

2018 Rocket Family

JM Rocket Football



2018 JM Rocket Varsity Football Season

| Date | Result | Opponent | Location |
|--|---------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Big Southeast Red District Regular Season</i> | | | |
| Fri Aug 31 | L 14-20 | Winona | JM Stadium |
| Fri Sep 7 | L 14-40 | Northfield | Northfield High School |
| Fri Sep 14 | L 12-50 | Mankato West | JM Stadium - SENIOR NIGHT |
| Fri Sep 21 | L 0-34 | Owatonna | Owatonna High School |
| Fri Sep 28 | W 72-0 | Red Wing | Red Wing High School |
| Fri Oct 5 | W 35-14 | New Prague | JM Stadium - HOMECOMING |
| Fri Oct 12 | L 18-29 | Rochester Century | Mayo High School |
| Wed Oct 17 | L 0-7 | Rochester Mayo | JM Stadium |
| <i>1AAAAA Section Tournament</i> | | | |
| Tue Oct 23 | L 7-10 | Northfield | Northfield High School |

2018 JM Rocket Varsity Roster

| # | Name | Off | Def | HT | WT | GR |
|----|-----------------------|-----|------|-------|-----|----|
| 2 | Kpeweh Smith | RB | DB | 5'8" | 165 | 12 |
| 3 | Jack Ward | WR | SS/K | 5'9" | 150 | 10 |
| 4 | Connor Higgins | QB | DB | 5'10" | 150 | 11 |
| 5 | Chris Walls | WR | DB | 5'9" | 165 | 12 |
| 7 | Aaron Limberg* | QB | FS | 6'2" | 200 | 12 |
| 8 | Corbin Starr | WR | DB | 5'9" | 170 | 12 |
| 9 | Mark Sandstrom | WR | SS | 5'11" | 180 | 12 |
| 11 | Drew Yochim | WR | DB | 5'11" | 160 | 11 |
| 12 | Ben Ellefson | WR | SS | 5'8" | 175 | 12 |
| 15 | Taylor Badger | QB | DB/K | 5'11" | 175 | 12 |
| 17 | Peter Ward | QB | LB | 5'11" | 165 | 10 |
| 18 | Cole Peterson | QB | LB | 5'10" | 145 | 10 |
| 19 | Ben Ilyaba | WR | DB | 5'10" | 160 | 12 |
| 20 | Parker Shultz | WR | LB | 5'8" | 165 | 12 |
| 22 | Justin Higgins | WR | FS | 6'1" | 175 | 12 |
| 25 | Dominic Rentz | RB | FS | 6'0" | 175 | 11 |
| 26 | Justin Vutha | WR | CB | 5'9" | 140 | 12 |
| 27 | Parker Navitsky | WR | SS | 5'11" | 175 | 10 |
| 28 | Abdul-Hakeem Mustapha | RB | DB | 5'9" | 180 | 12 |
| 30 | Ethan Boone | RB | SS | 6'0" | 190 | 12 |
| 31 | Nathan Griffin | WR | CB | 6'0" | 166 | 10 |
| 35 | Javon On | WR | DB | 6'1" | 140 | 10 |
| 36 | Braden Black* | RB | DB | 6'1" | 200 | 11 |
| 38 | Aaron Beckenbaugh | RB | LB | 5'8" | 130 | 10 |
| 39 | Tremond Brooks | RB | SS | 5'9" | 150 | 10 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|----|----|-------|-----|----|
| 40 | Forti Smith | RB | DL | 6'2" | 185 | 10 |
| 42 | Nate Swanson | RB | DB | 5'9" | 140 | 10 |
| 44 | Sam Lingen* | RB | LB | 5'10" | 175 | 12 |
| 50 | Aaron Farmer | OL | DL | 5'8" | 170 | 10 |
| 53 | Sam Lingen* | OL | LB | 5'10" | 175 | 12 |
| 54 | Caleb Tiede | OL | DL | 6'1" | 170 | 10 |
| 55 | TJ Gonzalez | OL | DL | 5'11" | 230 | 12 |
| 56 | Donavin Badger | OL | DL | 6'0" | 165 | 10 |
| 58 | Tyler Gonzalez | OL | DL | 6'0" | 180 | 10 |
| 59 | Chase Mulholland | OL | DL | 5'11" | 170 | 10 |
| 65 | Payne Hyde | OL | DL | 6'2" | 195 | 11 |
| 71 | Gabe Stangler | OL | DL | 6'5" | 290 | 11 |
| 72 | Ben Laack | OL | DL | 6'4" | 280 | 9 |
| 73 | Toriano Cain Jr.* | OL | DL | 6'2" | 220 | 12 |
| 74 | Deontae Veney | OL | DL | 6'5" | 290 | 11 |
| 75 | Alex Carlin | OL | DL | 6'0" | 235 | 11 |
| 78 | Jacob Johnson* | OL | DL | 5'9" | 235 | 12 |
| 82 | Trevor Haddick | TE | DL | 6'2" | 165 | 10 |
| 83 | Fabian Longar | TE | SS | 6'7" | 225 | 12 |
| 84 | Mike Drucker | TE | DE | 6'1" | 195 | 12 |
| 85 | Triston Carrow | TE | DE | 6'3" | 190 | 12 |
| 87 | Will Woodford | WR | DE | 6'4" | 180 | 11 |
| 88 | Nick Kastner | WR | CB | 5'9" | 150 | 10 |
| 89 | Jacob Welp | WR | FS | 5'11" | 160 | 10 |
| Mgr | Sean Healy | | | | | |

