

Pirates Dominate WHS In Playoff Opener

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 03 November 2012 12:00

Any ideas the Watauga High football team had about pulling off an upset were put to rest right away by Porter Ridge Friday night. The Pirates (10-1), 37-4 in their last 41 games, scored on their first four possessions of the game and

crushed the Pioneers 69-0 in Indian Trail in the opening-round of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Class 4A state playoffs.

The Pirates piled up 488 yards, including 364 yards on the ground. The Pirates only ran 50 offensive plays and averaged 9.8-yards-per-play. Porter Ridge broke the game open with 35 points in the second quarter for a 49-0 halftime lead. The Pioneers (5-7) didn't pick up a first down until nine minutes remained in the second quarter (and that was by penalty). And the Pioneers didn't cross mid-field until 3:32 remained the third quarter.

"They were as good as advertised," said WHS coach Tom Wright. "They're (37-4) the last three years, they've been to the final four (two) years in a row. coach (Blair) Hardin told me before this game that he thought this team was as talented as any of the teams he's had here at (Porter Ridge), and it looked like it to me."

The Pioneers best scoring chance came in the fourth quarter with 27 seconds left. WHS, thanks to a nine-yard run by Collin Augustine, had a first-and-goal at the five-yard line. But a personal foul penalty against the Pioneers pushed the ball back to the 20-yard line and the drive eventually fizzled when quarterback Aaron Dobbins threw his fourth interception of the game on fourth-and-goal.

"I really thought we could score a time or two late in the game," Wright said. "We had some opportunities, but penalties took us out of it every time."

The Pioneers were flagged nine times for 85 yards, and they turned the ball over five times. And kicker Matt Wogan of the Pirates, who will attend the University of Oregon on a football scholarship next fall, had nine touchbacks forcing WHS to start the majority of their drives at its 20-yard-line. And with the Pioneers struggling to move the ball, the Indians began most of their drives near mid-field (their drives on average began at the WHS 48-yard-line).

"They just had too many short fields," Wright said. "And it really didn't help our cause at all. They have great athletic talent to begin with, and they're fast. And we've had our problems against fast teams this season. And giving them a short field to work on, didn't help our defense at all."

"They worked real hard on the field," said wide receiver Cameron Baker, who did not have a catch against the Pirates after his stellar performance against St. Stephens last week. "They were strong, and you could tell they spend a lot of time in the weight room. They're just a great team. We were playing hard, but there wasn't much we could do."

The lone bright spot for WHS was Augustine, who ran for 115 yards on 26 carries---the first 100-yard rushing game of his career---in his final game with the Pioneers. Team-wise, the Pioneers ran for 139 yards and they had 220 yards offensively.

Quarterback Isaiah Hicklin, running back Chris Rathbone and wide receiver Luke Bayly paced the Pirates. Hicklin, who started for Nick Vagnone, who missed the game with a staff infection, was 8-12 for 124 yards, and he hooked up with Bayly on three TD tosses. An 11-yard strike on Porter Ridge's opening drive set the tone for the rest of the game.

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Bayly finished with five grabs for 77 yards and three TDs; Rathbone, who entered the game in the third quarter, scored on a 48-yard run on his first carry of the game. He finished with 137 yards on just six carries and three TDs.

"Everyone on our team needs to get into the weight room this off-season," Baker said. "We have a lot of work to do, and we need to get closer as a team. If we do that, next year, we'll have that bond and family feeling."

"We've talked about it all year about getting into the weight room," Wright said. "And we will enforce it now since the season is over. Hopefully, we'll get in the weight room and be ready next year. I really believe the future of Watauga football looks bright. You can't look at this game and say it's bad. We didn't have the season we wanted, but I thought we had a pretty good year. And we have some good players coming back and our (junior varsity) team had a good (8-2 record) season, and I think the future looks bright."

NOTES: Senior Nick Williams of the Pioneers was disqualified from the game in the fourth quarter. He's the second WHS player to be disqualified in as many games. Taylor Shuford was disqualified last week against St. Stephens....The Pioneers are 1-5 in their last six state playoff appearances. The Pirates are 7-2 in their last nine post-season games....Porter Ridge will play A.C. Reynolds in a second-round game at home next Friday night. The Rockets defeated Alexander Central 63-35 Friday night in their playoff opener.

SCORING SUMMARY

	1	2	3	4	TOTAL
WATAUGA	0	0	0	0	- 0
PORTER RIDGE	14	35	7	13	- 69

1ST

08:50 PRHS-BAYLY 11-YD PASS FROM HICKLIN, (WOGAN KICK), 7-75, 2:17 7-0
03:39 PRHS-BAYLY 31-YD PASS FROM HICKLIN, (WOGAN KICK), 6-54, 2:56 14-0

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2ND

11:53 PRHS-ROBBINS 4 YD RUN, (WOGAN KICK), 4-28, 1:33 21-0

09:43 PRHS-BAYLY 12-YARD PASS FROM HICKLIN, (WOGAN KICK), 4-46, 0:45 28-0

05:50 PRHS-WIDGEON 26-YD INTERCEPTION RETURN, (WOGAN KICK), 35-0

02:19 PRHS-DUFFY 1-YD RUN, (WOGAN KICK), 6-55, 2:00 42-0

00:17 PRHS-HICKLIN 6-YD RUN, (WOGAN KICK), 3-32, 0:46 49-0

3RD

04:27 PRHS-RATHBONE 48-YD RUN, (WOGAN KICK), 1-48, 0:11 56-0

4TH

10:51 PRHS-RATHBONE 34-YARD RUN, (WOGAN KICK), 4-73, 1:36 63-0

06:17 PRHS-RATHBONE 0 YD FUMBLE RECOVERY, (KICK FAILED), 5-49, 2:44 69-0

TEAM STATISTICS

FIRST DOWNS: WHS 12, PRHS 24

RUSHING YARDS: WHS 139, PRHS 364

PASSING YARDS: WHS 81, PRHS 124

TOTAL YARDS: WHS 220, PRHS 488

FUMBLES: NUMBER-LOST: WHS 1-1, PRHS 2-1

TURNNOGVERS: WHS 5, PRHS 1

POSSESSION TIME: WHS 28:21, PRHS 19:39

PENALTY YARDS: WHS 9-85, PRHS 5-51

3RD DOWN CONVERSIONS: WHS 2-13, PRHS 3-5

4TH DOWN CONVERSIONS: WHS 0-3, PRHS 0-0

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

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RUSHING

WHS: AUGUSTINE 26-115

PRHS: RATHBONE 6-137-3TD, ROBBINS 8-76-TD, JOHNSON 7-69, HICKLIN 6-58-TD

PASSING

WHS: DOBBINS 13-30-4INT-81

PRHS: HICKLIN 8-12-124-3TD

RECEIVING

WHS: MACKEY 4-15, EBAUGH 2-42

PRHS: BAYLY 5-77-3TD

FRIDAY'S GAMES

CLASS 4A

PORTER RIDGE 69, WATUAGA 0

A.C. REYNOLDS 63, ALEXANDER CENTRAL 35

SOUTH CALDWELL 17, HOPEWELL 14

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CLASS 3A

HICKORY 35, HIBRITEN 17

CLASS 2AA

NEWTON-CONOVER 49, ASHE COUNTY 0

CLASS 1AA

LAKE NORMAN CHARTER 48, AVERY 0

Photo Courtesy: Collin Augustine, Rob Moore