

Cliff Jette photos/The Gazette

Cedar Rapids Kennedy's Michael Watkins is tackled by Linn-Mar's Isaiah Garman last night at Kingston Stadium in Cedar Rapids.

It's all about the game

Kennedy tops Linn-Mar during homecoming

By Jeff Johnson, The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — They're celebrating homecoming, as well as the 50-year anniversary of Cedar Rapids Kennedy High School this weekend.

There's a dance today and gala Saturday. It would have been downright rude for the 2017 Cougars to spoil this party by losing. They didn't. Winning,

They didn't. Winning 38-28, over Linn-Mar. "Coach was telling

us all week the game was the most important thing," Kennedy running back Justin Johnson said. "We practiced hard all week, tried not to let other factors get to us. I think we did a good job of that."

"Our job was this," Kennedy Coach Brian White said. "Because if you don't take care of this, it makes everything else a little sour."

With super sophomore back Cairron Hendred out with an injury, Kennedy (5-1, 2-0 Class 4A District 8) turned to a group approach running the football. Johnson had 128 yards and two touch-



Kennedy's Terrell Jordan celebrates after the Cougars recovered a Linn-Mar fumble last night at Kingston Stadium in Cedar Rapids.

downs, Michael Watkins had 84 yards and a TD and Cade Parker added 72 yards.

Even quarterback B.J. White contributed 76 yards rushing, rushing for a touchdown and throwing a TD pass. Kennedy finished with 358 yards on the ground and 502 yards overall. "They were just beating us up front," Linn-Mar Coach Paul James

said. Kennedy stormed to a 21-0 lead early in the second quarter and was up 38-14 midway through the fourth. Linn-Mar (1-5, 1-1) rallied for two last touchdowns (both passes from QB Trot Carey to Alex Hess) and had the ball deep in Kennedy territory with a couple of minutes to go, thanks to back-to-back successful onside kicks.

Carey completed 23 of 33 throws for 221 yards and added another 67 yards rushing. Josh Hilsenbeck caught nine balls for 108 yards and a TD.

"They could have folded their tents in a number of places," James said. "This was just another step for us, that never-say-die attitude that really stuck out tonight."

After stopping Linn-Mar on downs inside its 35 with a minute to go, Kennedy confused what was left of the crowd by passing the ball and calling timeouts in an effort to score another touchdown. White explained it was in an effort to get the maximum 17 points for the victory from a district standpoint.

"I look like a (jerk), but what do I say? What do I do?" White said. "I'm going to say I'm not going to do the best that I can to get our team in the playoffs?"

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