

CLASS 4A FOOTBALL PLAYOFFS

History for Kennedy



Cliff Jette/The Gazette

Cedar Rapids Kennedy's Dalles Jacobus (60) celebrates swatting down a pass during the first half of a Class 4A semifinal last night at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls.

Cougars oust Bettendorf, punch ticket to first state title game

By K.J. Pilcher, The Gazette

CEDAR FALLS — Cedar Rapids Kennedy left it all out on the football field.

Sweat, blood and even a little vomit. Everything they gave was enough to make Cougar history.

Third-ranked Kennedy shut down No. 2 Bettendorf in the second half and scored the final 14 points on an interception return and a gutsy fourth-down pass play for a 31-14 victory in the Class 4A state semifinal last night at the UNI-Dome.

The Cougars advance to the championship game for the first time, facing the winner of West Des Moines Dowling and West Des Moines Valley. The realization began to sink in late in the fourth.

"It felt great," Kennedy

running back Tyler Dralle said. "It's something that I've never felt before and it's great because I know I've been able to play the most football I was able to play my senior year."

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Cliff Jette photos/The Gazette

Cedar Rapids Kennedy's Tyler Dralle (right) stiff-arms Bettendorf's Jack Wells during the first half of a Class 4A semifinal last night at the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls.

Kennedy/Advances to 4A title game

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The game was tied at 7, to start the second half, with the teams only separated by two yards of total offense. Kennedy Coach Brian White challenged his team to win the battle upfront.

They responded, forcing Bettendorf to punt after three plays and producing an 86-yard scoring drive on eight rushes. Dralle outran defenders to the left pylon for a 13-yard TD, capping a series that was delayed briefly when a Cougar player apparently vomited near midfield.

"In the first half, I don't think we were controlling the line of scrimmage very well," Dralle said. "That was our goal coming into the second half. Shaun really opened it up with the outside runs and I did the dirty work inside. Just got us going."



Cedar Rapids Kennedy players celebrate after their victory over Bettendorf in the Class 4A semifinals last night.

The Cougars remained true to the style that has led them to the UNI-Dome. Dralle rushed for 159 yards with a TD. Beyer had 76 rushing yards, including an 8-yard TD for Kennedy's first TD.

Beyer also had 72 receiving yards.

"At this point, it is survive and move on," White said. "You just do what you have to do

to win a football game.

When you've got an asset like Dralle and an asset like Beyer and a QB like (Nick) Duehr that doesn't make very many mistakes at all, we're pretty fortunate. And we have a big O-line."

After a second straight Bulldogs punt, Kennedy rushed its way inside the Bettendorf 20 when Alex Stone kicked a 37-yard field goal to

put the Cougars ahead for good, 17-14, with 2:11 left in the third.

The Kennedy defense was stingy in the second half, forcing three turnovers against backup quarterback Jacob Wehr, playing in place of Owen Ridenour, who suffered a broken collarbone last week.

Linebacker Brandon Neimeier helped Kennedy start tapping a nail in the coffin with an impressive 55-yard interception return for a score, making it 24-14 with 8:30 left.

Kennedy has one more game and the Cougars have a chance to pen another chapter in their history books.

"It's exciting," Neimeier said. "It's something we've never done before. We're just excited to go for it and hopefully we can come out with a (win)."

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C.R. Kennedy 31**Bettendorf 14****AT UNI-DOME**

	CRK	BETT
First downs.....	20	12
Rushes-yards.....	46-229	33 - 161
Passing-yards.....	79	61
Comp-att-int.....	6-17-1	8-22-2
Punts-avg.....	4-43.75	5-40.6
Fumbles-lost.....	0-0	3-2
Penalties-yards.....	3-41	7-66

C.R. Kennedy 7 0 10 14—31
Bettendorf 0 7 7 0—14

CRK — Beyer 8 run (Alex Stone kick)

BETT — Emerson 3 run (Matt Perk kick)

CRK — Dralle 13 run (Stone kick)

CRK — FG Stone 37

BETT — Emerson 18 run (Perk kick)

CRK — Brandon Neimeier 55 interception return (Stone kick)

CRK — Bailey 10 pass from Duehr (Stone kick)

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing — **C.R. Kennedy**: Tyler Dralle 30-159, Shaun Beyer 10-76, Tyler Jacobs 3-8, Nick Duehr 3-(-14). **Bettendorf**: Dax Emerson 27-125, Jacob Wehr 5-22, Jovan Jackson 1-14.

Passing — **C.R. Kennedy**: Duehr 5-16-1-78, Beyer 1-1-0-1. **Bettendorf**: Wehr 8-22-2-61.

Receiving — **C.R. Kennedy**: Beyer 3-72, Austin Bailey 2-11, Chase Bailey 1-(-4). **Bettendorf**: Keaton Cain 2-25, Ryan Donovan 3-17, Suni Lane 1-10, Ian Beck 1-6, Emerson 1-3.