2018 JM Rocket Coaching Staff

| Kevin Kirkeby | Head Varsity Football Coach |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Dirk Erickson | Assistant Varsity Football Coach |
| Scott Glandon | Assistant Varsity Football Coach |
| Ben Kall | Assistant Varsity Football Coach |
| James Knutson | Assistant Varsity Football Coach |
| Brent Ritter | Assistant Varsity Football Coach |
| Mike Williams | Assistant Varsity Football Coach |

| Brendan Adams | Head JV Football Coach |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Tim Burkholder | Assistant JV Football Coach |
| Shane Hewitt | Assistant JV Football Coach |
| Karl Laack | Head C-Squad Football Coach |
| Avery Moore | Assistant C-Squad Football Coach |
| Frank Galvan | Assistant C-Squad, Head Gr 8 Coach |
| Travis Magle | Assistant C-Squad, Head Gr 7 Coach |

<http://www.johnmarshallrockets.org/football>

 @JMRocketFB



Preseason

Guys like Aaron Limberg, Toriano Cain, and about 14 others — they'd had enough. Enough of their John Marshall football team losing games.

"We'd won just three football games the last two years (combined)," Limberg said. "We didn't want to be remembered as a team that didn't win."



So, Limberg and that group of 16 spent the last nine months doing something about it. It included lots of alarms being set.

Upon the curtain mercifully closing on their 1-8 2017 season, that group of 16 guys — and often more — could be found well before sunrise making their way into the Rockets weight room. They kept that up all school year, and kept cranking all summer, too.

"It felt really early in the morning for about a week," Cain said of last school year's pre-dawn lifting sessions. "But then we got used to it."

Cain, Limberg and the rest say it was all worth it. That's because the extra strength, speed, discipline and togetherness they gained through their weight-room work has provided them a new confidence.

It has them raring for this season to start, which it will Friday night when JM hosts Winona.

"I think we're better at every position," said the strapping 6-foot-2, 200-pound Limberg, who had mixed quarterbacking success last year, but put himself through daily passing sessions this summer to improve.

"And I think we are really going to play as a team."

One thing that's built Limberg's confidence is the guys in front of him, as JM will be sporting one of its biggest offensive lines in years.

It goes like this: Gabe Stangler (6-5, 290), Cain (6-2, 220), Jacob Johnson (5-9, 235), Sam Lingen (5-10, 175), Deontae Veney (6-5, 290), and tight end Mike Drucker (6-1, 195).

"Those guys are helping my confidence because they give me a lot more time in the pocket," Limberg said.

JM coach Kevin Kirkeby is envisioning a breakout season from Limberg.

“He’s matured and turned a nice corner,” Kirkeby said.

There is also speed offensively for JM. Senior running backs Abdul-Hakeem Mustapha (lost for the year midway through last season with a concussion) and Kpeweh Smith are two of the fastest players in the conference. Much of the path clearing for them will be done by junior fullback Braden Black (6-1, 200), another of the weight room diehards who is among the team’s best all-around players (JM’s top returning linebacker).

At wide receiver, sophomore Trevale Moe potentially gives them a fast and darting presence, and Drucker is a tough tight end.

Defensively, JM coach Kevin Kirkeby is excited about his front eight. The line consists of ends Drucker and Cain, and inside guys Veney and Stangler. At linebacker are Black, Lingen, Mark Sandstrom (5-11, 180) and Fabian Longar (6-7, 225).

JM’s secondary is a work in progress, with lots of new faces.

As improved as the Rockets seem, their season begins with a string of wicked tests, their first four games against the predicted top teams in the conference: Winona, then Northfield, followed by Mankato West and Owatonna.

Still, JM is set on putting its losing ways behind it.

“People have been doubting us so much,” Cain said. “That’s why we worked so hard in the off-season. We just want to turn this thing around.”



2018 JM Rocket Seniors



Front Row: Triston Carrow, Mike Drucker, Ben Ellefson, Adbul-Hakeem Mustapha, Fabian Longar, Taylor Badger, Ethan Boone, TJ Gonzalez, Corbin Starr, Aaron Limberg

Back Row: Kpeweh Smith, Mark Sandstrom, Sam Lingen, Toriano Cain, Justin Higgins, Justin Vutha, Tomas Vargas, Ben Ilyaba, Parker Schultz, Chris Walls, Jacob Johnson

2018 JM Rocket Captains



#53 Sam Lingen
#36 Braden Black
7 Aaron Limberg
#73 Toriano Cain Jr.
#78 Jacob Johnson

Week 1: JM vs Winona

After suffering through a 1-8 season a year ago, the John Marshall football team was more than ready for a new beginning.

The Rockets got one Friday night. At least kind of.

But what eluded them was something they desired most — a win.

Winona, which reached the state semifinals last year and the finals the year before that, got all that it wanted from JM on Friday in the season opener for both teams at John Drews Field.

But Winona took off when it mattered most, scoring the game's final 13 points to win 20-14 in the Big Southeast District crossover matchup.

