

4-0 Wykons race past Ironwood

Written by Peter Nocerini

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Nick Helgemo turns on the afterburners, dashing away from Ironwood defenders on a first down scamper during the second half of the game against Ironwood Sept. 20. In back, Zane Sarafiny (75) and Bryson Heimerl maintain their blocks.

IRONWOOD—After its first-time-in-23-years win over Iron Mountain the week before, would West Iron's suffer an emotional letdown when they visited Ironwood Sept. 20?

No. Way. PUBLIC

The Wykons scored on their first five possessions here Sept. 20, bowling over the Red Devils 49-0 and improving to 4-0 overall, 2-0 in the West Pac Conference.

A bigger test is in store: The Wykons visit 3-1 Houghton Sept. 27 on the Gremlins' home turf, the last of three straight away games for the Blue and White.

The Blue and White gave the Red Devils the blues right away after the opening kickoff, covering 66 yards in eight plays and scoring on QB Andrew Peterson's keeper from the 1.

The highlight of that drive was Joe Varney's 33-yard run to the Ironwood 3—but Varney hurt an ankle on the play, and his night was over. Still, the Wykons led 7-0 lead after Ryan Rogers' kick.

Soon it was 14-0. On the Red Devils' third play, Colton Pangrazzi leaped high to intercept Adam Mackey's long pass at the WIC 27. On first down, Peterson passed to Rogers, who zipped down the right lane for a 73-yard TD. After the kick, it was 14-0.

Ironwood's longest drive of the night followed—five first downs during a drive that reached the West Iron 22 early in the second quarter on Mackey's 12-yard keeper. On the next play, Mackey rolled left, was hit by Chasz Jonet, the ball came loose, and Alec Schmelebeck recovered at the Wykon 20.

Peterson's 43-yard pass to Joe Pisoni and Schmelebeck's three 10+ yard runs led to Jonet's TD run from the 2. Peterson ran in a two-pointer. Wykons, 22-0.

Soon it was 28-0—after Ironwood punted, Schmelebeck took the first down handoff 45 yards up the middle, through tacklers to paydirt.

The next scoring drive needed eight plays, including 16- and 28-yard runs by Schmelebeck. Jonet scored from the 1. Wykons 34-0 at halftime.

Early in the second half, Ironwood earned two first downs, but its nine-play drive only gained 20 yards against the stingy WIC defense. When the Wykons got their turn, they covered 66 yards in five plays, scoring on Nick Helgemo's 18-yard run.

Tommi Kesti-Kastari's extra point kick put the Wykons up 41-0 and started the running clock for the rest of the night.

Nolan Raab's interception led to the final WIC score, and the reserves made the most of their time on the field, covering 55 yards in five plays. Kesti-Kastari ran it in from the 7, and Helgemo's two-pointer put the Wykons up 49-0.

Coach Mike Berutti noted that when they played in the scrimmage back in August, the Wykons' second defensive unit struggled. They got another chance at Ironwood, playing all but three

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plays in the second half, and showed how much they have learned.

“We gave up a total of 49 yards in the second half,” Berutti said. “So I’m real happy with the way they played—how they got to the football and how they responded to the option, too.”