

# NONPAREIL *online*

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## Blackhawks make a statement

DWANE MCFERRIN, Staff Writer

The Iowa Blackhawks sent a strong message to American Professional Football League league foes by crushing the Springfield Wolfpack 57-13 in the league opener Saturday night at the Mid-America Center.

The Blackhawks harassed Wolfpack quarterback Colby Hughes with five sacks and held their opponent to only 97 yards of total offense.

The Wolfpack (1-2) lost a narrow 40-28 decision to five-time defending champion Kansas April 19 in the first game for both teams. The margin of victory by the Blackhawks is sure to raise eyebrows in Topeka where the Blackhawks will travel May 24 for an early season showdown.

"Our guys played well for a first game. We talked about playing in our system and one of their scores was due to a breakdown," said fifth year head coach Mike Wolff. "I'd grade our effort as an A. The offense and defense were pretty good, but we still have things to work on."

Ryan Dennhardt led the Blackhawks with two sacks. Iowa recorded eight tackles for losses behind the line of scrimmage and delivered hard hits in the secondary. Scott Yates intercepted a pass and Chris Moore lit up several receivers with bone-jarring hits.



Staff photo/Josh White - Iowa's Jon Helget, 40, and Chris Moore wrap up Springfield's Lee Coleman as the Blackhawks battle the Wolfpack during the first quarter of Saturday evening's season opener at the Mid-America Center.

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"We pride ourselves in being out there making plays. We're eight athletes out there flying around and having fun," said Moore. "I like the freedom at safety to roam the middle, hit somebody every play and take someone's head off. We clicked well as a defensive unit that first game and it means a lot."

While the defense was outstanding, the young receiver corps delivered and quarterback Chuck Wright had a solid performance with 17-of-23 passing for 204 yards and five touchdowns.

Wright connected with first-year player Chris Pomerleau seven times for 83 yards and two scores. Wright completed passes with seven different receivers and also had scoring strikes with Mike Stuart and first-year players Brad Triplett and Mike Neville.

"It was clicking early and we thought we'd be rusty but the vets did a good job and the rookies were catching touchdowns and the offensive line was awesome," said Wright. "We challenged the rookies to make plays and they delivered. Pomerleau was amazing tonight."

Pomerleau had a spectacular catch early in the first quarter snagging a throw just as he turned to look at Wright. He also eluded two Wolfpack defenders at the goal line for a touchdown late in the third period.

"The spin move was to avoid getting smashed," said Pomerleau. "It is fun to be back in Council Bluffs. It was also great to have a game. We're tired of hitting each other in practice."

Elijah Sullivan led the ground attack with 45 yards on eight carries and one score.

Assistant head coach and offensive coordinator Justin Kammrad pointed out areas needed for improvement.

"We struggled with some penalties," said Kammrad, "and didn't execute fully. We need to work on accuracy of some passes. We played well and that makes decisions on roster spots more difficult for the coaching staff."

The Blackhawks return home Saturday to face the Missouri Minutemen. Kickoff is at 7:05 p.m.

Springfield Wolfpack 0 7 6 0 - 13

Iowa Blackhawks 14 16 7 20 - 57

Passing: Springfield (Hughes 8-22-63-1), Iowa (Wright 17-23-204-0, Pomerleau 0-1-0-0).

Receiving: Springfield (Logan Hughes 4-34, Brett Lovekamp 2-16, Lee Coleman 2-13), Iowa (Chris Pomerleau 7-83, Mike Stuart 4-41, Kurt Ferguson 1-34, Mike Neville 1-20, Elijah Sullivan 2-13, Brad Triplett 1-9, Eric Johnson 1-4).

Rushing: Springfield (C. Hughes 16-17, Lee Coleman 6-12, Winston Grimes 4-5), Iowa (Sullivan 8-45, Eric Johnson 4-32, Mike Stuart 1-9, Chris Pomerleau 1(-1)).

Records: Springfield (1-2), Iowa (1-0).

Scoring Summary:

IA Elijah Sullivan 10-yard run (Jerry Lakin kick) 12:45 first quarter

IA Mike Stuart 4-yard pass from Wright (Lakin kick) 6:21 first quarter

IA Chris Pomerleau 26-yard pass from Wright (kick failed) 14:04 second quarter

SP - Lee Coleman 8-yard run (Chris Shirato kick) 9:56 second quarter

IA - Eric Johnson 15-yard run (Lakin kick) 3:52 second quarter

IA - Lakin 20-yard field goal 0:00 second quarter

SP - Colby Hughes 5-yard run (kick blocked) 7:29 third quarter

IA - Chris Pomerleau 14-yard pass from Wright (Lakin kick) 3:10 third quarter

IA - Brad Triplett 9-yard pass from Wright (Kick blocked) 10:36 fourth quarter

IA - Mike Neville 20-yard pass from Wright (Lakin kick) 8:11 fourth quarter

IA - Eric Johnson 5-yard run (Lakin kick) 5:10 fourth quarter