



Koyotes face key game against Iowa

Topeka still hoping for No. 1 seed in APFL playoffs

BY RICK PETERSON

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The Kansas Koyotes helped themselves, and got help, last weekend and are now at least in the hunt for the No. 1 seed in the upcoming American Professional Football League playoffs.

The 5-2 Koyotes can help themselves even more with a victory at 7:05 tonight at Landon Arena against the 5-1 Iowa Blackhawks, who have handed the Koyotes both of their losses.

Jim Green's Kansas team is coming off a 40-27 road win over the Springfield (Mo.) WolfPack last Saturday while Iowa suffered its first loss of the year last week, losing to the non-league Mid-Missouri team, which is 11-0.

With a win tonight the Koyotes would pull even with the Blackhawks in the APFL standings. Iowa would still hold the tiebreaker advantage by virtue of its two wins against Kansas, but both the Blackhawks and Koyotes have regular-season games remaining with 4-3 Springfield, which could be a spoiler.

"Like I explained to the players, this is when it becomes interesting and fun," Green said. "You really control your own destiny with every game you play — every win counts and every loss counts.

"You never want to be dependent on another team to win or lose, but you just have to play your game and go for that win."

The APFL playoffs are tentatively scheduled to begin July 11, with the No. 3 seed playing at the No. 2 seed. The top seed will get a first-round bye and then host the championship game, probably either July 18 or July 25.

The good news for the Koyotes, according to Green, is they're starting to hit their stride heading into crunch time.

"Our defense has definitely picked up, with our new defensive coordinator, Brooks Meyers (former Koyotes player)," Green said. "I've been nothing but impressed by Brooks and the players are really starting to come together.

"They've got their swagger back and we've been missing that. This is what you want to do, start playing good solid football going into the end of the season and the playoffs."

Green said the offensive key tonight and beyond is to cut down on mistakes.

"We need to play smart, heads-up football and eliminate the turnovers," he said. "In the past (against the Blackhawks) we've had a lot of turnovers and that's what has killed us.

“We’ve got to make sure we hold on to the football and don’t throw it away, and we don’t try to go for it all at one time. We want to know where the yard-markers are and just play to those yard-markers. If we control the ball we control the clock, and if we control the clock we control the game.”

The Koyotes also will be at home next Saturday, hosting Springfield. Kansas will close out its regular season at Lincoln on June 27.

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