

Press Clippings - 9/22/2023

- Daily Herald -

Larkin overtakes Fenton in 2nd half, snaps 2-game skid

By: Lou Nunez Jr
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When the starting kickoff for Fenton's Upstate Eight Conference contest versus **Larkin** was moved up by over an hour due to a cancellation of the lower-level game Thursday, both squads appeared not to be phased by the time change.

Instead, the two teams with a combined 1-7 record played like that mark was completely opposite as they battled one another in a back-and-forth battle at the Bison's 2023 home, the field at the George Jorndt Athletic Complex at Triton College in River Grove.

The visitors from Elgin's West Side emerged victorious 24-14.

The win snapped a two-game losing streak for a Larkin (2-3, 2-3) unit which had been shutout in those setbacks to Glenbard South and South Elgin.

The Royals had spotted Fenton (0-5, 0-5) a 14-6 lead with 2:54 remaining until halftime as Bison QB Nathan Stewart (12-20 passing, 126 yards) scored on a 2-yard TD run in the first and then found Maverick Murguia on a 45-yard pass play that saw that saw the pigskin slip through a Larkin defender into the senior's hands for their final points of the evening.

Larkin pulled to within 14-12 on a 22-yard scoring strike from sophomore Aden Mora to Terrence Boone with 36 ticks left in the half. Mora (7-13 passing, 149 yards) previously got them on the board with a 64-yard TD toss to Erick Myrick.

It was their opening possession of the second half that gave them the lead for good when Mora took it in from the 3 at the 8:09 mark giving the Royals an 18-14 advantage which they took into the fourth.

It would be just 31 ticks into that final stanza of play where the game's big play took place. Fenton had driven to the Royals' 11-yard line when Larkin senior defensive back Damani

Cannon picked Stewart off in the end zone and then proceeded to run it back 103 yards to give them a 10-point cushion at 24-14.

"When the (ball) snapped, I took my read steps," said Cannon, who snared another pick later on in the fourth. "I saw the (formation) and then I (saw) the QB looking at his target and I hopped in front of him and then (after intercepting the pass) I took off."

Angell Santana also recovered a Bison fumble on the Royals' 31 to quell another Fenton scoring threat.

First-year Larkin coach Vincent Ray feels that his team hasn't even begun to scratch the surface of reaching their potential. The Royals head home to Elgin Memorial Field where it will play their next three games against East Aurora and Bartlett and as technically the road team vs. rival Elgin.

"Are we there? Not even close. This is a very talented team and we have to live up to the expectations and talent that they have," Ray said.

"The second half they kind of turned it around and started giving me more of what it was (that) I was looking for."

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Scouting Week 5 Fox football games

By: Craig Brueske and Jake Bartelson Shaw Local News
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Bartlett (2-2, 2-2) at Glenbard South (4-0, 4-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Glenbard South won, 47-6, last year

About the Hawks: Bartlett put together its best half of the season last weekend, outscoring Elgin 21-0 in the final 24 minutes during its 35-14 victory. Sophomore backs Isaac Harris (200 yards, 2 TDs) and Joey Caputo (178 yards, TD) sparked the Hawks, while another sophomore, Vincent Yario, had a TD pass and TD run at quarterback. "Those three had a huge game for us last Friday night, but they couldn't have done any of it without the amazing play of our offensive line -- left tackle Damian Alba, left guard Blake McCluskey, center Daniel Thorner, right guard Sam Mancilla, and right tackle Yazan Aburmishan," said Hawks coach Milan Vuckovich. "To have a varsity backfield of all sophomores account for

400 rushing yards and 4 touchdowns is just unreal, and something I've never experienced firsthand in my 14 years of coaching high school football." Receiver Nicholas Carlos, inside linebackers Daniel Jasso and Ethan Ratajczyk, and Thorner are also sophomore starters. "The experience these seven sophomores are getting this year is going to do wonders for their development," added Vuckovich. The Hawks face a major challenge against unbeaten Glenbard South. "Ryan (Raiders coach Crissey) has his team playing really well right now," said Vuckovich. "They can hit the home run at any time with their skill players on both sides of the ball -- and special teams. To be successful, we'll need to play sound defense and tackle well, do our jobs on special teams, and control the ball on offense."

