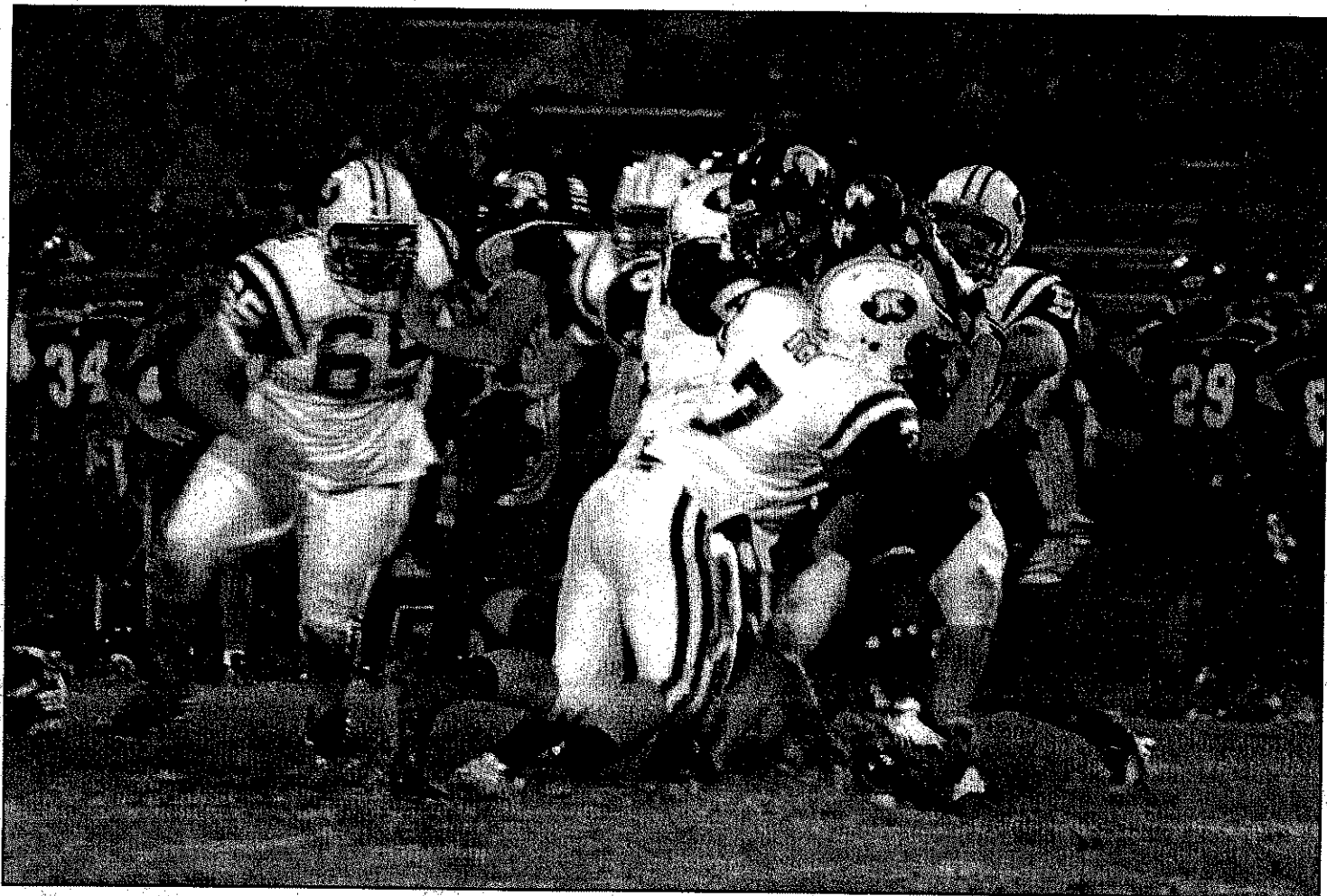


Indians sweep West Bend teams



Kewaskum defenders Matt Ballard (56), Joey Wollner (11), Ryan Ogi (7) and Mack Donath (72) escort West Bend West running back Jack Baumann to the ground for no gain in the second quarter at West Bend West Friday night. The Indians won, 41-8, to improve to 2-0.

