

## Blackhawks head to postseason with a win



Staff photo/Cindy Christensen - Iowa Blackhawks wide receiver Steve Rush escapes a tackle from the Kansas Koyotes' Brooks Myers to score the team's first touchdown of the night at the Mid-America Center on Saturday.

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Shorthanded and sluggish, the Iowa Blackhawks still enter the playoffs on a high note.

The reigning American Professional Football League champions capped an 8-1 regular season with a 52-36 win over rival Kansas Saturday at the Mid-America Center.

It wasn't always pretty. In fact, the APFL's highest-scoring team sputtered to only one offensive score in the first half before finally pulling away late in the game.

The Blackhawks also played their regular-season finale without injured regulars Chris Moore, Mell Holliday, Mike Stuart, Derek Townsend and Jerry Lakin. Defensive lineman Albert Rodriguez also didn't play, although he wasn't hurt.

The game was virtually meaningless to Iowa, considering it had already wrapped up the top seed in the upcoming APFL playoffs. And early on, the Blackhawks seemed to lack their usual inspiration.

A 41-yard touchdown pass from Chuck Wright to Andrew Seymour out of play-action in the third quarter, however, sparked the champions. They finished with a 38-point, second-half flurry.

"We were just little slow and needed to wake up," Seymour said. "We kind of needed a big play to get that going. Coach set it up in the locker room and drew it up. We used a previous run like it. And we came back to it, faked it and got a big play on it."

The TD put the Blackhawks, who will face the winner of next week's play-in game between Kansas and Junction City on July 10 at the MAC, up to stay at 27-23. Seymour added a 5-yard scoring reception late in the third to make it a 10-point advantage.

Defensive lineman Jeff McQuinn later put the game away with an interception return for a touchdown in the fourth quarter.

Wright completed all five of his passes after the intermission, including three for scores. But early on, the passing game was almost nonexistent.

Steve Rush hauled in a 25-yard scoring pass from Wright on Iowa's first play from scrimmage. Then the Blackhawks went on vacation offensively for the rest of the first half.

Iowa managed only 65 total yards on its other six possessions before the intermission. Wright was intercepted three times and completed only 4 of 10 passes.

"Kansas had a good game plan to come in and stop us," the veteran quarterback said. "We just came out flat. We talked about it at halftime and made adjustments. Guys stepped up in the second half and made plays."

The Blackhawks also missed a field-goal attempt and had another blocked in the first half.

Naji Shinskia scored from a yard out following the block to put Kansas up 16-7 at the end of the first quarter. Iowa pulled within two in the closing seconds of the first half, however, when Taheem Acevedo returned a kick from his own end zone 58 yards for a touchdown.

Each team led in the third quarter before Seymour's scores gave the Blackhawks some separation.

Iowa managed 115 rushing yards in the game, including 67 by Eric Johnson and 32 from newcomer Chris Bradford. Each also had a touchdown run.

Kansas (4-5) 16 0 7 13 - 36

Iowa (8-1) 7 7 19 19 - 52

I: Steve Rush 25 pass from Chuck Wright (Zach Kohlhoff kick)

K: Chris Thompson 54 FG

K: Henry Talley 18 pass from Jordan Brill (kick failed)

K: Naji Shinskia 1 run (Thompson kick)

I: Taheem Acevedo 58 kick return (Kohlhoff kick)

I: Chris Bradford 4 run (Kohlhoff kick)

K: Justin Wrecke 22 pass from Brill (Thompson kick)

I: Andrew Seymour 41 pass from Wright (kick failed)

I: Seymour 5 pass from Wright (run failed)

K: Wrecke 9 pass from Brill (pass failed)

I: Eric Johnson 9 run (pass failed)

I: Jeff McQuinn 15 interception return (Kohlhoff kick)

K: Talley 15 pass from Brill (Thompson kick)

I: Rush 1 pass from Wright (kick failed)