About the Raiders: Through their first 4 games, the Raiders have been nearly unstoppable on both sides of the ball, having outscored opponents by a staggering 204-27 margin. Notre Dame-bound senior WR/KR Cam Williams averages 118 receiving yards per game and has scored 7 touchdowns -- in limited time due to the blowout victories. Senior quarterback Michael Champagne leads the team in rushing (67 yards per game) and has thrown 12 TD passes to go with 4 rushing TDs. Tailback Carter London (3 TDs) adds depth to the offensive attack. "They have big, strong, solid linemen and mid-bodies, so we definitely need to match their physicality at the line of scrimmage," said Vuckovich. Senior tackle Jack Everett Anderson (2 sacks) and sophomore linebacker Lambros Ioannou (5.3 tackles per game) anchor the Raiders' defense.

Glenbard East (3-1, 3-1) at **Streamwood** (1-3, 1-3)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Glenbard East won, 42-8, last year

About the Rams: Blake Salvino tossed 4 touchdown passes during the Rams' 49-6 win over East Aurora last weekend. Amonte Cook hauled in a pair of TDs, while Gianbiagio Brusca and Chris Renford each had TD receptions. "Blake has been a rock at quarterback," said Rams coach John Walters. "He has really done a great job of running our system and distributing the ball. With that, he also plays linebacker on defense for us. He has been on point for four weeks on both sides of the ball. I couldn't be more impressed with how he has played." The Rams' defense has been rock-solid throughout its first 4 contests. "Our defense is pretty good," said Walters. "We have some real defensive minded dudes that take pride in playing that side of the ball. It's a culture that started under former defensive coordinator Jeff Cherry and has continued under new defensive coordinator Pat Walker. These guys prep hard every week. They take pride in playing defense." Walters understands what lies ahead against the Sabres. "Streamwood is going to do what Streamwood does -- double tight, double wing, possess the ball, keep your offense on the sidelines," said the coach. "Our goal will be to get stops so we can get offensive possessions. It's a big week for our defensive guys."

About the Sabres: Last week, the Sabres jumped out to a 6-0 lead over Glenbard South on a 29-yard touchdown run by quarterback Aden Strong. "Aden is a smart player," said **Streamwood** coach Keith McMaster. "Last season, he was our quarterback and had to resume the role in Week 3 due to an injury. He had been running the wing position, so he knows how to see a seam and attack it, whether at quarterback or wingback. I'm very proud of his progress from last year to this season and hope to see more from him down the stretch." McMaster isn't afraid to try anything on special teams. "We've been close to recovering 4 different onside kicks this season -- we came through with two of them last game. Over the past two seasons, our special teams group has excelled at their jobs." McMaster knows the Rams are tough. "Glenbard East is a talented group on both sides of the ball," he said. "They are stingy on defense, not allowing many teams to put points on the board while at the same time moving the ball up and down the field on opposing teams. They feature a balanced attack using the run to set up the pass with skilled players running, passing, and catching the football."

West Chicago (2-2, 2-2) at **Elgin** (1-3, 1-3)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: won, 48-20, last year

About the Wildcats: Much-improved West Chicago is fresh from a 56-28 victory over Fenton, thanks to the play of running backs Vincent Muci (19 carries, 175 yards, 3 TDs), Robert Lee (72-yard TD), and Louis Zeitler (95-yard TD). "I'm not quite sure when the last time was that we scored 56 points," said Wildcats coach Adam Chavez. "Looking at some previous years' results that we had at the school, it hasn't been done in the 2000s. The best part for me as the head coach was we didn't turn the ball over (last week)." The Wildcats amassed 653 yards of total offense against the Bison. "Most definitely, the credit goes to the offensive line," said Chavez. "In our postgame coaches' meeting, it was a unanimous decision that they were the MVPs of the game." With his team at 2-2, Chavez realizes the importance of this week's game. "This game is really big for us," said the coach. "Elgin beat us handily last year and that left a very bad taste in our mouths. We will have to play a complete game to have a chance at the end of the game."