Statesman photo: Mitch Maersch

By Mitch Maersch

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Feeling better or worse, in sickness and in health, Eric Perkins runs all over West Bend.

One week after 204 yards and two touchdowns against West Bend East in limited time due to a stomach issue, a healthy Perkins shredded West Bend West for 225 yards and four scores, again sitting out a while, this time because the game was a blowout.

Kewaskum improved to 2-0 on the season and again completed the sweep of West Bend's much bigger schools with a 41-8 victory last Friday. Kewaskum's enrollment hovers around 700 while each West Bend school has more than 1,100.

In less than six quarters, Perkins has amassed 440 yards and six touchdowns, averaging a video game-

like 7.6 yards per carry and 36.3 yards per touchdown run.

Once Perkins reaches the second level of defenders and gets into open space, cue the scoreboard operator.

"I just try to make the quickest move and get through everybody before they know where I'm going," said Perkins.

"They" would include his coach, who has mixed feelings about just how easy it is to call plays for his 5-foot-9, 165-pound star.

"Yes, and no, I mean, you never know where he's going," said Jason Piittmann. "He makes things happen. That's the easiest way to put it."

Perkins has already drawn comparisons to 2005 star running back Garrett Donath, who rushed for 1,263 yards and 17 touchdowns, averaged 6.2 yards per carry and 114 per game. This

comes from a coach who in seven-plus seasons has amassed 67 wins against 17 losses and four conference titles.

Piittmann said Perkins runs a 4.4-second 40-yard dash using hand timing rules. For context, Chris Johnson, last year's leading rusher in the NFL with more than 2,000 yards, runs a 4.24, fastest in the league. Granted, Johnson is 5-11 and 191 pounds so he is more like tackling a horse.

Perkins' line enjoys catching a glimpse of the blur pass through.

"It's always pretty easy. You just kind of give him a split second because he's so quick and then he just busts through the second level," said guard Joey Herriges.

"It's pretty nice," said tackle Mark Miller. "You just give him that little bit

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of space. He hits that thing and he's gone."

After a muffed punt that put the Indians at the Spartans' 11, Perkins got the scoring when he stretched the ball across the goal line on a 9-yard sweep left with 3:55 to go in the first quarter.

On West's ensuing first play from scrimmage came one of the game's biggest plays. West completed a pass to a running back on the right sideline who headed up field. Kewaskum safety Tony Goring stormed over for the tackle and instead got all arm, ripping the ball free.

Johnny-on-the-spot linebacker Bo Seibel fell on the loose ball for his second big fumble recovery in two games.

"I was just kinda going for him trying to get a tackle and the ball popped out. I was just trying to get in there. It looked like he was going to break free," Goring said. "I think it kind of changed the momentum around and helped us get some momentum going."

Three plays later, Perkins flew in for a 27-yard score and Kewaskum was up 13-0 and headed for a blowout.

West answered. Quarterback Brandon Cowie turned the corner and flew down the left sideline for an 85-yard touchdown in an outstanding impersonation of Perkins.

The Spartans cut the deficit to five in the second quarter after punting to Kewaskum's 1. Quarterback Cody Nuernberg couldn't get out of the backfield and West scored a safety.

As a light rain began pick up, Perkins later extended the lead with a 67-yard dash to the end zone. Nuernberg hit Ryan Ogi for the two-point conversion and the Indians took a 21-8 lead.

Any hopes of a West comeback were dashed not only by Kewaskum's defense, but an injury and Mother Nature. Cowie went out with an injury in the second quarter and only returned as punter. That same quarter, a mini-monsoon entered the game, making it difficult to run an offense and take notes. The storm was short-lived as it left for refreshments at halftime, returning briefly in the second half with just a little rain and less wind.

