

Hometown Sports

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STEELE COUNTY TIMES

Hedensten, Tigers ground the Rockets



A Randolph defender latches onto and pulls down the uniform of Medford's Garron Hoffman (28) who is off running with the ball in Friday night's game. The Tigers cruised to a 47-18 victory over Randolph.

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

The Medford football team got off to a fast start and never took their foot off the pedal, beating Randolph 47-18 on Friday, Nov. 6.

The Tigers' offense clicked right away and scored four first-half touchdowns. Senior running back Josiah Hedensten scored two of those touchdowns, while sophomore running back Garron Hoffman and quarterback Justin Ristau each scored one touchdown.

Thanks to those four touchdowns and a stingy defense, the Tigers took a commanding 28-12 lead into halftime.

One of the most impactful plays of the first half was a 35-yard pass from Ristau to Hedensten, which set up Medford's fourth touchdown of the first half.

The Tigers' offense and defense continued to excel in the second half. The offense tacked on 19 more points, while the defense held Randolph to just six points in the final two quarters.

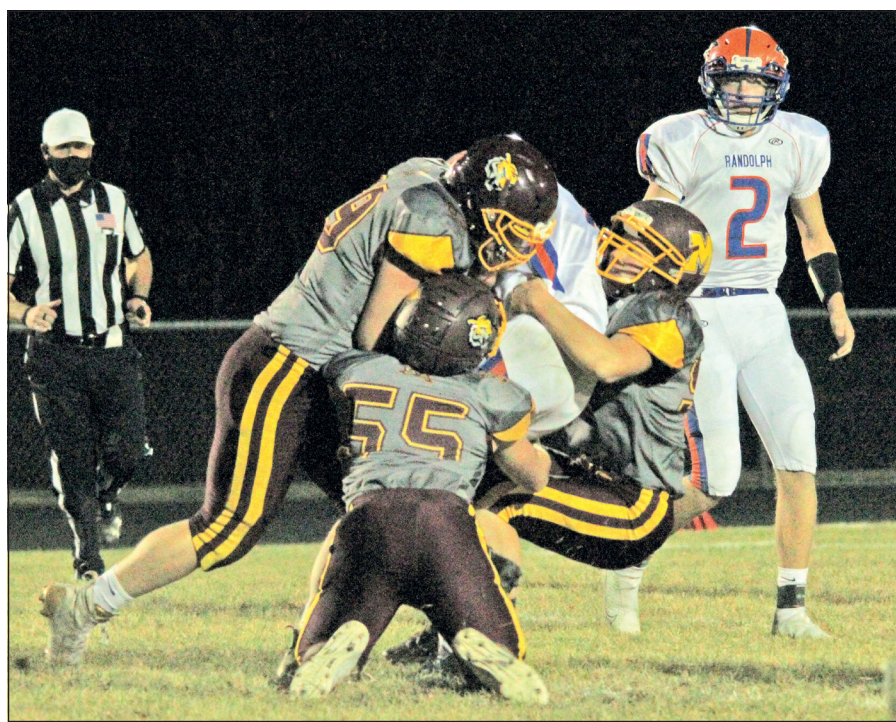
Medford (4-1) will play its last regular season game against Triton (3-2) in Dodge Center on Wednesday, Nov. 11.

STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER



Senior Josiah Hedensten (17) celebrated his 18th birthday Friday by scoring five touchdowns for Medford. He is shown here taking off with the ball en route to one of his touchdowns.

STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER



Three Tigers players with Brayden Beede (55) on the ground sandwich a Randolph ball handler Friday night.

STAFF PHOTO BY RICK BUSSLER

Permission for liftoff denied; Huskies beat Rockets

BY ALEX NUEHRING
SPORTS EDITOR

After losing four of its past five games, the Owatonna volleyball team got a much-needed win when it beat Rochester John Marshall 3-1 on Monday, Nov. 2.

In the first set, the Huskies got off to a strong start and cruised to a 25-10 win.

Owatonna Head Coach Tai Tolle said the keys to the Huskies' early success were their serving and decision-making.

"We came out serving aggressively and were able to get John Marshall out of system offensively in the first set. We also played in control and made solid decisions at the net," she said.

The Rockets bounced back in the second set and narrowly beat the Huskies 25-22 to tie the game at 1-1.

"We were adjusting to a lineup change in serve receive/defense.

Once JM started to find their rhythm offensively, it took us a moment to find our confidence and settle in," Tolle explained.

The third and fourth set were nearly as competitive, but both times it was Owatonna who came out on top, winning 25-20 and 25-18, respectively.

She noted that the difference in the third set compared to the second was how the Huskies' defense responded to the Rockets' offense.

"We started to pay attention to JM's offensive tendencies, keyed up our blockers on their offensive leaders and adjusted our defense to be in a good position to read those shots. It paid off with some nice defensive plays on our end, and our front line did a nice job of finishing at the net," Tolle said.

Additionally, Owatonna had a strong serving night collectively with a team total

of 13 aces. Sophomore setter Isabella Barrie led the effort with 5 aces.

Other Huskies who had strong performances were senior libero Haylee Mullenbach who led the team with 19 digs, senior outside hitter Emily Hagen who led the team with 14 kills and fellow senior outside hitter Lanie Schuster who tallied eight kills.

The win over John Marshall improves Owatonna's record to 3-4.

Even though the Huskies have lost more games than they've won, Tolle is happy with how her team has played throughout the first half of the season.

"All season, our focus has been on the attitude of growth over outcome. How are we pursuing growth everyday? Our players and staff have that as our central focus in the gym. Our group has shown consistently, all season, that they're



Huskies' senior outside hitter Lanie Schuster hits the ball over the net during the second set of Owatonna's 3-1 win over John Marshall on Monday, Nov. 2.

STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX NUEHRING

willing to put in the time and the effort to improve and grow, and doing so with a positive attitude. Regardless of the outcome, as a coach, that pleases me most," she said.

Owatonna was scheduled to play Mankato East (4-1) at home Tuesday, Nov. 10.

In order to beat the Cougars, she said, "We will continue to build on things we have been

working on all season: Strong serving, movement on serve receive, aggressive blocking at the net and keying our middle blockers on the opposing setter to get a quick read."



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