About the Maroons: **Elgin** played **Bartlett** to a 14-10 halftime deadlock before falling, 35-14, last weekend. "We don't have the depth that many teams we face day in and day out," said **Elgin** coach Anthony Mason. "We ran out of gas and injuries started piling up. Tough but a great fight. I know this team can play good football -- just trying to get more consistent with it." Junior safety Julian Carlson had a pair of interceptions against **Bartlett**. Mason expects a huge challenge from the Wildcats. "Great improvement from last year. They understand their assignments and play hard," said the coach. "They fly to the ball on defense and have some playmakers in the backfield and on the line of scrimmage, which is

always a plus." Mason has seen improvement from his team through the first four weeks. "The main thing for us is staying together in hard times," said the coach. "We have dealt with things this season people don't experience in a lifetime, so staying together, and winning the day, every day, is the improvement we consistently want to see for the rest of the season."

South Elgin (4-0, 4-0) at East Aurora (2-2, 2-2)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: **South Elgin** won, 52-20, last year

About the Storm: Coming off its first shutout of the season -- 36-0 win over **Larkin** --

South Elgin looks to extend its UEC winning streak to 29 against an improved East Aurora team. Junior quarterback Jack Ginnan is progressing nicely for the Storm. Last week, he tossed 3 TD passes -- to Jabari Pruitt, Brandon Berrios, and Ishmael George. Berrios added an 80-yard kick return for a touchdown, while the defense came up with a pair of goal-line stands to keep the Royals out of the end zone. It was South Elgin's 20th shutout but the first since Week 1 of 2022. "I'm happy for our guys and we have a lot of work to do because East Aurora has two kids that are capable of scoring from any point on the field," said Storm coach Dragan Teonic. "Any time we can stop a team with as much talent as Larkin on the goal line twice, it shows a ton of toughness on our guys' part. We're playing with much better effort and execution."

About the Tomcats: Stinging from a 49-6 loss to Glenbard East last weekend, the Tomcats face another steep challenge against 4-time defending Upstate Eight Conference champion **South Elgin**. Wide receiver/kick returner Kenneth Cooley has the attention of all UEC coaches. Cooley had a 98-yard TD return against Glenbard East. "Cooley ended up with a kick return TD off a fumble from their other returner," said Rams coach John Walters. "We lost him for a second -- he's that electric." Storm coach Teonic knows it will take a team effort against Cooley. "I don't know that there is any one best way to try and minimize his impact on a game because they also have a great running back. We need to get all 11 guys to the ball. Our corners and safeties need to be ready to play the long ball, and our defensive line will need to get pressure on their quarterback to help." Teonic expects a challenge from the Tomcats. "This is the best East Aurora team I've seen on film in my six years at **South Elgin**," said the coach. "They're athletic, tough and well coached."

Wheaton Academy (3-1, 1-1) at St. Edward (0-4, 0-2)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Wheaton Academy won, 38-7, last year

About the Warriors: Following a wild 30-29 loss to Hope Academy in their home opener last weekend, the Warriors attempt to rebound against St. Edward. "We're going to St. Ed's

for the second year in a row," said Warriors coach Jim Johanik. "We historically don't play well there. They've always been a hard-nosed team that seems to play us tough. It will be a good environment for us to have to overcome." Against Hope, Wheaton Academy mounted an 80-yard drive in the final minute, capped by quarterback Brett Kasper's 40-yard TD pass to Ben DeHaan. However, a pair of celebration penalties moved the PAT try to 50 yards, and the potential game-tying kick fell a few yards short. "Hope has done a fantastic job in building its program," said Johanik. "They're competing in attracting talent with every other private and public school in and around the city, and they've got more skill and size than I've ever seen from them. They outplayed us and we missed some key opportunities to seal the game. This matchup is going to be great for our young conference going forward. The loss, as disappointing as it was, doesn't change much for us. We can still share in the conference title, the playoffs are well within reach, and if anything, it helped us refocus a bit. Learning from the tough losses are more important than getting easy wins."

About the Green Wave: Having been outscored 136-44 through four games, the Green Wave and first-year head coach Shane Finnane look for their first victory against a Wheaton Academy team that suffered its first loss last weekend.

