

Quick lead, title visions dissolve into loss for Jewell

By Bill Richardson

sports writer

McMinnville, Ore.—Nineteen seconds into the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Division II championship football game, William Jewell held a 7-0 lead over Linfield College.

Kelly Groom's pass to Jimi Reed for an 86-yard touchdown and Steve Hudson's kick had sent the Cardinals into euphoria and set up instant visions of a national title.

As it turned out, those opening 19 seconds were the best of times that day for the Cardinals from Liberty, Mo. The Linfield Wildcats of McMinnville owned the rest of the afternoon and gained their first national crown with a 33-15 victory before an overflow crowd of 4,588 fans in

Worth Wortman Stadium.

The Wildcats, keeping Jewell's defense on its heels with misdirection plays and an amazing amount of patience by quarterback Randy Mueller, took charge of the game by driving 56 and 82 yards for touchdowns in the first quarter.

Linfield then took advantage of Jewell mistakes in the second quarter for a 26-7 halftime lead and coasted in the second half.

Jewell Coach Vic Wallace praised the Wildcats, who completed their season at 12-0 and left the Cardinals at 10-2.

"They hit hard and played well," Wallace said. "We haven't played against anybody who did a better job of attacking our defense than they did. I'm disappointed we didn't win the national championship. I feel a little hollow about it now."

Linfield ran 92 plays to Jewell's 71 and outgained the Cardinals 517 yards to 414. Mueller, an academic senior who could have another year of football eligibility if he so chose, completed 18 of 33 passes for 292 yards and three touchdowns. But mainly he exploited the Jewell defense, which was weakened when regular middle linebacker Tim Johnson suffered an ankle injury and left the game after the second play of the game.

"We thought they (Jewell defenders) pursued very well and our counters could take advantage of that," Mueller said. "That's an integral part of our offense. We saw a weakness from the films with their two-deep defense that left the curl patterns open. We thought the tight end would be a key."

Mueller topped Linfield's opening touchdown drive by hitting tight end

Kent Bostick on an 11-yard touchdown pass. Freshman Dan Crowell skipped through a hole in the line and ran 14 yards on a trap play for Linfield's second touchdown.

Two mistakes by defensive end Jerry Twigg were costly to the Cardinals in the second quarter. Twigg jumped offside on a fourth-down punt play, giving Linfield a first down at the Jewell 32. Two plays later, Mueller teamed with halfback Tim Nacrelli for a 32-yard scoring pass.

On another punt, the ball struck Twigg as he was back to block for the returner, and Linfield recovered at the Jewell 5. Two plays later Mike Freeman went in from the 1.

Jewell lost an opportunity to rebound in the third quarter when a 79-yard drive was halted at the Linfield 1. Groom was stopped for no gain inches from the goal

on a fourth-down sneak.

"We had a lot of momentum before," Groom said. "We ran the quarterback before and it hadn't been stopped. We needed a 2-inch play and didn't get it."

In the fourth quarter Groom was sacked and fumbled at the Jewell 16, setting up Linfield's last score. Mueller threw 16 yards to tight end Lance Lopes for the touchdown. Jewell scored in the last quarter following a fumble recovery at the Linfield 30. Groom passed 30 yards to back Steve Hodges for the touchdown, then threw to tight end Scott Martin for the two-point conversion.

Mueller was chosen the outstanding offensive player of the game, and defensive end Mike McAllister of Linfield, who had two interceptions and caused a fumble, was selected the top defensive player.