

Koyote Ugly



Blackhawks rout six-time champs for APFL title

By Tony Boone, Senior Writer
tony.boone@nonpareilonline.com

Published: Sunday, July 26, 2009 4:16 PM CDT

The reign is over. And it wasn't even close.

Iowa let out five years of frustration on Kansas Saturday, mauling the six-time league champion Koyotes 63-17 at the Mid-America Center, to claim its first American Professional Football League title.

The Blackhawks, who had lost to Kansas in the postseason in each of the last four seasons, scored on their first nine possessions and rattled off 45 consecutive points to beat the Koyotes for the third time in four meetings this season.

Chuck Wright threw four touchdown passes and Mike Stuart scored three times as Iowa finished its championship season at 9-2. The Blackhawks dominated Kansas defensively as well, holding the Koyotes to 57 yards of total

offense, 30 of which came on one fourth-quarter drive.

"I'm ecstatic. This feels great," Iowa coach Mike Wolff said. "It's what we've worked for all season.

"We have a good group of athletes. They're great kids, they want to win, they do the right things and they're coachable. We've just got to put them in places where they can succeed, and we did that tonight."

Wolff happily accepted the championship trophy from Ralph Adams, who owns both the APFL and the Kansas franchise, after the game.

"It's a pretty sad day for Koyote fans, but we knew this day would come," Adams said. The Iowa fans at the MAC screamed in elation after the remark.

The Blackhawks dominated Saturday from the opening kickoff, finding the end zone on four of their five first half offensive possessions.

Stuart was the star of the half. The Morningside College product, who missed six weeks with a broken wrist, capped the first two series with touchdown runs then made a spectacular one-armed grab for another TD on a tipped pass with five seconds left in the second quarter to give Iowa a 31-10 halftime lead.

"The first half we just knew we had to come out and be explosive," Stuart said. "We wanted to set the tone early. We just happened to run the ball, and I scored two times early. We just started off with a bang."

Wright added to the onslaught by connecting on TD passes with Andrew Seymour and Stuart before halftime. He added scoring tosses to Mell Holliday and Marque McCray in the third period as the Blackhawks extended their lead to 54-10.

The last remaining member of Iowa's roster from the 2004 season, the team's first year in the APFL, said winning the title was even better than he imagined it would be.

"For a guy like me who's been around six years, and we've taken a lot of lumps from those guys, to beat them the way we did with a total team effort, it was sweet," Wright said. "It's almost surreal right now."

While its offense was scoring in bundles, Iowa's defense was doing a number on the Koyotes. Kansas managed only 41 yards of total offense and had minus-3 rushing yards before the intermission.

The only reason the Koyotes found the end zone before the final quarter was that Blackhawk defensive back Travis Hines was whistled for a 24-yard pass interference penalty to give Kansas the ball at the Iowa 2 early in the second period.

That was about the only mistake by the Iowa D. It made things miserable for Koyote quarterback Carlos Kelly, sacking him three times and forcing three turnovers in the first three quarters.

Council Bluffs natives Jeff McQuinn and Albert Rodriguez each recovered fumbles, and defensive back Scott Yates had an interception. Ryan Hoden added a pair of blocked field goals in the third quarter for good measure.

"Coach told us, 'To win this game the defense has to play lights-out,'" McQuinn said. "We took the challenge, and we like the game on our shoulders. We played the only way we know how to play football."

Kansas (8-3) 3 7 0 7 - 17

Iowa (9-2) 14 17 23 9 - 63

I - Mike Stuart 4 run (Jerry Lakin kick)

K - Chris Thompson 18 field goal

I - Andrew Seymour 5 pass from Chuck Wright (Lakin kick)

I - Stuart 8 run (Lakin kick)

K - Donnell Smith 4 run (Thompson kick)

I - Lakin 26 FG

I – Stuart 5 pass from Wright (Lakin kick)

I – Lakin 43 FG

I – Mell Holliday 10 pass from Wright (Lakin kick)

I – Holliday 5 run (kick failed)

I – Marque McCray 15 pass from Wright (Lakin kick)

I – Intentional grounding on Josh Freeman in end zone

K – Justin Wrecke 2 pass from Freeman (Thompson kick)

I – Sid Panteau 56 kickoff return (Lakin kick)

Individual Statistics

RUSHING: K, Kelly 9-(-56), DuBois 5-21, Steen 3-4, Freeman 3-(-10), Smith 2-11, Wrecke 1-17. I, Holliday 13-36, Stuart 5-26, McCray 1-4, Rush 1-2, Seymour 1-0, Wright 1-(-2).

PASSING: K, Kelly 5-10-1 61, Freeman 2-5-0 9. I, Wright 11-19-0 87.

RECEIVING: K, Wrecke 7-70. I, Seymour 3-45, McCray 2-27, Holliday 2-16, Rush 2-13, Stuart 2-8.