"We have to focus on winning," JM two-way lineman Toriano Cain said. "I felt like we let up a little bit."



The Winhawks scored on a 25-yard touchdown run by Trevor Pomeroy with 2:15 remaining. Then, after forcing JM to a three-and-out on its next possession, Winona rode a 45-yard bomb from quarterback Jackson Nibbelink to Ethan Ringo to set them up beautifully for the win.

One play later — with 45 seconds remaining — Nibbelink dashed 5 yards up the middle to grab the lead, and for good.

"We are frustrated," JM quarterback Aaron Limberg. "This is a tough loss. We've got to fix our mistakes."

JM began the game looking like it had fixed a whole bunch of things. The Rockets, who had a bunch of players commit to the weight room this past off-season, dominated the first quarter.

They did it with a defense that was rugged and effective nearly the entire night (until those final big plays to end the game). Winona manged just 90 yards on the ground. It had 172 through the air, but Nibbelink had to throw it 23 times to make that happen.

While JM's defensive line was especially effective, the Rockets showed that they've come a long ways up front offensively, too. JM was running the ball down Winona's throat the first quarter.

That was with speedy and determined halfback Kpeweh Smith dashing and slamming for yards, and the 200-pound Limberg banging the ball up the middle on keepers.

Still, thanks to a JM turnover deep in Winona's territory on its first possession, it held just a 6-0 lead early in the second quarter. JM's touchdown was a 10-yard burst by Limberg.

The game turned after that, and in part thanks to Smith — who had stepped in nicely for top running back Abdul-Hakeem Mustapha (out with an ankle sprain) — having to leave the game for good with an ankle sprain of his own.

JM never got untracked offensively after that. At least not until late in the game, when it turned to fullback Braden Black as well as Limberg. Starting at 9:17 of the fourth quarter, and trailing 7-6, it went on an 11-play march that was capped by a 4-yard blast by Black.

Black also banged in a two-point conversion as JM now led 14-7.

"I probably should have gone with Braden earlier than I did," JM coach Kevin Kirkeby said.

But Winona had an answer, doing it especially behind the arm of Nibbelink, a first-year starter.

And JM's defense, which had been so good all night, finally faltered just enough.

Likely the biggest play of the game happened on Winona's march that tied the game at 14. Winona had the ball at its JM's 47-yard line and needed five yards to convert a fourth down.

Nibbelink scrambled to his right, then had just enough to get past the first-down marker. JM was also called for a personal foul on the play as it hit Nibbelink just after he got out of bounds.

Suddenly, Winona was sitting pretty, set up deep in JM territory. One play later the Winhawks were in the end zone after a 25-yard run.



Week 2: JM vs Northfield

NORTHFIELD — After offering reason for optimism a week ago, the John Marshall football team had an evening to forget on Friday.

The Rockets were no match for Northfield, losing 40-14 in the Big Southeast District, Red Sub-District game. Included in the loss were two punt snaps that sailed over the JM punter's head, both turnovers resulting in Raiders points.

"We started out flat," JM coach Kevin Kirkeby said. "I didn't think that would happen because we'd had a good week of practice. But a couple of things didn't go our way early in the game and we hung our heads some. We have to work on the mental side of football as well. When things go wrong we have to do a better job of overcoming them



Both teams were coming off losses. JM had fallen 20-14 to Winona, while Northfield was a 31-22 loser to Mankato East.

The Rockets trailed Northfield 23-0 at halftime. JM played a much stronger second half, though, and got a pair of fourth-quarter rushing touchdowns from quarterback Aaron Limberg.

For the game, Limberg was 5-for-11 for 72 yards.

Fullback Braden Black had a big game for JM, with 103 yards rushing on 15 carries.

JM was playing without its top two halfbacks, Kpeweh Smith and Abdul-Hakeem Mustapha, both out with sprained ankles



Week 3: JM vs Mankato West

This overwhelmingly difficult start to the 2018 football season for John Marshall is almost done.

The Rockets faced their third straight powerful opponent on Friday, as No. 5-ranked Mankato West (Class AAAAA) came to John Drews Field and did what it does. The Scarlets, oozing talent and cohesiveness, stayed perfect with a 50-12 romp over JM in a Big Southeast District crossover game.

JM, now 0-3, has what figures to be its most difficult regular-season test in one more week, when it travels to play No. 1-ranked Owatonna. JM started off its season against No. 3-ranked Winona (AAAA).



“We don’t think about it as being a tough schedule,” said JM halfback Kpeweh Smith, who was one of the few bright spots for JM as he totaled 91 yards rushing on nine carries. That, after missing the last 1 1/2 games with an ankle injury.

“We’re not afraid of anyone,” Smith said. “We feel like we have just as good as athletes as a team like West. But West just executes so well. We have to start executing better and have everyone just really buy into the system.”

West hadn’t just won its first two games, it had roared to wins, outscoring Century and Mankato East by a combined 72-20.

West spent Friday night showing that it does pretty much everything well. Offensively, it mixed the run and pass beautifully, its linemen opening gaping holes for standout runners Melik Davis (running back) and Jack Foster (quarterback). Both of them speedy and difficult to bring down, Davis finished with 109 yards rushing and Foster 100. Wyatt Block also totaled 84 yards rushing — on just two carries.