Kingdom Prep Lutheran (1-4) at Aurora Central Catholic (2-2)

When: 6 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: First meeting

About the Wolfpack: Freshman quarterback Ryde Ehley has thrown 13 touchdowns with 6 interceptions for the Wolfpack. Senior defensive lineman Jadon Lewis leads the team with 51 tackles. Kingdom Prep has been outscored 168-46 in its 4 losses. "Kingdom Prep is another athletic team coming in," said ACC coach Christian Rago. Facing a Wisconsin team has its challenges with no other common opponents. "You have to do some extra digging when learning about your opponent, but Hudl is very helpful when it comes to exchanging film."

About the Chargers: ACC tries to regroup following last weekend's 78-0 loss to Milwaukee Academy of Science. "We tried to refocus on what was ahead," Rago said of his squad. "You have to find the things we can improve upon and focus on getting ready for the next opponent. A game like that puts you in the lowest position possible and tests your love for the game. You hope the team responds positively and comes together." Health-wise, the Chargers are on the mend. "We are slowly getting back to full strength," said the coach. "We are getting a handful of starting linemen back and with that looking to improve up front to get things going offensively and defensively." Quarterback Kevin Stanislo leads the Chargers' offense.

Yorkville (2-2, 0-0) at West Aurora (4-0, 0-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Yorkville 10, West Aurora 0 (2022)

About the Foxes: After back-to-back losses, Yorkville got back on track with a 28-0 win over Plainfield Central last week. Michael Dopart threw two TD passes to Dom Coronado. Ryan Wulff ran for 93 yards and Josh Gettemy 87 to lead the Foxes' 208-yard output on the ground. The Foxes have had some close calls with West Aurora since the two schools joined the Southwest Prairie Conference. Luke Zook's pick six highlighted last year's 10-0 Foxes' win.

About the Blackhawks: West Aurora's last winning season came in 2018, the year before the program joined the SPC. The Blackhawks are headed back to the Upstate Eight next season -- and in the meantime are off to a fast start in nonconference play, 4-0 for the first time since 2017. West Aurora's schedule up to this point is a little suspect -- teams with a combined record of 3-13. The Blackhawks will find out more about themselves in the SPC West, a league in which they have posted an 0-20 record in since joining the league. Two-sport star Terrence Smith, a 6-foot-4 junior receiver, is the man to watch.

Wheaton North (3-1, 2-0) at Batavia (3-1, 2-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: Wheaton North 27, Batavia 24 (2022)

About the Falcons: Wheaton North backed up its big Week 3 win over St. Charles North with a 35-14 win over St. Charles East last Friday, setting up its showdown with Batavia for the DuKane lead. Illinois recruit Joe Barna made his presence felt on both sides of the ball last week with a sack, forced fumble and a shoestring TD catch. Max Howser threw for 200 yards and two TDs and Rich Schilling had five catches for 95 yards and a TD.

About the Bulldogs: Batavia's offense continued to hum last Friday with its 45-21 win over St. Charles North. Charlie Whelpley ran for 121 yards, had 53 receiving yards and scored a TD. Batavia's balanced offense has four players -- Whelpley, QB Ryan Boe, Nathan Whitwell and Zach Granberg -- who are over 100 yards rushing on the season. Boe, a North Dakota State recruit, has completed 67% of his passes for 890 yards and one touchdown and Whelpley has a team-high 21 catches.

St. Charles North (2-2, 0-2) at Wheaton Warrenville South (2-2, 1-1)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: St. Charles North 35, Wheaton Warrenville South 20 (2022)

About the North Stars: After a 2-0 start in nonconference, St. Charles North has dropped back-to-back games to Wheaton North and Batavia and is a little banged up. The North Stars' first four games on the schedule have been a bear. Junior QB Ethan Plumb, in his

third varsity season, is off to a big start to the season and threw for 237 yards in the Batavia loss. Jake Mettetal, who appears to be Plumb's top target, had 103 receiving yards and two TDs but the North Stars have other threats like Jake Furtney.

