threw a dart to Many Oluntunde on 2nd-and-9 from his own 37-yard line and Olutunde broke loose and raced all the way to the end zone for a 63-yard TD, thanks to a terrific downfield block by Furnish. Caleb Kesterson kicked the extra point and the game was tied, 21-21, with 4:32 remaining.

The J-Hawks lingered on the field for more than 30 minutes after the game, savoring the moment. Meanwhile, Kennedy Coach Brian White tried to console his players in the locker room and said he was proud of their effort.

Kennedy would have gone home a winner if Schulz, a talented left-footed kicker, had nailed that 33-yard field goal in the final second of the

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fourth quarter.

"He just hooked it too far," said White. "It's killing him right now. He's tore up."

Kennedy played short-handed, with tailback Logan Wedo sidelined with a painful turf toe and linebacker Terrance Hall in street clothes with a sore ankle. Tyler Dralle became a workhouse in the backfield for the Cougars and carried the ball 25 times for 82 yards.

Lizarraga hit 13 of 20 passes for 201 yards and three TDs in his best game of the season. Furrow completed 11 of 18 throws for 171 yards and two touchdowns. Neither quarterback threw an interception. Rashed carried the ball 21 times for 96 yards.

Bob Ask, a Jefferson assistant football coach from 1957 to 1981, joined the post-game celebration and offered his words of congratulations to this group of J-Hawks.

"I have never been more proud," said Ask, who was a member of the Jefferson coaching staff that produced three straight titles. "Nice going, guys."

JEFFERSON 27, KENNEDY 24 (OT)

CRK □ □ □ □ CRJ

First downs	15	17
Rushes-yards	39-142	35-124
Passing yards	171	201
Comp-Att-Int	11-18-0	13-20-0
Fumbles-lost	2-0	1-1
Punts-avg.	2-19.5	3-50.0
Penalties-yards	3-20	5-35

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Kennedy 7 0 0 14 3 - 24

Jefferson 0 0 0 14 7 6 - 27

K - Shaun Beyer 41 pass from Sammy Lizarraga (Mark Schulz kick)

J - Tavian Rashed 16 run (Caleb Kesterson kick)

J - Mason Short 4 run (Kesterson kick)

K - Beyer 32 pass from Lizarraga (Schulz kick)

K - Beyer 15 pass from Lizarraga (Schulz kick)

J - Many Olutunde 63 pass from Jesse Furrow (Kesterson kick)

K - Schulz 25 FG

J - Valentino Green 2 pass from Furrow

Individual Statistics

Rushing

Kennedy - Dralle 25-82, Lizarraga 1-27, Blank 6-16, Beyer 2-1, Team 1-minus 2.

Jefferson - Rashed 21-96, Short 11-39, Hollandsworth 1-11, Furrow 5-minus 3, Stafford 1-minus.

Passing

Kennedy - Lizarraga 13-20-0, 201.

Jefferson - Furrow 11-18-0, 171.

Receiving

Kennedy - Beyer 5-110, Blank 4-30, Bell 2-28, Brewster 1-18, Dralle 1-15.

Jefferson - Green 4-28, Olutunde 3-85, Furnish 1-37, Lund 1-13, Rashed 1-7, Short 1-minus 1.