West did more than fine passing the ball, too. Foster, a 6-foot-4, 210-pound junior, threw for 189 yards as he was an efficient 14 for 24. Four of his passes went for touchdowns.

Defensively, West was also way too much for the Rockets. JM's quarterback Aaron Limberg, who was heavily rushed all game, completed just 1 of 12 passes. The one hookup was with Fabian Longar and went for an 18-yard touchdown midway through the third quarter.

It was a perfectly placed toss to the 6-foot-7 Longar.

While West — with speed everywhere — held JM to just 18 yard passing, the Rockets also managed just 133 yards on the ground.

“West had a good defensive game plan; they took away (fullback) Braden Black” JM coach Kevin Kirkeby said. “That did open some things for Kpeweh, though.”

West essentially had the game put away by halftime, having built a 36-6 lead. The Scarlets scored three times in the first quarter, Foster going on a 21-yard sprint, then tossing a 10-yard TD pass, then Davis catching a screen pass from Foster and racing 80 yards with it into the end zone.

Kirkeby liked what his team did in the second half more than than the first. It was the same thing the week before, in the loss to Northfield.

Now, he is hoping that they can put things together for an entire game. He also knows this: Things aren't going to get any easier next Friday, when his team travels to play No. 1 Owatonna.

Still, the Rockets weren't anywhere close to in give-up mode when this game was done. They seemed to know what they have to do.

“We have to trust each other,” JM junior lineman Deontae Veney said. “And we have to bring some urgency to what we're doing. We have to keep grinding.”





Week 4: JM vs Owatonna

OWATONNA — The John Marshall football team has struggled to begin this season as it's had to deal with a rugged schedule. The winless Rockets came into Friday night set for their toughest assignment yet, playing at No. 1-ranked and state defending champion Owatonna.

JM held up nicely for a half, before Owatonna powered its way to a 34-0 Big Southeast, Red Sub-District win.

"I thought we did a nice job in the first half," said JM coach Kevin Kirkeby, whose team slid to 0-4. "Defensively, we did a nice job in the first half containing (Jason) Williamson. Our defense had him frustrated."



Williamson, the Huskies' star halfback who is headed next year to play at Minnesota, was held to just 21 yards in the first half. But he finished the game with 144 yards on 15 carries.

"In the second half, Owatonna decided to hunker down and come right at us," Kirkeby said. "Williamson had a couple of long runs then."

JM — for the first time this season — had both its starting halfbacks available, Abdul-Hakeem Mustapha and Kpeweh Smith.

Mustapha finished with 87 yards on 16 carries, while Smith had 36 yards on 10 carries. Smith hurt his shoulder well before the game was over, however, and didn't return. His status for next week's game against winless Red Wing is unknown.

Owatonna scored 14 points in the third quarter to put the game away.

JM struggled again with its passing game, finishing with just 57 yards through the air.

The Huskies totaled 153 passing yards.





Week 5: JM vs Red Wing

RED WING — John Marshall was hungry for a win. Actually, more like starving.

Friday night the Rockets got their wish and then some, devouring winless Red Wing 72-0 in a Big Southeast District crossover game.

JM coach Kevin Kirkeby was delighted with the win and in a variety of ways.

“I’m happy that we were able to get every kid into the game,” said Kirkeby, whose team had a murderous schedule to begin the season, including having taken on three ranked teams. “But I was really pleased with our defense. We allowed just four first downs and let Red Wing across the 50-yard line just once.”



JM led just 8-0 after the first quarter. But from there, the Rockets rode momentum that never let Up

The contest marked the first game that senior Aaron Limberg switched from quarterback to running back. Limberg had success with the move, rushing for a game-high 157 yards on 15 carries, with three touchdowns. Fellow senior Connor Higgins got the start at quarterback, and he was also sharp. Higgins finished 9-for-13, for 172 yards and a touchdown.

Limberg's biggest run went for 79 yards and a touchdown in the third quarter.

"Aaron and Justin really played well together," Kirkeby said. "Aaron played incredibly well. He took a couple of big shots (being tackled), but he showed nice speed."

Higgins hooked up on a 38-yard touchdown pass to Mike Drucker in the third quarter.

JM gave Red Wing fits defensively, including forcing four Wingers turnovers. One was an interception by Drew Yochim in the second half.

"That was a nice one," Kirkeby said. "He really laid out for it."

Kirkeby was pleased with his secondary in general, noting that Red Wing receivers rarely got behind the JM coverage.

JM, now 1-4 overall, hosts New Prague next Friday





Week 6: JM vs New Prague

Two weeks ago, John Marshall coach Kevin Kirkeby determined it was time to make a change at quarterback.

But in doing that, he wouldn't be sitting down starter Aaron Limberg. Instead, he'd just be shifting the position played by the 6-foot-2, 200-pound senior.

Kirkeby seems to have found the right spot for him — running back.



Has he ever. All Limberg did Friday night in his second game as the starting halfback was rush for 375 yards, as well as three touchdowns on JM's homecoming at John Drews Field. It came in a 35-14 rout of New Prague, which like JM entered the contest with one win.

JM now has a new look, a heap of momentum after rolling to its second straight triumph, and a guy wearing the No. 7 with a large smile on his face.

