

Blackhawks romp; clinch playoff berth



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The Iowa Blackhawks clinched a playoff berth in convincing fashion Saturday evening, beating the winless Kansas Storm 54-3 in American Professional Football League play in front of 1,450 fans at the Mid-America Center.

Justin Kammrad and Yano Jones each scored two touchdowns for the Blackhawks (4-3), who snapped a two-game losing streak in the victory.

The Iowa defense limited Kansas to only 30 yards in the contest. The defense gave the Blackhawks momentum early in the game when, faced with a first-and-goal at the three-yard line midway through the first quarter, they kept the Storm out of the end zone on four straight plays.

"We challenged the defense in practice (this week)," said Iowa coach Mike Wolff. "(The defense) rose to the occasion."

Kammrad scored his first touchdown on the ensuing possession, running the ball in from three yards out with 22 seconds left in the first quarter. The former Thomas Jefferson and Nebraska-Omaha standout scored the Blackhawks' next touchdown, catching a 36-yard pass from Chuck Wright with 7:53 remaining in the first half. The score gave Iowa a 14-0 lead.

"It was good to put early points on the board," said Kammrad.

Wright threw two more touchdown passes in the first half, connecting with Ryan Kauffman for 32 yards and Jones for 11 to give the Blackhawks a 27-0 halftime lead. He completed 11-of-16 passes in the game for five touchdowns and 230 of the Blackhawks' 295 yards.

Jones and Dontrell Ducker each caught a touchdown pass in the third quarter. Chris Moore recovered a Kansas fumble in the end zone for another touchdown.

Eric Johnson added a three-yard touchdown run in the fourth quarter for the Blackhawks' final score.

Wright credited the offensive line for the scoring outburst.

"The offensive line did great," said Wright. "In the second quarter they exploded."

"The offensive line is the key to everything," Kammrad agreed. "We executed a lot better than we're used to."

Jerry Lakin kicked a 43-yard field goal with 2:28 remaining in the game to give Kansas its only score.

"(The Storm) came out and played hard," said Wright. "Athletically, we knew we were the better team. We just had to go out and perform."

The Blackhawks wrap up the regular season June 25 when they host the Nebraska Bears at the MAC. If Iowa wins, it will host the first-round playoff game, which could also be against the rival Bears.

Wolff said that the game should be competitive, especially since the players on both teams are familiar with one another as longtime rivals.

"It should be a hard-hitting, entertaining game," said Wolff.

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Records: Kansas (0-5), Blackhawks (4-3).