

Piece of Mind: Iowa enjoys big win

By Tony Boone

Published: Tuesday, July 20, 2010 10:56 AM CDT

For the Iowa Blackhawks who played through those heartbreaking playoff losses to Kansas, last year's annihilation of the Koyotes in the American Professional Football League championship game will always be hard to top.

Saturday's overtime win over Mid-Missouri at the Mid-America Center, however, might have come close.

In case you missed it, the Blackhawks topped the Outlaws 31-28 in overtime on a 34-yard field goal by Jerry Lakin. Earlier, the veteran kicker missed from 30 yards out on the final play of regulation.

The fact that the APFL title game went down to the wire came as no surprise. Iowa and Mid-Missouri have now played four times in the past two seasons, and none of those games were decided by more than five points.

The first game, which the Outlaws won 54-49 after trailing 35-0, is still my favorite of the bunch because I didn't expect it. Saturday's barnburner played out as expected.

Like in the other meetings, Iowa had a chance to put the game away early.

Taheem Acevedo set up three first-half touchdowns (two on kick returns, another on an interception) to help the Blackhawks to a 21-7 lead. Iowa was then seemingly going to put the game away early in the third quarter after holding Mid-Missouri on its first possession.

But a fumble on an exchange between Chuck Wright and Eric Johnson on the Blackhawks' first snap of the second half gave the Outlaws life. They scored on the ensuing series to pull within seven.

The teams traded touchdowns later in the third quarter, and Iowa turned the ball over on downs at the Outlaw 1 to open the fourth.

Then, with 2:24 to play, Wright was intercepted by Mid-Missouri's Antoine Stewart. And as he had in each of the previous meetings, quarterback Kyle Middleton came up with a big play for the Outlaws.

Scrambling to his left, he lofted a pass down the sideline to a streaking Marcus James for a 30-yard touchdown that tied the game at 28.

Iowa got the ball to the Mid-Missouri 12 in the closing seconds, but Lakin missed the field-goal attempt after holder Andrew Seymour made a swift recovery from a bad snap. Seymour also had a pair of scoring receptions earlier.

Time expired as Lakin kicked, sending the game into overtime. The Blackhawks won the toss and chose to play defense. And after three incompletions, they forced a long field-goal attempt.

Outlaw kicker Adrian Trevino was hitting from 50 yards away in warmups consistently. He was off during the game, however. After missing three times in regulation, Iowa's Nick Freet blocked his attempt in OT to set up Lakin's game-winner.

The Blackhawks ran four plays before claiming the victory and their second straight APFL title.

The win capped a 10-1 season for Iowa, whose only blemish came after a controversial call in a road loss to the Outlaws. And it set up an interesting offseason for the Council Bluffs team.

The franchise is up for sale. The idea of joining a bigger league has been brought up.

Lakin mentioned retirement. Wright, who had hinted at it before, said he thinks he has another year left. Others, like Chris Moore and Mell Holliday, will be coming back from injury.

What the future holds for the Blackhawks is anyone's guess. What the team holds presently, however, is a second APFL championship trophy. And, for now, that's what matters.

Copyright © 2010 - Southwest Iowa News