Limberg — that guy — is loving his new lease on football and life.

"It was tough at first to make the move from quarterback because I'd worked all summer to be the first-string guy," said Limberg, who also rushed for over 100 yards a week ago against winless Red Wing. "But when you are 0-4, a change is the right thing to do. But yeah, this does feel really good. It is humbling. Our line really stepped up for us. They made the blocks and can take credit for all of those 300-plus yards I rushed for."

Limberg, who besides being a strong 200 pounds is one of the team's fastest players, gave New Prague fits with his long gallops. His three TD runs, in order, went for 87, 70 and 95 yards. The first two sprints came in the second quarter as JM built a 16-14 halftime lead.

JM needed all of that offensive production because New Prague was also giving the JM defense

fits of its own. The Trojans did it behind the left throwing arm of quarterback Parker Johnson.

New Prague had trouble running all night against JM's defense. But in the first half especially it didn't matter because Johnson was so precise with his throws. He threw for 208 yards in the first half, with touchdown strikes of 67 and 53 yards, keeping New Prague in it. Johnson finished the game 21 for 35 for 330 yards.

JM settled in much better defensively after intermission, pitching a shutout then.

While it was doing that, JM was devouring New Prague with its rushing attack. JM ran the ball right down the Trojans' throat to begin the third quarter, ramming for 62 yards on five plays and a touchdown.

After Limberg dominated things the first half, fullback Braden Black got heavily into the act this time, with three of those runs, the first one smashing for 20 yards.

The drive was capped by a 9-yard sprint up the middle with a juke at the end of it by Abdul-Hakeem Mustapha.

After JM forced a punt on New Prague's next possession, Limberg did it again.

On the first play from scrimmage on JM's very next drive, Limberg took a handoff and didn't stop running until he'd raced 95 yards for a touchdown.

Not only was he basking in his big night and position switch, so were his offensive linemen.

"Aaron was struggling there at quarterback," JM blocker Sam Lingen said. "But at running back, he's been awesome. He's one of my best friends, and I'm so happy for him."

Lingen is happy for his team, period.

A good chunk of it revolves around the progress of JM's offensive line.

Yes, the two teams the Rockets have between the past two weeks have combined for one win this season. But Lingen isn't worried about that. He sees big strides being made.

"Our line was amazing tonight," Lingen said, giving special shout outs to sophomore Caleb Tiede and senior Jacob Johnson. "I just think our entire team has a lot of momentum right now. We're having a lot of fun."

- New Prague halfback Cale Jallen was injured in the second half after taking a big hit. Jallen, after lying motionless for about 10 minutes was immobilized as he was taken away on a stretcher. There was no word on his condition following the game.

- JM, now 2-4 overall, plays at 3-3 Century next Friday.



Week 7: JM vs Rochester Century

Century was leery of the John Marshall running game heading into Friday's showdown between the two Rochester football teams.

JM and running back Aaron Limberg had two straight stellar ground games — against weak foes — in recording a pair of blowout victories. Century proved to be a much tougher foe all the way around and the Panthers used a strong overall game to turn back JM 29-18 in Big Southeast Red Sub-district action in a game that was moved to Mayo Field due to sloppy conditions at Century.



Limberg had rushed for a school-record 375 yards in JM's 35-14 win over New Prague a week ago. But this time around, the senior back was held to a mere six yards on 11 carries while the Rockets were limited to 89 yards rushing.

"The D-line, they basically played a hard game, taking up linemen and making alleys and reads for linebackers to make plays," Century senior linebacker/running back Thomas Mergen said. "If it's me making plays, or other boys making plays, I'm happy either way."

Mergen led the defensive charge for the Panthers and he, along with fellow linebacker Mark Leonard, hit Limberg in the backfield several times during the course of the game.

"The first half, I thought our kids played great run defense," Century coach Jon Vik said. "We were in gap sound, which was an important part of our defense. I thought our linebackers flowed to the ball and our D-line got off the ball and played well. Then we had a couple of times when we weren't gap sound, and they made us pay."

Century (4-3) held a narrow 7-6 lead at the half. The Panthers scored when Arath Martinez launched a 36-yard scoring toss to Jack Fisher in the second quarter. The pair had an 87-yard TD pass wiped out in the first quarter due to a penalty.

"I ran a seam (route) and it was wide open," said Fisher, who finished with four catches for 71 yards. "The safety ran left with Kobe (Sinclair), and he did a good job getting me open with that."

JM struggled to run in the first half, but Justin Higgins' 48-yard screen pass to Braden Black late in the second quarter set up Black's 5-yard TD run, cutting the margin to one at the break.

With Limberg bottled up, JM coach Keven Kirkeby decided to put his top rusher at receiver in the second half while going with Kpeweth Smith and Black in the backfield.

"They've got quick linemen and they've got three really good linebackers and we were just missing our blocks," Kirkeby said.

"He (Limberg) handled it really well," the coach added. "We went for a changeup, we put him at receiver because he has the best hands on the team, too.

"The move paid off as the game remained close until the end.

Colin Smith's 25-yard run, and Fisher's 2-point conversion pass to Leonard, gave Century a 15-6 lead early in the second half. But the speedy Smith broke free on a 40-yard scoring run with 3:21 left in the third quarter to cut the margin to 15-12.

