

Hawkeyes pound way to Cy-Hawk trophy

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

AMES, Iowa – The satisfaction was evident. As the final whistle was blown and the Jack Trice Stadium scoreboard showed 0:00 on the clock, the Iowa Hawkeyes raced toward Iowa State's sideline and the celebration had begun.

On both sides of the football, Iowa did the dirty work Saturday night in reclaiming the Cy-Hawk trophy for the first time since 2010 after beating Iowa State 27-21 to move to 2-1 on this young 2013 season. This game was won because for the majority of the evening, the Hawkeyes controlled the line of scrimmage.

"It's awesome," junior offensive tackle Brandon Scherff said on a night where Iowa had 378 yards of total offense. "Rivalry games are big games. Any game is a big game. I thought we prepared well during the week."

Iowa's defense set the tone on this night, as the Cyclones were only able to muster 61 yards of total offense in the entire first half. Iowa State only managed 10 yards rushing during those first 30 minutes, enabling the Hawkeyes to experiment more with nickel packages on third down and make the Cyclones one-dimensional on offense. Iowa State only managed 59 yards rushing on 24 carries for the entire contest.

"That's prideful," junior defensive tackle Carl Davis said. "We take pride in stopping the run and that's what we did."

After overcoming a first quarter that featured a turnover, Iowa's offense got more in sync during the second quarter and

a big reason why was the Hawkeyes' ground game. For the second straight game, junior running back Mark Weisman handled the bulk of Iowa's carries as he touched the ball 35 times Saturday and rushed for 145 yards.

Because he got it going on the ground, it allowed sophomore quarterback Jake Rudock to make more plays with his arm and he did just that when he connected with junior wideout Kevonte Martin-Manley for a 5-yard touchdown to give Iowa a 7-0 lead.

Senior kicker Mike Meyer made a 28-yard field goal to make it 10-0, then one of the game's biggest plays happened when senior linebacker James Morris hauled down an interception of Iowa State quarterback Sam Richardson on a play where sophomore defensive end Drew Ott brought the pressure. Iowa got another Meyer field goal out of the turnover and took a 13-0 lead with it into halftime.

"I don't remember if he was hurried or if the ball was tipped, but it was a soft throw," Morris said about his interception. "It wasn't a bullet coming out. I reached for it and the receiver reached for it. It was contested. I ended up catching it off the bounce and saw the end zone in front of me, but a big, ugly lineman got in the way so I spun around."

The Cyclones would strike with a huge play in the third quarter when Richardson hit Quenton Bundrage for a 67-yard touchdown following a missed tackle by senior linebacker B.J. Lowery. But much like it did last week against Missouri State, that one-possession Hawkeye lead immediately went back to two possessions.

Iowa responded with a 9-play touchdown drive that saw the Hawkeyes convert three third downs, the last of which went for a 26-yard touchdown pass from Rudock to sophomore wide receiver Jacob Hillyer to make the score 20-7. On the evening, the Hawkeyes faced 20 third downs and moved the chains on 11 of those plays.

"They brought a weak-side blitz and the line did a great job, gave me enough time to stand in there and deliver him the ball," Rudock said about his touchdown pass to Hillyer. "All of sudden, I heard our fans screaming, so he apparently spun out of it and made a great play. I didn't see it, but it was awesome he got in."

The rushing attack of Weisman, junior Damon Bullock and sophomore Jordan Canzeri was on full display in the fourth quarter when Iowa would build its lead up to 27-7. On a 15-play series capped by Rudock running in from one yard out, all but one of those 15 plays was a run. As a team, the Hawkeyes finished with 218 yards on the ground.

"We came into this game wanting to run the ball," Weisman said. "I thought we did it pretty well. I thought we could've done it a little better, but it was definitely an improvement."

Iowa State would score 14 unanswered points in the fourth quarter to get back within six points, but junior tight end Ray Hamilton would recover an onside kick that allowed the Hawkeyes to run the clock down to 12 seconds. The Cyclones got that one last attempt to run a hook-and-lateral, but to no avail.

The Cy-Hawk trophy took multiple players to carry it off the field, but the satisfaction of being able to do just that was worth it to this Iowa squad, which will look to finish non-conference play 3-1 next week when it hosts Western Michigan.

"It's a great feeling to win any game, but especially this one," senior linebacker Anthony Hitchens said.

That contest against Western Michigan is slated to start from Kinnick Stadium at 11 a.m. Central and will air nationally on the Big Ten Network. The Broncos will enter 0-3 after losing to No. 17 Northwestern on Saturday in Evanston, Ill.