The third quarter put the game on ice, which was about the only weather event, along with snow and hail, missing from the game. The Indians

left to stop him and streamed down the sideline for a 40-yard score.

He said he would need to watch the play on film to remember what happened.

"It happened so quick I don't know," Olla said.

On the Indians' fifth play from scrimmage, backup running back Joey Wollner broke through the middle and galloped in from 33 yards.

The point-after made it 41-8 and sent starters to the bench for the night, mostly for both teams.

Any hopes of a West comeback or even closing the gap were shut down by Kewaskum's second-team defense, led by Austin Goeman, who made several plays and recovered a fumble.

Pittmann cited early turnovers as keys, and he said West's quarterback leaving took away the threat of the pass. Mother Nature, though it took away the threat of walking off the field actually dry, even did her part to slow West's offense.

"The rain helped us, too," he said.

On Friday, the Indians open Eastern Wisconsin Conference play by hosting Kiel, a team they beat 27-6 on the road last season. The Raiders come in 2-0 after demolishing Chilton, 38-19, at home in the first week and Howards Grove, 35-14, on the road last week.

Pittmann said there is plenty of room for improvement.

"We've still got work to do. I told the kids it was a good win; it wasn't a great win. We need to get better every week," he said. "It's great to get through the non-conference games undefeated but it's the conference games that put you in the playoffs."

SCORING

1Q - Kew, 3:55, Eric Perkins, 9-yard run. Hunter Flanders kick good; Kew, 2:25, Perkins, 25-yard run. Kick blocked; WBW, 1:40, Brandon Cowie, 85-yard run. Kick failed.

2Q - WBW, 7:57, safety; Kew, 6:42, 67-yard run, 2-point pass Cody Nuernberg to Ryan Ogi.

3Q - Kew, 11:43, Perkins, 71-yard run, kick good. Kew, 9:05, Sam Olla 40-yard pass from Nuernberg, Flanders kick

good; Kew, 5:57, Joey Wollner 33-yard run, two-point failed.

STATS

Kewaskum: Passing-Co Nuernberg, 2-6, 59 yards, T Rushing-Eric Perkins, 14-22, 4 TD; Joey Wollner, 1-33, T Receiving-Sam Olla, 2-59, T

WB West: Passing-Brandon Cowie, 3-5, 25 yards, T Rushing-Cowie 4-86, T Jack Baumann, 11-35, Jim Dieck, 8-34; Lajim Lor, 10-1; Joe Stubbe, 9-18; Receiver Nicholas Gronski, 1-1; Stubbe, 1-9.

NOTES

Happy birthday, Joe! Offensive guard Joey Herrig turned 17 on Friday and celebrated by helping open holes for Kewaskum's 2 yards rushing.

Beloved team athlete trainer and newly crown local celebrity Emily Muel stayed upright the entire game this week, after a late hit out bounds and bench players protecting her plopped her face on her back, her head nearly hitting the track, last week. "This is fabulous," Mueller said as the final seconds of West ticked away.

Welcome to football the Middle East? Between the hash marks and the sideline of West Bend's Carl Pick Field were full of some kind of sand substance on Friday, filling the holes left from a West Bend mud bowl on Thursday. We did look like it was running quicksand trying to catch Eric Perkins, but so did East this week before an actual game in Kewaskum's Doc Mitchell Athletic Complex.

Coach Jason Pittmann had luck at Carl Pick Field has started to turn, but the conditions not so much. In 2006, the Indians lost Greendale in a state semifinal playoff game in a mud bowl. In 2007, the Indians played East as it rained throughout the entire game. In 2008, Kewaskum played West the day after East played in a monsoon and played six overtimes on the same side of the field. In 2009, Kewaskum blew it East but it rained in the second half. This year, the Indians faced West the day after East won a mud wrestling match overtime. But hey, the Indians are winning.