

First Loss

Continued from Page 1B

Cedar Rapids Washington (4-3 overall, 2-1 in the district) was only 4-of-14 on third down but converted most of those on its two first-half scoring drives.

The Warriors' first scoring drive started late in the first quarter and covered 80 yards in 13 plays. The visitors got three yards on fourth and two and 21 yards on third and seven to keep the chains moving.

The 18-yard TD run by Watts McBride also came on third down.

The other two scoring drives came on short fields. The first one covered 47 yards in eight plays and included a Newton facemask penalty on third down and a pass interference penalty in the end zone.

The short TD run by Malik Epps-Keller made it 14-0 with 4:17 to go in the first half.

The Cardinals did have their moments on offense. After going three and out on their first drive, Brody Bauer connected with Christian Ergenbright for 27 yards on their next possession.

The drive stalled three plays later and the Warriors' blocked a Newton field-goal attempt to keep the Cardinals off the board.

Cedar Rapids Washington also blocked a punt to set up the short field on its second scoring drive.

On Newton's next offensive possession, Bauer found Curtis Payne on the home sideline for 25 yards.

The Warriors though picked off Bauer two plays later.

The ball appeared to hit the turf on the interception, but the officials gave the ball to Washington anyway.

"We just struggled to get into a rhythm and put things together consistently," Swedenhjelm said. "We had a big play every once in a while and got some chunk yardage here and there, but we didn't have any consistency."

Newton's defense kept the scoring down as Nathan Milburn came up with a sack on second down during the Warriors' final possession of the first half. They punted two plays later.

The Cardinals halted another long drive by the Warriors to open



Troy Hyde/Newton News

Newton sophomore Christian Ergenbright hauls in a pass from Brody Bauer over two Cedar Rapids Washington defenders during the Cardinals' 21-0 loss on Friday. Ergenbright led the team with 58 receiving yards on four catches.

the second half. The visitors went about 60 yards and picked up three first downs, but an Alex Thomason interception gave the ball back to the Cardinals.

One of the biggest blemishes in the game for the Newton defense were a handful of facemask penalties that extended drives.

"Our kids play aggressive and when you play aggressive, things like that happen," Swedenhjelm said. "We'll clean up our technique. They have a big back and it was hard to take him down."

The Cardinals turned the ball over on downs on their next two possessions after the Thomason pick. And the defense forced Washington into a three-and-out.

It also gave the offense great field position when it forced a fumble that was recovered by Brendon West.

Starting at the Washington 45-yard line, Newton (6-1, 2-1) got a

first down by way of a Warrior personal-foul penalty, but then moved 15 yards back with a penalty of its own. The Cardinals punted three plays later.

"The defense set us up in some good spots, but we didn't take advantage of the opportunities," Swedenhjelm said.

Washington started its next possession on its own 3-yard line, but 250-pound sophomore tailback Alex Taylor gained eight yards on back-to-back plays. Carson Satterfield halted the drive with consecutive tackles for loss though.

Newton started its next possession at mid-field but turned it over on downs after four plays.

Washington's final touchdown came on its next drive.

The Warriors went 48 yards in 10 plays and the 10-yard TD run by McBride came on fourth down and two.

Newton registered just five first downs in

the loss and averaged only 2.2 yards per carry. The Cardinals lost tight end Turner Williams to an ankle injury in the first half, too.

"Him leaving the game jacked up our game plan a little bit,"

Swedenhjelm said about the Williams injury. "It's next man in, and I have to do a better job of putting kids in positions to succeed."

"We had to re-invent stuff on the fly and struggled to get any rhythm,

but we'll grow from it."

Bauer finished 11-of-20 through the air for 117 yards and one interception. He also rushed for 28 yards on 10 carries.

Cody Klein gained 24 yards on 17 carries and grabbed three passes for 28 yards. Ergenbright led the offense with 58 yards receiving on four catches.

Milburn and West led the defense. Milburn finished with 13 tackles and one sack and West registered 10.5 tackles and a fumble recovery.

Thomason added 5.5 tackles and one pick, Wyatt Weter chipped in 3.5 tackles and a sack and Satterfield had four tackles. Clayton Wickliffe collected 3.5 tackles and Jake Ingle had three tackles.

Notes: Christian Lawson had a touchback on his only kickoff in the game and now has 27 touchbacks in 32 kickoffs this season. He's one touchback away from tying the single-season school record. ... The last time Newton was shut out, the Cardinals lost 34-0 to Southeast Polk in 2016. ... Taylor rushed for 77 yards for the Warriors, while McBride had 68 yards and two scores. Caden Stock led the Washington defense with seven tackles, 1.5 sacks and 2.5 tackles for loss. ... The Cardinals, who were trying to be 7-0 for the first time since 2006, likely need one more win to clinch a playoff berth. Friday's loss most likely eliminates a home playoff game.

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Newton junior Nathan Milburn led the Cardinal defense with 13 tackles and one sack on Friday during the Cardinals' home loss to Cedar Rapids Washington at H.A. Lynn Stadium.



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