In the second half, Century was able to respond to both JM touchdowns with a TD of its own on the following drive.

"I think the big thing was some of our things were self inflicted," Vik said of his team's four turnovers. "We shot ourselves in the foot a couple of times, but we came back from adversity multiple times during the game and I was really proud of them for that."

Following Smith's TD run, Century countered with a 75-yard scoring drive. Martinez developed cramps during the drive. Junior quarterback Brock Shamblin came in to finish it off, and he delivered a wobbly 27-yard TD pass to Sinclair.

"But an effective pass," Vik said. "Brock has done a great job of coming in for Arath all year and has done a great job in practice doing a lot of things. It was his time to make a play and he was able to do it."

Century appeared to be in control, up 22-12 with under six minutes left. But Higgins intercepted a pass, and one play later he hit Limberg with a 35-yard TD pass, cutting the margin to 22-18 with 5:28 left. At that point, the four-point margin was based on made conversions by Century and missed ones by JM.

"I have a tendency to go for two," Kirkeby said. "I like to instill to them, why go for seven when you can go for eight. And it just didn't work out for us."

Century followed with an 84-yard TD drive that ran all but the final 27 seconds off the clock. Mergen (12 carries 80 yards) had key runs of 11, 8 and 27 yards in the drive. Then shortly after Martinez hit Leonard with an 11-yard pass on fourth-and-3, Mergen capped the drive with an 8-yard TD to seal the win.

"It took a while to get going, but once we got going, we were a punishing run game," Mergen said.

"We couldn't get the ball back," Kirkeby said. "I was calling timeouts and had them in some good positions. They had that big play-action pass out to the flat."

"I was really proud of the kids, the offensive line and the running backs that we were able to march the ball on the ground down the field and against a physically superior opponent size wise," Vik said. "They're a bigger group then we are."

JM (2-5) finished with 195 total yards. Higgins was 6-for-14 passing for 106 yards. Century had 386 total yards, 195 passing and 191 rushing. Martinez was 13-for-21 passing for 168 yards.

The win means Century will be playing for the No. 2 seed in Section One, Class AAAAA when it plays at Northfield. JM hosts Mayo on Wednesday.



Week 8: JM vs Rochester Mayo

Mayo and John Marshall have played prettier football than that.

A lot prettier.

In the end, it was the Spartans who made just enough plays (one, really) to push them to a 7-0 victory against JM on Wednesday in a Big Southeast District, Red Sub-District contest at John Drews Field.



It tied the lowest-scoring total in the history of this storied rivalry (JM beat Mayo 7-0 in 1983) and just the second time that Mayo has shut out JM (the first was 1995, a 20-0 Spartans victory).

It was also the final regular-season game for both teams and likely not the kind of note that either wants to head into the postseason on.

Mayo turned the ball over three times in what was a scoreless first half. For the game, JM lost it four times — three by interception, one by fumble.

There were also plenty of other passing misfires by both teams' quarterbacks that didn't end up in the other team's hands, but fell to the turf.

Yes, it was one of those games, and Mayo coach Donny Holcomb believed he had the explanation.

"With these intra-city games, kids sometimes get too caught up in all this stuff, try to do too much and make mistakes," said Holcomb, whose team moved to 5-3 with the win, while JM slipped to 2-6. "At halftime, I told our guys to just relax and play the way they've been taught."

That worked for the Spartans. At least just enough.

After Mayo managed just 100 first-half yards and JM had 105, the Spartans finally made something happen with 10:34 left in the fourth quarter.

Predictably, it was senior halfback Israel Lozoya who got it done. The senior had already rushed for more than 1,000 yards going into the game and was coming off a seven-touchdown game against New Prague.

He showed little of that good stuff prior to intermission, totaling just 51 first-half yards as the JM defense bottled him up. But on Mayo's third possession of the second half, he finally broke loose.

Lozoya took a handoff and sprinted down the left sideline. He didn't stop until he'd covered 39 yards and was in the end zone. Jake McCabe kicked the extra point.

"It felt amazing to score there," said Lozoya, who finished with 121 yards on 18 carries. "I've always dreamed about scoring a touchdown in 'crunch time.'"

JM had a running back of its own who looked ready to live out a dream.

Senior halfback Hakeem-Abdul Mustapha has spent the bulk of this season on the sidelines, nursing an ankle that he sprained just before his team's season opener. Prior to that, Mustapha — who combines excellent speed with moves and strength — figured to be his team's main running back.

Wednesday, he finally got a solid crack at showing what he could do, though he wasn't unleashed until just into the fourth quarter.

Mustapha showed that he is now finally healthy. He also showed that he can be as dynamic as anyone on the JM roster. The 5-foot-9, 180-pounder — who also got some key blocks from his linemen — looked like he might deliver JM into the end zone on his first bunch of touches with the ball. He ran for 16 yards on his first carry, then had runs of 14, 9 and 14 yards as the Rockets were sitting at the Mayo 22.

But then disaster struck for JM, as it turned the ball over on a fumble.

Mayo couldn't do anything with its next chance, though, and JM promptly went on another Mustapha-led drive, as he dashed for 14, then 22 yards on his first two tries. Finally, though, JM stalled, this time failing to convert a fourth-and-3 from Mayo's 18-yard line.