About the Tigers: WW South, after consecutive losses, got a much-needed 41-0 win over Glenbard North last week. The scoring output was a welcome sight for a Tigers' offense that had scored a total of 18 points the first three weeks. Two-way starter Matt Crider, who missed the first three games with an ankle injury, provided a big lift with his return and ran for 119 yards and three TDs. Quarterback Luca Carbonaro had a 30-yard TD run. The schedule stiffens the next two weeks with St. Charles North and Wheaton North.

Geneva (4-0, 2-0) at Glenbard North (0-4, 0-2)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: 14-10 Geneva (2022)

About the Vikings: Geneva is firing on all cylinders at this point. Whether it's the defense only allowing 23 total points or the Vikings' rushing attack of Michael Rumoro, Troy Velez and QB Nate Stempowski combining for over 100 yards per game, there's little not to like with what Geneva has done. Another win this week and it already secures them playoff eligibility with Batavia on the horizon.

About the Panthers: Glenbard North is obviously struggling, and it gets no easier with an undefeated team coming into your building. They've gotten shut out in consecutive weeks.

St. Charles East (1-3, 1-1) at Lake Park (2-2, 0-2)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: 24-0 Lake Park (2022)

About the Saints: The schedule isn't going to get any easier, so this is a pretty important week for the Saints to get momentum before the likes of SCN, Geneva and Batavia in the next three weeks. Outside of Week 2, the Saints haven't scored more than 14 points, so getting the offense going is imperative.

About the Lancers: On the other side, Lake Park is starting to enter a stage where the schedule might favor them a bit. Lake Park is coming off consecutive losses to Batavia and Geneva, but is really starting to show the bounce-back season it was hoping for. Wideout Matt Rodriguez and running back Declan Fortuna are their marquee offensive players, and that should continue this week.

Ottawa (2-2, 0-1) at Kaneland (2-2, 1-1)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: 41-14 Kaneland (2022)

About the Knights: Kaneland picked up an emphatic 42-0 win at Woodstock, rebounding from a 43-33 loss to Morris the week before. Both Kaneland losses have been at home, losing to Morris in Week 3 and 33-27 to Washington in Week 1, and in both games the Knights led in the fourth quarter. First-year coach Michael Thorgesen said the Knights are hoping for a strong performance and their first home win of the season.

About the Pirates: The 48-0 loss to Sycamore last week was the first time Ottawa has been shut out since a 34-0 loss to Plano in Week 9 of the 2021 season. Colby Mortensen had a hard time getting the Ottawa offense going, completing 11-of-21 passes for 84 yards and an interception. Hayden Swett, Packston Miller and Archer Cechowicz had three catches each.

Marmion (2-2, 0-1) at St. Rita (3-1)

When: 7 p.m. Friday

Last matchup: 49-13 St. Rita (2019)

About the Cadets: Marmion was overmatched in last week's loss to Carmel. While Jacob Sullivan went 15 of 19 passing for 234 yards and two touchdowns, it was when the Cadets were already down 25-0. Wideout Ben Morcos impressed with six catches for 159 yards and a touchdown.

About the Mustangs: St. Rita understandably struggled in a loss to Mt. Carmel last week, but has an opportunity to get the defense back on track after allowing 38 points. Jett Hilding had a 69-yard touchdown pass to Jimmie Maxson III early, but that was it after that.

McHenry (0-4, 0-4) at Burlington Central (2-2, 2-2)

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: 28-13 McHenry (2022)

About the Warriors: McHenry lost to Dundee-Crown 13-7 last week. The Warriors got a boost for their offense when sophomore QB Ethan Dietmeyer returned to the lineup. Dietmeyer suffered a broken finger in the opener and missed two games. He ran 12 times for 87 yards last week, and RB Jacob Jones had 19 carries for 98 yards. McHenry's win over Central in Week 9 last season left the Rockets out of the Class 5A playoffs, and the teams tied for fifth in the FVC.

About the Rockets: Central fell to Crystal Lake Central 25-10 last week. QB Ryder Bergemann, playing in place of injured Jackson Alcorn, threw for 160 yards, but left the game late with an ankle injury. After the game, Rockets coach Brian Iossi thought Bergemann would be able to come back. RB Joey Kowall (335 yards rushing) also was injured in that game, but Iossi said his absence was more precautionary. WRs Michael Person (16 receptions), Brady Gilroy (15) and Caden West (11) are Bergemann's top targets.

