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Wednesday, Sep. 09, 2009

Roos prepare for Aledo after Lamar loss

By BRENT SHIRLEY
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While the Arlington Lamar football players celebrated their 41-21 win against Weatherford Friday, coach Kenny Wheaton stood in the middle of his Kangaroo players, imploring: "We can beat these guys." He repeated the phrase in the present tense several times, while the defeated Roos knelt around him.



Weatherford defensive tackle Cory Matlock wraps up Arlington Lamar running back Cliff Nyagesiba Friday at Cravens Field. (Photo by Brent Shirley)

Weatherford had played Lamar much closer than the scoreboard indicated, and Wheaton wanted his players to understand how close they were to controlling the game.

"[Arlington Lamar] thought they could intimidate us," Wheaton said, "but they didn't. We stood toe-to-toe with those jokers and didn't back down. I'm proud of how physical we played and the way we kept fighting."

Weatherford's offense moved the ball well – Colton Kamper led the Roos with 83 of their 280 rushing yards. But several crucial errors – a fumble, turnover on downs, and a penalty that wiped away a touchdown – put Weatherford down 28-21 heading into the last four minutes of the fourth quarter.

"We are vastly improved mentally and with our toughness, but we are still making the little mistakes," Wheaton said. "I feel like we are so close."

The Roos needed one defensive stop to give the offense a chance at redemption, but on fourth and seven from the Weatherford 27-yard line, Lamar quarterback Tyler Wilson connected with Tracy Smith for 17-yards and a first down. Lamar quickly added two touchdowns to ice the game.

"The stupid mistakes cost us the game," said Weatherford defensive end Gabe Garner. "They weren't special. They didn't do things we haven't seen. We just made mistakes and they took advantage."

Weatherford's defense gave up a few big plays, but it showed signs of improvement as well. Twice, the Roos stuffed Lamar on fourth down, and defensive back Joe Ward intercepted a pass.

"It felt good to stop them [on the fourth down plays]," said Weatherford defensive lineman Cory Matlock. "We knew our responsibilities and what to do. We've come a long way since last year, offensively and defensively. On defense, we are a lot stronger, and we are starting to make some stops."

The Roos defense will be tested even more Friday when Weatherford opens its new stadium with a game against Aledo. The Bearcats gained 528 yards – 306 rushing – last week in a 48-10 blowout of Grapevine.

"We're going to have to be physical with them," Garner said. "We have to pick up their offensive line and push them backward."

Aledo sophomore Mathew Bishop stepped in as quarterback for the Bearcats and finished the game 9-14 with 122 yards and a touchdown. Johnathan Gray ran for 255 yards and scored Aledo's first four touchdowns, three rushing and one receiving.

"We are going to watch film on Aledo and see what [Aledo will have for us]," Matlock said. "All we can do is handle our responsibilities and fill our gaps. With it being the first game in the new stadium, we will be pretty hyped up."

Next game

Weatherford and Aledo will face off at 7:30 Friday at Kangaroo Stadium.

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