

Blackhawks gain must win

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WICHITA - Chuck Wright sparkled in his second consecutive start as quarterback and wide-outs Yano Jones and Kyle Peterson returned from injuries to catch 11 of Wright's passes and the Iowa Blackhawks defeated the Wichita Aviators 50-47 in overtime at the Ice Hangar Saturday night in American Professional Football League action.

After playing five different quarterbacks in five games, the Blackhawks offense was potent, amassing 354 total yards. Chuck Wright threw six touchdown passes and George Patterson rushed for 105 yards. The Blackhawks racked up 200 yards passing and 154 yards rushing and held the ball over 39 minutes compared to 175 total yards and 20 minutes for the Aviators.

It was a must-win game for the resurgent Blackhawks (5-3) and they played perhaps their most complete game of the year. A fourth loss in conference play would have greatly damaged their chance to claim the second seed and host a post-season game. The loss dropped the Aviators to 7-2 in league play with one more regular season game yet to play against the Blackhawks.

It was a great win for the Blackhawks and coach Mike Wolff who lost a heart-breaker 51-48 to the Aviators at home April 29.

"The game was reverse what happened in Council Bluffs," said Wolff. "We scored too quickly at home and our defense got worn down. Tonight, we controlled the ball and they got tired."

Despite dominating the line of scrimmage, the Blackhawks were haunted by special team mistakes and had no answer for speedster Reggie Smith who gave the Aviators excellent field position with 80 kick return yards, including a 47 yard touchdown in the third quarter. The Aviators followed Smith's return with an unintentional onside kick that also resulted in a quick score.

"It was a great game of two talented teams," said Aviators GM and Defensive Coordinator Mike McCoy. "We struggled to contain number 25 (Yano Jones) all night. He's a great receiver."

Jones and Blackhawk quarterback Wright combined for three passes of over 25 yards. Jones caught six passes for 106 yards including two acrobatic touchdown receptions in his first game back after injury.

Fake toss sweeps also froze the defense inside the Aviators ten-yard line and Wright connected in the end zone three times with Kyle Peterson.

The game nearly ended in regulation in favor of the Aviators on a bizarre play. After driving to the Aviator goal line with seconds remaining in the game, Earl Henry intercepted a Wright pass, fell down and then ran 49 yards for an apparent game-winning score. All but one referee left the playing field and fans rushed the field to celebrate the improbable win. The back judge ruled Henry down on contact, however, deflating the capacity crowd and giving the Blackhawks an emotional edge going into overtime.

The Aviators had possession of the ball first in the overtime period. Their drive stalled and Ziya Gunay kicked a 25-yard field goal to take a 47-44 lead.

On the ensuing possession, the Blackhawks pounded the Aviators with the running game. Elijah Simmons scored the game-winning touchdown from four yards out to finish the scoring and give the Blackhawks a 50-47 road victory.

The Blackhawks return to action Saturday at home against the Omaha Extreme in a non-conference game. A rematch with the Aviators in Wichita is set for July 1.

Iowa Blackhawks 6 12 12 14 6 - 50

Wichita Aviators 9 7 14 14 3 - 47

Passing: Iowa (Chuck Wright 16-30-200-6-1), Wichita (John Wise 6-10-49-0-2, Matt Kelly 4-7-39-1-0).

Rushing: Iowa (Elijah Simmons 9-38, Chuck Wright 2-(-5), George Patterson 20-105, Eric Johnson 6-16), Wichita (Idris Elias 18-69, Reggie Smith 4-15, John Wise 1-0, Phillip Baron 1-3).

Receiving: Iowa (Ryan Kaufman 2-30, Yano Jones 6-106, Kyle Peterson 5-45, Chris Moore 2-15, Elijah Simmons 1-4), Wichita (Reggie Smith 5-42, Chris Williams 4-31, Donald Payne 1-15).

Scoring:

W: Blackhawks bad field goal snap into end zone for safety 6:26 First Quarter

W: Reggie Smith 10 run (Gunay kick) 3:13 First Quarter

IA: Yano Jones 28 pass from Chuck Wright (conversion failed) 0:36 First Quarter

IA: Yano Jones 25 pass from Chuck Wright (run failed) 5:57 Second Quarter

W: Idris Elias 1 run (Gunay kick) 2:40 Second Quarter

IA: Kyle Peterson 3 pass from Chuck Wright (pass failed) 0:05 Second Quarter

IA: Kyle Peterson 8 pass from Chuck Wright (pass failed) 7:22 Third Quarter

W: Reggie Smith 47 kickoff return (Reggie Smith run for two-point conversion) 6:22 Third Quarter

W: Idris Elias 31 run (run failed) 4:59 Third Quarter

IA: Eric Johnson 6 run (pass failed) 0:04 Third Quarter

IA: Kyle Peterson 13 pass from Chuck Wright (Elijah Simmons reception for two-point conversion) 9:05 Fourth Quarter

W: Idris Elias 3 run (run failed) 7:22 Fourth Quarter

IA: Elijah Simmons 4 pass from Chuck Wright (run failed) 2:44 Fourth Quarter

W: Donald Payne 15 pass from Matt Kelly (Idris Elias run for two-point conversion) 1:20 Fourth Quarter

W: 25 field goal by Ziya Gunay Overtime

IA: 4 run by Elijah Simmons Overtime.

