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Football: Lakin, Blackhawks soar to second straight championship

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Cindy Christensen/World-Herald News Service

Iowa's Taheem Acevedo celebrates with his teammates after returning a punt during Saturday's APFL championship game. The Blackhawks finished their best season in franchise history at 10-1.

COUNCIL BLUFFS — Did anyone expect anything less?

Iowa and Mid-Missouri did more than go down to the wire in Saturday's APFL championship game at the Mid-America Center. They went past it.

After missing a 30-yard field goal as time expired, veteran kicker Jerry Lakin knocked in a 34-yarder in overtime to give the Blackhawks a 31-28 victory and their second consecutive APFL title.

Iowa finished its best season in franchise history at 10-1. And Lakin, perhaps, finished a fulfilling career by kicking a game-winner in an APFL title game for the second time.

"I had no worries whatsoever," Saturday's hero said. "I've been here too many times. It was mine. I wasn't leaving after missing the first one. I wasn't doing it again."

Winning on a field goal was a bit ironic for the Blackhawks. In their only loss, a 41-38 defeat to the Outlaws in Sedalia, Mo., in early June, Lakin was hurt and Iowa squandered a lead because of its inability to attempt kicks late.

In addition, Mid-Missouri's Adrian Trevino was the top kicker in the league this year. In his last trip to the MAC, he hit attempts from 46, 56 and 60 yards.

On Saturday, however, he was 0 for 4. His final attempt on the opening possession of overtime was blocked by Iowa's Nick Freet.

The Blackhawks then moved the ball from midfield to the Outlaw 16. Lakin, who beat the Blackhawks on a last-second field goal while a member of the Kansas Koyotes four years ago, sent the game-winner straight through the middle and took off running the other way before being mauled by his teammates.

“This one means a lot,” Iowa coach Mike Wolff said. “Guys stepped up and made plays all year long.”

The title-game teams split two previous meetings this season with each winning on its home field. Mid-Missouri was the last team to beat the Blackhawks at the MAC, rallying from 35-0 down for a 54-49 victory on June 6, 2009.

All three of those games were decided in the final seconds. And Saturday looked like it would be no different.

Outlaw Antoine Stewart intercepted a Chuck Wright pass to set up a 30-yard touchdown pass from Kyle Middleton to Marcus James that tied the game with 1:32 to go.

Iowa went the other way to set up Lakin’s first attempt. Holder Andrew Seymour got down a poor snap, but Lakin pushed the kick to the right.

On his second try, he didn’t miss.

Mid-Missouri (8-3).....7 0 14 7 0—28

Iowa (10-1).....7 14 7 0 3—31

- MM: Marcus James 3 run (Adrian Trevino kick)
- I: Chris Bradford 3 run (Jerry Lakin kick)
- I: Steve Rush 4 pass from Chuck Wright (Lakin kick)
- I: Andrew Seymour 17 pass from Wright (Lakin kick)
- MM: James 6 run (Trevino kick)
- I: Seymour 5 pass from Wright (Lakin kick)
- MM: Allen Williams 11 pass from Kyle Middleton (Trevino kick)
- MM: James 30 pass from Middleton (Trevino kick)
- I: Lakin 34 FG