It ended what had been a night of frustration for the Rockets, who also lost narrowly to Century last week.

"In the end, I feel bad for our kids," JM coach Kevin Kirkeby said.

Mayo will likely be the fourth seed in the upcoming playoffs, while JM will be the fifth or sixth seed. There is a chance Mayo and JM will meet in Tuesday's playoff quarterfinals.







2018 Varsity Stats

Special Teams

| PUNT RETURNS | | | | | |
|--------------|---------|-------------|---------------|---------|------|
| Player | Returns | Total Yards | Average Yards | Longest | TD's |
| Moe | 4 | 118 | 29.5 | 45 | 0 |
| Limberg | 1 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 0 |
| TOTAL: | 5 | 128 | 25.6 | 45 | 0 |

| KICK RETURNS | | | | | |
|--------------|---------|-------------|---------------|---------|------|
| Player | Returns | Total Yards | Average Yards | Longest | TD's |
| Navitsky | 12 | 197 | 16.42 | 33 | 0 |
| Moe | 7 | 140 | 20 | 40 | 0 |
| Sandstrom | 5 | 55 | 11 | 16 | 0 |
| Mustapha | 2 | 46 | 23 | 27 | 0 |
| Limberg | 1 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 0 |
| Ward | 1 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 0 |
| Yochim | 1 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 0 |
| Ellefson | 1 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| Rentz | 1 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| TOTAL: | 31 | 492 | 15.87 | 40 | 0 |

| PUNT | | | | |
|--------|-------|-------|---------------|---------|
| Player | Punts | Yards | Average Yards | Longest |
| Badger | 42 | 1502 | 35.76 | 56 |
| TOTAL: | 42 | 1502 | 35.76 | 56 |

| KICK OFF | | | | | |
|----------|-------|-------|---------------|---------|-------------|
| Player | Kicks | Yards | Average Yards | Longest | Touch Backs |
| Badger | 33 | 1217 | 36.88 | 63 | 2 |
| TOTAL: | 33 | 1217 | 36.88 | 63 | 2 |

| Extra Points | | | | Field Goals | | |
|--------------|------|----------|--------|-------------|----------|--------|
| Player | Made | Attempts | Points | Made | Attempts | Points |
| Badger | 12 | 15 | 12 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| TOTAL: | 12 | 15 | 12 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

| Extra Points | | | | Field Goals | | |
|--------------|------|----------|--------|-------------|----------|--------|
| Player | Made | Attempts | Points | Made | Attempts | Points |
| Badger | 12 | 15 | 12 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| TOTAL: | 12 | 15 | 12 | 0 | 1 | 0 |

2018 Varsity Stats

Rocket Defense

| TACKLES | | | |
|----------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Player | Solo | Assist | Total |
| Higgins, J. | 34 | 34 | 51 |
| Schultz | 18 | 37 | 36.5 |
| Lingen | 12 | 48 | 36 |
| Higgins, C. | 22 | 11 | 27.5 |
| Drucker | 16.5 | 19 | 26 |
| Navitsky | 13.5 | 25 | 26 |
| Cain Jr. | 15 | 18 | 24 |
| Sandstrom | 13 | 18 | 22 |
| Black | 11 | 14 | 18 |
| Yochim | 10 | 15 | 17.5 |
| Woodford | 9 | 16 | 17 |
| Moe | 6 | 7 | 9.5 |
| Veney | 3 | 13 | 9.5 |
| Smith | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Gonzalez | 4 | 1 | 4.5 |
| Hyde | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Rentz | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Ward | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Johnson | 2 | 3 | 3.5 |
| Carrow | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Mustapha | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| Beckenbaugh | 0 | 5 | 2.5 |
| Limberg | 1 | 3 | 2.5 |
| Ilyaba | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| Stangler | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Swanson | 1 | 1 | 1.5 |
| Boone | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Longar | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Vutha | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Walls | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Carlin | 0 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Farmer | 0 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Kastner | 0 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Starr | 0 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Totals: | 213 | 312 | 369 |

| TACKLES FOR LOSS | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Player | Loss |
| Cain Jr. | 9 |
| Drucker | 6 |
| Schultz | 5.5 |
| Lingen | 5 |
| Woodford | 3.5 |
| Veney | 1.5 |
| Carrow | 1 |
| Hyde | 1 |
| Johnson | 1 |
| Moe | 1 |
| Sandstrom | 1 |
| Navitsky | 0.5 |
| Total: | 36 |

| SACKS | |
|---------------|-----------|
| Player | Sacks |
| Cain Jr. | 3.5 |
| Drucker | 3 |
| Schultz | 3 |
| Woodford | 3 |
| Veney | 1.5 |
| Carrow | 1 |
| Lingen | 1 |
| Sandstrom | 1 |
| Total: | 17 |

| INTERCEPTIONS | |
|---------------|----------|
| Player | Int |
| Higgins, J. | 2 |
| Higgins, C. | 1 |
| Yochim | 1 |
| Navitsky | 1 |
| Total: | 5 |

| FUMBLE RECOVERIES | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Player | Fumble Rec |
| Navitsky | 3 |
| Schultz | 2 |
| Cain Jr. | 2 |
| Drucker | 1 |
| Ellefson | 1 |
| Higgins, J. | 1 |
| Lingen | 1 |
| Sandstrom | 1 |
| Swanson | 1 |
| Vutha | 1 |
| Woodford | 1 |
| Total: | 15 |