Prairie Ridge (4-0, 4-0) at Cary-Grove (4-0, 4-0)

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: Prairie Ridge won 27-16 in Week 5 last season.

About the Wolves: Prairie Ridge beat Huntley 27-14 last week. ... The Wolves are No. 1 in The Associated Press Class 5A poll and are 16-2 since last season. ... FB Jack Finn has 470 rushing yards. QB Joey Vanderwiel has run for 211 yards. ... Prairie Ridge's defense has allowed only 40 points for the season and only 12 in the second half. Those 12 points came against Hampshire after the Wolves had a 43-0 lead. ... Prairie Ridge won Class 6A state titles in 2016 and 2017 and played in championship games in 2019 and 2022.

About the Trojans: C-G defeated Jacobs 27-14 last week. ... The Trojans are No. 5 in Class 6A and have allowed 53 points on defense, second in the FVC to Prairie Ridge. ...

Sophomore FB Logan Abrams has 485 rushing yards, while RB Andrew Prio is C-G's most explosive player. Prio has 300 rushing yards and averages 13.0 per carry. With his two receptions, both for touchdowns, Prio has seven touchdowns in 25 touches from scrimmage. ... QB Peyton Seaburg has four completions for the season, all of which have gone for touchdowns. ... The Trojans won the 6A state championship games in 2018 and 2021.

Crystal Lake Central (2-2, 2-2) at Crystal Lake South (2-2, 2-2)

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: Crystal Lake South defeated Central 50-22 in Week 6 last season.

About the Tigers: Central beat Burlington Central 25-10 last week. ... QB Jason Penza has 1,103 passing yards after last week's 290-yard game. WRs Tommy Hammond (21), George Dimopoulos (18) and Carter Kelley (12) lead the way. ... RB Griffin Buehler has 395 yards rushing. ... Central lost to Huntley and C-G to start the season before beating Dundee-Crown and Burlington Central.

About the Gators: South defeated Hampshire 38-28 last week. ... RB Jake Christensen doubled his rushing total in last week's game with 163 yards and three TDs. ... QB Caden Casimino has 802 yards passing and has completed 61.8% of his throws. ... WR Colton Hess has 21 receptions and five TDs, RB AJ Demirov has 22 grabs.

Jacobs (1-3, 1-3) at Dundee-Crown (1-3, 1-3)

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: Jacobs beat D-C 37-7 last season in Week 9.

About the Golden Eagles: Jacobs lost to Cary-Grove 27-14 last week. ... While the Eagles' margin for error has diminished, they are through with the FVC's top three teams (C-G, Prairie Ridge and Huntley, which are a combined 11-1). ... Sophomore RB Caden DuMelle leads Jacobs with 287 rushing yards. ... TE Grant Stec (Wisconsin) has 10 of his 12 catches in the last two games.

About the Chargers: D-C beat McHenry 13-7 last week. ... RB Kadin Malone had a big game last week with nine carries for 90 yards and both Chargers' touchdowns. ... RB Terrion Spencer had 83 yards rushing and 43 receiving last week. ... D-C is missing WR Kali Freeman, who had TD catches in the first three games, with a leg injury.

Hampshire (1-3, 1-3) at Huntley (3-1, 3-1)

When: 7 p.m. Friday.

Last matchup: Huntley defeated Hampshire 35-0 in Week 7 last season.

About the Whip-Purs: Hampshire lost to Crystal Lake South 38-28 last week. ... RB Cole Klawikowski carried 20 times for 103 yards and a touchdown and also had five catches for 109 yards and two scores. Those were Klawikowski's first receptions for the season. ... QB Luke Lacke has 564 yards passing.

About the Red Raiders: Huntley lost to Prairie Ridge 27-14 last week. ... The Raiders had cracked the Class 8A poll at No. 9 before their loss last week. ... QB Braylon Bower is 26 of 31 passing over the last two games. He was 11 of 11 against Jacobs in Week 3, then hit on his first nine passes last week. ... RB Haiden Janke has 364 yards and 10 rushing touchdowns.