

# Big challenge for Vikings in St. Paul

Todd Smith

The Cook County Vikings football team found itself with a hole in its schedule due to Nashauk Keewatin dropping its football program and combining with Greenway, so Vikings Head Coach Mitch Dorr went on a search to fill the hole. His search ultimately sent Cook County down the road to St. Paul where the Vikings played the St. Paul Humboldt Hawks, on Friday, September 11.

Humboldt High School is a 2A team that plays in the predominately 3A St. Paul City Conference. The Hawks haven't had much success in the win column over the years and annually finish at or near the bottom of the conference.

Playing against bigger teams and losing a lot can wear on a team and a program, so picking up a game against a smaller team was most likely a breath of fresh air to the Hawks. They took advantage with a convincing 32-12 romp over the Vikings and the loss handed the undermanned Vikings their second loss in as many games.

Before the season started Coach Dorr lamented the loss of a number of his fastest players to injury and commented, "In high school football... speed kills."

Those words certainly rang true on Friday and were a prediction of the game against Humboldt. The Hawks showcased a lot of speed in their victory over the Vikings and were quite a bit bigger.

Coach Dorr commented, "We were severely out-sized and they were way faster than us. When there are six guys catching Brock [Hommerding] in the open field they have a lot of speed."

Coach Dorr said that the Hawks' starting quarterback Sahmad Nakumbe was like a young version of ex-Minnesota Vikings' quarterback Daunte Culpepper and was the biggest guy on their team.

Two other Humboldt players who caused a great deal of trouble for the Vikings were speedy wide receivers Donzeal Epps and Julian Luster who combined with Nakumbe for a one-two-three punch that scored all of the Hawks' touchdowns.

Humboldt featured a passing game that used a no huddle spread offense with the quarterback in the shotgun formation to take advantage of their team

speed.

After a scoreless first quarter, the Hawks drew first blood when Nakumbe hooked up with Epps over the top of the Vikings defense on a 74-yard touchdown pass at 8:50 of the second quarter. The kick failed, making it 6-0, Hawks.

## PLAY BY PLAY



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The Vikings answered right back. On the ensuing kickoff, Hommerding returned the ball 65 yards and looked to be on his way to a score, but he was caught and forced out of bounds at the Hawks' 20-yard line.

Six plays later, Hommerding scored when quarterback Kale Boomer faked a handoff to fullback Jacob Rude and pitched to Hommerding who ran it into the end zone from one yard out. The point-after kick was no good, making it

6-6 with 5:29 left in the half.

The game had turned into a big play slug fest when three plays later, the Hawks set up a bubble screen to Luster that went 72 yards for a touchdown. The two-point conversion pass attempt fell incomplete so with 4:22 left in the second, the Hawks had regained the lead at 12-6, which remained the score at halftime.

The Vikings kicked off to start the second half, but they couldn't stop the Hawks who used 11 plays over five minutes on their next scoring drive. Along the way Luster caught a pass for 19 yards that would have gone for a touchdown, but Boomer made a nice touchdown-saving tackle at the Vikings' 18. It turned out to be only a temporary reprieve, when Nakumbe hooked up with Epps on an 11 yard scoring strike. The two-point conversion was good on a run by Chase Luster, making the score 20-6 Hawks.

After the Hawks kickoff, the Vikings' offense couldn't get anything going and was forced to punt. The Hawks took over at their 30, but again the Vikings' defense couldn't keep the Hawks out of the end zone as they drove 70 yards and scored on a 40-yard run by Julian Luster. The conversion was no good and the teams went into the quarter break with the Hawks in control of the game leading 26-6.

The Hawks' next possession resulted in another touchdown on an 11-play drive that culminated in a two-yard quar-

terback sneak by Nakumbe midway through the fourth quarter. The conversion failed making the score 32-6.

The Vikings' final touchdown was set up when defensive end Nick Austin recovered a Hawks' fumble at the Hawks' 23.

The Vikings struck quickly when on the next play Boomer passed to Mike Sjogren for a 23-yard touchdown with just over four minutes remaining in the game. The extra point kick by foreign exchange student Raul Piccione was no good, making the final score 32-12 Humboldt.

Offensively the Vikings

were led by Hommerding who had 105 yards rushing on 23 carries and 77 yards in returns.

Defensively the Vikings were led by Jacob Rude and Mike Austin with 14 tackles each, and in his first game back from injury, Dylan Quaife with 10 tackles.

Coach Dorr said it was a good experience and that the Hawks were good hosts. After the game the Hawks treated the Vikings to pizza.

Dorr highlighted the game performances of Hommerding and Quaife saying, "Brock ran really hard. He had his best game of the year. Dylan played

very well for only having one day of practice since his injury."

Up next for the Vikings is Ogilvie at home on Friday, September 18. Ogilvie lost to Chisholm 12-8 this past week. Coach Dorr said Ogilvie runs a funky defense that blitzes a lot and the key to the game could be how well the Vikings pick up those blitzes.

Go Vikes!

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Friday, September 25, 2009  
7:00 PM • AWAY  
vs. Mesabi East High School



Photo by Gary Siesennop  
Senior halfback Brock Hommerding led the Vikings offensively in the game against the St. Paul Humboldt Hawks on Friday, September 11. Hommerding had 105 yards rushing on 23 carries and 77 yards in returns.

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