2018 Varsity Stats

Rocket Offense

| OFFENSIVE SCORING | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|------------|
| Player | TD* | FG | PAT | 2 PT* | PTS |
| Limberg | 11 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 68 |
| Black | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 28 |
| Badger | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 12 |
| Rentz | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Smith, K. | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Mustapha | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 10 |
| Drucker | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Ellefson | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Higgins | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Longar | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Swanson | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Totals | 25 | 0 | 12 | 5 | 172 |

*Only receiving and rushing TDs/2 PT conversions

| TOTAL OFFENSE* | | | | |
|----------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| Player | Plays | Rush | Passing | Total |
| Limberg | 166 | 694 | 198 | 892 |
| Smith | 73 | 455 | 0 | 455 |
| Higgins, J. | 86 | 27 | 397 | 424 |
| Black | 80 | 372 | 10 | 382 |
| Mustapha | 33 | 188 | 0 | 188 |
| Rentz | 19 | 112 | 0 | 112 |
| Ellefson | 2 | 32 | 0 | 32 |
| Welp | 2 | 0 | 28 | 28 |
| Swanson | 2 | 24 | 0 | 24 |
| Moe | 11 | 18 | 0 | 18 |
| Beckenbaugh | 4 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Totals | 478 | 1932 | 633 | 2565 |

*No reception information. That is included in All Purpose Yards

2018 Varsity Stats

Rocket Offense

| RUSHING | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|------------|
| Player | Attempts | Yards | Average Yard | Longest | TD | 2 pt. | Fumbles | Points |
| Limberg | 113 | 694 | 6.1 | 95 | 9 | 1 | 1 | 56 |
| Black | 78 | 372 | 4.8 | 24 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 28 |
| Smith, K. | 73 | 455 | 6.2 | 40 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Mustapha | 33 | 188 | 5.7 | 16 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 10 |
| Rentz | 19 | 112 | 5.9 | 38 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Ellefson | 2 | 32 | 16 | 29 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Higgins | 16 | 27 | 1.7 | 14 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Swanson | 2 | 24 | 12 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Moe | 11 | 18 | 1.6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Beckenbaugh | 4 | 10 | 2.5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 351 | 1932 | 5.5 | 95 | 21 | 5 | 4 | 136 |

| PASSING | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|---------------|----------|
| Player | Completions | Attempts | Yards | TD | Int | Longest | Percent | 2 pt |
| Higgins, J. | 26 | 70 | 397 | 3 | 3 | 48 | 37.14% | 0 |
| Limberg | 17 | 53 | 198 | 1 | 2 | 31 | 32.08% | 0 |
| Welp | 2 | 2 | 28 | 0 | 0 | 24 | 100.00% | 0 |
| Black | 1 | 2 | 10 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 50.00% | 0 |
| Total | 46 | 127 | 633 | 4 | 6 | 48 | 36.22% | 0 |

| RECEIVING | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Player | Receptions | Yards | Average | Longest | TD | 2 pt | Points | Fumbles |
| Drucker | 7 | 172 | 24.6 | 41 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Black | 14 | 140 | 10 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Limberg | 8 | 128 | 16 | 48 | 2 | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| Navitsky | 4 | 50 | 12.5 | 26 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Moe | 5 | 37 | 7.4 | 22 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sandstrom | 1 | 33 | 33 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ellefson | 1 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Longar | 1 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 0 |
| Woodford | 1 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Rentz | 2 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Yochim | 2 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 46 | 633 | 13.8 | 33 | 4 | 0 | 24 | 0 |

| | |
|--------------|------|
| Total Yards: | 2565 |
|--------------|------|

2018 Varsity Stats

| ALL PURPOSE YARDS* | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Player | Rush | Receiving | Kick Return | Punt Return | Total |
| Limberg | 694 | 128 | 18 | 10 | 850 |
| Black | 372 | 140 | 0 | 0 | 512 |
| Smith | 455 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 455 |
| Moe | 18 | 37 | 140 | 118 | 313 |
| Navitsky | 0 | 50 | 197 | 0 | 247 |
| Mustapha | 188 | 0 | 46 | 0 | 234 |
| Drucker | 0 | 172 | 0 | 0 | 172 |
| Rentz | 112 | 8 | 5 | 0 | 125 |
| Sandstrom | 0 | 33 | 55 | 0 | 88 |
| Ellefson | 32 | 24 | 6 | 0 | 62 |
| Higgins, J. | 27 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 27 |
| Swanson | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 24 |
| Longar | 0 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 18 |
| Woodford | 0 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 17 |
| Yochim | 0 | 6 | 11 | 0 | 17 |
| Ward | 0 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 14 |
| Beckenbaugh | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Totals | 1932 | 633 | 492 | 128 | 3185 |

*All purpose yards does not include forward passes, interception returns nor fumble returns.



| 2018-2019 School Year ▼ | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Overall Record | 2-7 | Section Record | 0-4 |
| Last 10 Games | 2-7 | Conference Record | 1-4 |
| Away Record | 1-4 | QRF Rank | 42.1 35 |
| Home Record | 1-3 | | |

