

No.1 Saints stuff J-Hawks, 44-0

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 06 September 2013 22:59

The Xavier Saints are ranked No.1 in the state by the Des Moines Register, the Associated Press and The Gazette, but that can't be right.

Surely the Northern Iowa Panthers, Iowa Hawkeyes, Iowa State Cyclones and Coe Kohawks are better than the Saints.

But if you're looking for the No.1 high school football team in the state, you won't get any arguments from Jefferson Coach Brian Webb.

"I haven't seen the teams on the west side (of the state), but I don't know who's better than this team on the east side," Webb said Friday night. "Xavier is where we want to be."

The Saints rolled to a 37-0 lead at halftime and smashed the J-Hawks, 44-0, on Senior Night at the Xavier field.

Xavier (2-0) scored on all six of its possessions in the first half and held Jefferson (0-2) to 103 yards of total offense all night.

"We just got mashed all the way around," said Webb.

Of course, you won't hear any of that "We're No.1 talk" on the Xavier football team. "It has not even been mentioned," Coach Duane Schulte affirmed.

The Saints finished No.2 in Class 4A last year when they lost to Ankeny in the state championship game. Ankeny split in half this year, with half the kids staying at Ankeny High School and the other half attending the new Ankeny Centennial High School.

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That helped lift Xavier into the consensus No.1 pick for the 2013 campaign, but they might have been No.1 anyway with a veteran defense, talent and depth.

"In our opinion, we're not No.1 until we get to the state championship," Saints linebacker Logan Clarahan contended. "We're not No.1. We have to prove it."

Xavier is one of the smallest Class 4A football teams in the state, but clearly one of the best. Maybe even THE best, maybe even the legitimate No.1 prep team in Iowa.

"Honestly I think it's a cool thing, but we can't let it get to our heads," said defensive tackle Daniel Vega. "If we let it get to our heads, somebody is going to come out and they're going to pop us. We might lose a game, you never know."

Quinton Scholer, who succeeded all-state quarterback Reggie Schulte at the helm this season, led the Saints to five touchdowns and a field goal in the first half. They were simply unstoppable.

Tailback Brendan Miller scored on an 11-yard run, Scholer broke loose for a 48-yard touchdown and Matt Nelson caught a 1-yard TD pass from Scholer. That made it 21-0 after the first quarter.

Fullback Jay Kortemeyer scored on a 5-yard burst, Ryan Persick kicked a 39-yard field goal and Miller scored on another 5-yard run to make it 37-0 at intermission. That ignited the continuous clock for the entire second half.

The Saints rolled up 275 yards of total offense in the first half and gained another 103 yards on punt returns in the first two quarters. It was near-total domination, except for a few brave plays by Jefferson quarterback Layne Sullivan.

Jefferson dressed only 37 players for the game. Five guys watched from the sidelines with a

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variety of ailments, many suffered last week in a 24-7 loss to Prairie.

The Saints, meanwhile, had a whopping 83 players in uniform and introduced 41 seniors on Senior Night before the game. They looked like a college team with all those people in uniform.

"That was a good football team we played," said Webb. "They've got a lot of things going.

"We're a long way from where Xavier is," he said. "No matter what you draw with X's and O's, if the other team is more physical it doesn't matter."

Webb said 90 percent of his guys had to play on offense, defense and special teams. The Saints, meanwhile, had separate units for each phase of the game, with a few exceptions in spot situations.

Nelson, the 6-foot-8 star who has committed to Iowa, started at defensive end but saw only limited duty at tight end (enough to catch his TD pass).

The Saints were looking forward to a matchup of undefeated teams next week when they host Prairie, but the Hawks lost to Kennedy Friday night, 28-24.

Miller, the hard-charging tailback who packs a wallop at 5-foot-9, carried the ball 14 times for 143 yards and two touchdowns. Scholer completed 6 of 8 passes for 94 yards and ran the ball twice for 63 yards, with all his damage coming in the first half.

Miller got some nice holes at the line of scrimmage, then refused to be tackled by only one or two guys. "They did a great job blocking," he said. "They got a good surge tonight.

"We just have to keep getting better and better, keep working week after week," said Miller.

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Schulte thought his offensive line improved from Week 1 to Week 2. The Saints beat Dubuque Hempstead, 35-7, last week and have outscored two outmatched opponents, 79-7.

"I'm just happy we've got two wins," he said. "We just want to win on Friday nights."

Schulte emptied his bench early and often in the second half.

Jefferson hosts Hempstead next Friday. The J-Hawks defeated the Mustangs last year to break a 24-game losing streak and claim their only victory of the season.

"It's a very winnable game for us," said Webb.

Hempstead beat Dubuque Wahlert, 41-14, Friday night in Dubuque to snap its own 10-game losing skid.

XAVIER 44, JEFFERSON 0

CRJ	CRX	
First downs	7	16
Rushes-yards	25-42	34-266
Passing yards	61	94
Comp-Att-Int	7-19-1	6-10-0
Fumbles-lost	3/1	4/2
Punts-avg.	7-38.6	1-32.0
Penalties-yards	2-15	3-25

Jefferson	0	0	0	0	-	0
Xavier	21	16	0	7	-	44

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Scoring plays

X - Brendan Miller 11 run (Ryan Persick kick)
X - Quinton Scholer 48 run (Persick kick)
X - Matt Nelson 1 pass from Scholer (Persick kick)
X - Jay Kortemeyer 5 run (kick failed)
X - FG Persick 39
X - Miller 5 run (Persick kick)
X - John Hovda 5 run (Persick kick)

Individual Statistics

Rushing

Jefferson - Sullivan 8-34, Lund 1-12, Floyd 2-4, Frazier 1-4, Pappas 1-4, O'Connell 3-1, Koering 3-0, Knox 1-0, Cardis 3-(minus 8), Moncivais 2-(minus 9).
Xavier - Miller 14-143, Scholer 2-63, Kortemeyer 8-36, Andrew Steffensmeier 3-18, Hovda 1-5, Eller 1-2, Adam Steffensmeier 2-0, Krouse 1-0, Tursi 2-minus.

Passing

Jefferson - Sullivan 5-14-0-46; Cardis 2-5-1-15.
Xavier - Scholer 6-8-0-94; Tursi 0-2-0-0.

Receiving

Jefferson - Koering 3-32, Hunt 2-26, Moncivais 1-4, Knox 1-4.
Xavier - Hill 3-69, Baldus 1-16, Kortemeyer 1-8, Nelson 1-1.