

Warrensburg relinquishes Silver Tiger Trophy

By Joe Andrews
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SEDALIA — As every season goes by, a team earns its right to have its name scribed onto the Silver Tiger Trophy.

Over the last 15 years, there has been little variety. This year is one of the exceptions.

Warrensburg's seven-game win streak in the rivalry series reached an end with a 17-7 loss to Smith-Cotton on Friday, Aug. 29 at Smith-Cotton High School.

The stretch, which spanned 2018 to 2024, ties Smith-Cotton's seven-game win streak from 2011 to 2017.

"I want to give credit to Smith-Cotton for a well-played game and making the plays that they needed to make to win the game," Warrensburg head coach Chris Cavanah said. "We didn't do that today. We had some opportunities that we didn't capitalize on, and ultimately, we didn't win. We've got to look at ourselves in the mirror and see what needs to be fixed."

Blunders ultimately proved to be the primary factor that hindered Warrensburg in the game.

It turned the ball over more than five times, including three interceptions, two fumbles, and at least two turnovers on downs.

Smith-Cotton scored following a turnover on downs in the second quarter and a pair of fumbles in the third quarter.

S-C began in 'Burg territory on two of the three possessions.

"We made some major mistakes tonight on some plays that we would like to have back," Cavanah said. "But our kids battled. We didn't make the plays that we needed to make to win the game."

Warrensburg cashed in on a similar sequence in the first quarter after junior Xanden Johnson intercepted S-C junior quarterback Koleman Fredrickson.

The takeaway set 'Burg up inside Smith-Cotton's 30-yard line. A few moments later, senior quarterback Cruz Villegas found junior Jacob Taylor for a three-yard touchdown with 4:37 remaining in the frame.

Warrensburg's lead did not break until over a quarter later, when a turnover on downs at



Warrensburg's KJ Hale tackles Smith-Cotton quarterback Koleman Fredrickson on Friday, Aug. 29, at Smith-Cotton High School. PHOTOS BY JOE ANDREWS | STAR-JOURNAL



Warrensburg senior quarterback Cruz Villegas faces pressure from a Smith-Cotton defender on Friday, Aug. 29, at Smith-Cotton High School.

the S-C 40 led to a Smith-Cotton drive that ended with a 1-yard touchdown from Armand Wright.

Wright's score came not too long after S-C converted a fake field goal.

Smith-Cotton senior Kaden

Wiskur intercepted Villegas on the first snap of the next possession.

After starting at the Warrensburg 22, Smith-Cotton advanced within the 5-yard line but turned over on downs with less than 10 seconds to go in the half.

'Burg proceeded to kneel, sending the game into halftime with a 7-7 tie.

Warrensburg fumbled in Smith-Cotton territory on the first series of the second half. S-C turned that takeaway into a 42-yard field goal from sophomore Karson Wiskur.

Smith-Cotton also scored on a 24-yard fumble recovery from senior Dax Wiskur with 4:49 remaining in the third quarter.

"We had a mess up on a field goal attempt that became a first and goal for them that turned into a touchdown, and we had a pick-six, and we gave up the field goal," Cavanah said. "Our kids battled on the ball and really fought for us. We just didn't have enough there at the end."

Villegas completed 4-of-8 passes for 13 yards and a touchdown.

Sophomore quarterback Camden Mannering took first team snaps with the offense in the fourth quarter. He completed 3-of-8 passes for 20 yards.

Xanden Johnson, senior Tucker Small and sophomore Hunter Michel had one catch each for

seven yards.

Senior AJ Smith had one catch for six yards, junior Theo McCracken had one catch for four yards and Taylor had two catches for two yards and a touchdown.

Smith ran for 141 yards on 22 carries.

The game was the first of five on the road for the Tigers in the first month of the season.

Next up, they travel to Cameron on Sept. 5.

Cavanah said the week one outcome provides a measuring stick for where 'Burg needs to improve heading into next week.

"You can do a lot of things throughout the summer, go to camps and have jamborees, but until it's week one and the plays are live, there's a lot of things you still really don't know about yourselves. There's a lot of things to correct. I think our kids will be ready to correct come Monday."

Smith-Cotton opens Central Missouri Activities Conference play at Rock Bridge on Sept. 5.

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Central Missouri football falls short at Delta State

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First-half mistakes did not do No. 22 Central Missouri any favors in a 31-23 loss to Delta State in its season opener Thursday, Aug. 28, at McCool Stadium in Cleveland, Mississippi.

Central Missouri scored on the game's opening kickoff, but had fumbled on their second drive and had a botched punt on their third.

By the end of the first quarter, the Mules trailed 13-7. The deficit grew to 25-12 by halftime.

UCM went on to make a comeback push in the second half. It was within 12 yards of a touchdown before it turned the ball over on downs with 39 seconds remaining.

"The mistakes we made in the first half ultimately came back and didn't allow us to win the football game," Central Missouri head coach Josh Lamberson told Greg Hassler postgame on the UCM Sports Radio Network. "I was proud of the way the guys battled. We got a lot of guys playing their first college football game. It could've easily went the other way."

On his first drive of college football, freshman quarterback Donovan Omolo helped guide the Mules 75 yards downfield.

He completed two passes



Central Missouri redshirt freshman quarterback Donovan Omolo scrambles as redshirt junior defensive lineman Jaylen Harris pressures April 26, at Walton Stadium. FILE PHOTO BY JOE ANDREWS | STAR-JOURNAL

during the sequence, including a 13-yard touchdown pass to redshirt senior wide receiver Jack Pospisil. It ended up being the lone touchdown the Mules had until late in the third quarter.

Their other scores came via a 35-yard field goal from redshirt sophomore kicker Will Peacock and a safety in the second quarter, along with a 29-yard field goal from Peacock and a 1-yard touchdown run from senior Tank Young in the third quarter.

Central Missouri punted the ball six times in the game while

turning the ball over on downs twice.

It finished with 340 yards of offense, just 134 in the first half. Omolo completed 29-of-45 passes for 246 yards and a touchdown. Redshirt sophomore Hogan Wasson had 11 catches for 121 yards. Pospisil had seven catches for 71 yards and a touchdown.

Young led UCM on the ground, running for 61 yards and a touchdown on 17 carries.

"You don't really know who you are until you get in those mo-

ments," Lamberson said. "I think we got a good football team. We got really good players. We needed one more play there at the end. I do think we did find some things in that football game that are going to pay off for us as we go down the road."

Trailing 25-12 at halftime, the Mules gave up a touchdown on the opening drive of the second half.

Delta State did not score again, punting the ball twice and missing a field goal.

Central Missouri benefited

from one additional miscue in the second half, getting the ball back from its own punt after a Statesman touched the ball without keeping contact.

In its first game under defensive coordinator Rich Wright, the Mules allowed 422 yards. Delta State senior wide receiver Curtis Rearden caught three passes for 123 yards and one touchdown.

Redshirt senior defensive lineman Michael Harris and redshirt junior defensive lineman Jaylen Harris led UCM with six tackles apiece. Jaylen Harris had one sack and one tackle for loss.

"I'm proud of our defense making some adjustments in the second half and holding them to seven points," Lamberson said. "You get the ball down in the red zone there, you got to come away with points. Ultimately, we just made too many mistakes in the football game to come out on the road in a really cool environment and get a win. There's a lot to learn from, a lot to clean up. We'll get better, and come back next week and try to win a football game."

Central Missouri heads into a bye week, but returns home to host Colorado State-Pueblo at 7 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 11, at Walton Stadium.

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