

Blackhawks fall in season opener

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SIOUX CITY – A late start to its practice season put Iowa behind schedule heading into its American Professional Football League opener at the Tyson Event Center.

And the Blackhawks played that way Friday against APFL newcomer Sioux City.

The two-time league champions trailed the Bandits nearly the entire way before pulling even with less than a minute to play. Sioux City countered, however, with a 28-yard touchdown pass from Scott Jensen to Fredrick Bruno with 26 seconds remaining to pull out a 57-50 win in its league debut.

Iowa missed two tackles on the game-winning play, then failed to score on its ensuing series.

"You can see that we made some fundamental mistakes tonight that we're going to have to clean up," Blackhawk coach Mike Wolff said. "That was a pretty good football team we played."

Jensen, one of only six holdovers from Sioux City's team that played in the Indoor Football League a year ago, threw for 190 yards and four touchdowns. He twice found Eddie Pertilla running behind the Iowa secondary as the Bandits built an 11-point lead in the second half.

"We played as a team," Jensen said. "That's what we're all about this year. It's a new beginning, a new start."

After struggling on offense in a 16-yard third quarter, Iowa tied the game at 50-all when Andrew Seymour hauled in his second touchdown reception from Chuck Wright with 54 seconds to play and Kaylon Price added a two-point conversion.

Sioux City started the winning drive at its own 6, but it scored in three plays to pull off a statement-making victory in its first APFL game. Iowa lost only once all of last season while winning its second consecutive league championship.

The Blackhawks almost pulled even again late as Robert Kirvin nearly pulled in a long pass from Wright at the goal line with 13 seconds left. Defensive back Buddy Williams broke up the play, however.

"I was really close," Kirvin said. "I had both hands on it. But when I went to pull it in, it hit his elbow and bounced out."

Wright, who had four TD passes but was intercepted twice, had to dump the ball off on the final two plays. Kirvin was tackled at the Sioux City 15 as time expired.

Price had 74 rushing yards and three touchdowns in the season opener for the Blackhawks, and John Bentley ran for three scores for Sioux City.

The two teams will play in Council Bluffs twice later this season. Wolff said his team should be more prepared by then after rushing through its preseason following the uncertainty surrounding the recent sale of the Blackhawks.

"Our guys battled the whole game," he said. "If we had that extra month of practice, we're probably a better football team than what we are (tonight)."

Iowa (0-1) 13 20 3 14 – 50

Sioux City (1-0) 21 16 7 13 – 57

SC: Eddie Pertilla 25 pass from Scott Jensen (Brian Darden kick)

I: Andrew Seymour 12 pass from Chuck Wright (Zach Kohlhoff kick)

SC: Andrew Prohaska 4 run (Darden kick)

I: Kaylon Price 43 run (kick failed)

SC: John Bentley 2 run (Darden kick)

I: Price 1 run (Kohlhoff kick)

I: Steve Rush 15 pass from Wright (Kohlhoff kick)

SC: Pertilla 38 pass from Jensen (Darden kick)

I: Robert Kirvin 7 pass from Wright (kick failed)

SC: Fredrick Bruno 13 pass from Jensen (kick failed)

SC: Darden 47 FG

SC: Bentley 1 run (Darden kick)

I: Kohlhoff 42 FG

I: Price 5 run (pass failed)

SC: Bentley 3 run (kick failed)

I: Seymour 17 pass from Wright (Price pass from Wright)

SC: Bruno 28 pass from Jensen (Darden kick)

SC: Bruno 28 pass from Jensen (Darden kick)

Individual Statistics

RUSHING: I, Price 11-74, Johnson 3-24, Wright 1-4, Rush 1-2. SC, Jensen 4-44, Prohaska 7-31, Bentley 9-18, Bruno 3-(-1).

PASSING: I, Wright 19-30-2 189. SC, 11-20-0 190, Team 0-0-0 (-4).

RECEIVING: I, Kirvin 8-78, Rush 5-51, Seymour 4-36, Price 2-24. SC, Mothershead 4-65, Bruno 4-55, Pertilla 2-63, Colvin 1-7.