

Valentine (and his blockers) lead Metro in rushing

Written by Jim Ecker

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Carter Valentine finished third in the 110 meter high hurdles at the Class 4A state track meet last spring, so he's accustomed to jumping over barriers and running fast.

It's been similar this fall on the football field, where Valentine has been eluding tacklers and running swiftly through holes to gain yards for the Xavier Saints.

Valentine has rushed for 312 yards in two games, averaging 156 per game and 8.0 per carry for the 10th-ranked Saints (2-0). He leads the Metro area in rushing, ranks second in the Mississippi Valley Conference and is eighth in Class 4A.

Xavier's linemen enjoy blocking for him.

"He makes it easy, because he hits the holes hard and he runs fast through them," said Josh Giles, one of three seniors on the O-Line.

Valentine carried the ball only eight times for 38 yards last season, but Coach Duane Schulte thought he had a chance to succeed this year if given the opportunity. Schulte likes multi-sport athletes, and Valentine played basketball for Xavier last winter before enjoying a successful campaign in track.

"We knew he was a good athlete, so we were hoping once he did get the ball good things would happen," Schulte said.

Giles, Will Wright and Colm Larkin are the three seniors on the offensive line. Tight end Kevin Hosch is also a senior, giving Xavier some maturity up front.

"How good they do is how good I do," Valentine declared.

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It works both ways.

"He's good," Wright offered. "I know if I do my job, he'll do his job."

Xavier has pitched two straight shutouts this season, beating Kennedy 28-0 and Prairie 14-0. The Saints visit Dubuque Hempstead Friday night in search of a 3-0 start.

"Two shutouts. It doesn't get any better than that," Valentine said. "Two shutouts in a row is awesome."

The Saints are happy with what they've accomplished so far, but not satisfied.

"We've been playing good team ball," Larkin said. "Everyone is doing their job."