

Pioneers Power Past Huskies

Written by Mike Kelly
Saturday, 27 August 2011 12:46

For an entire week, Watauga High football coach Tim Pruitt was concerned about his running game.

After all, the Pioneers were held to minus three yards rushing in a week-one loss to A.C. Reynolds. But those worries were put to rest Friday night. Senior Kyle Chambers ran for a career-high 120 yards on 13 carries and two touchdowns as the Pioneers defeated Ashe County 32-14 at Huskies Stadium in West Jefferson.

It was also WHS's (1-1) tenth consecutive victory against the Huskies. WHS leads the all-time series 11-2, and the Pioneers have outscored the Huskies 184-32 in their last six meetings. "I really want to applaud our defensive staff," said WHS coach Tim Pruitt. "They did a great job preparing our players for this game. I was a little concerned about Ashe County and the offense they were running. They run the option, but our defense played good assignment football and created some turnovers."

The Huskies coughed it up four times, and WHS smothered their running game, holding to Ashe County (1-1) to 27 yards. Nick Williams set the tone of the opening possession of the game. He deflected an option toss from quarterback Sam Gammons to running back Jonathan Cox, and defensive end David Martin scooped it up and scampered in from 25 yards away for a 7-0 lead 1:12 into the game.

"We did a good job on the option all night," Pruitt said. "Nick Williams really put in the time during the off-season in the weight room. He's made himself a good football player. He goes out, does his job and takes care of business on the field."

Taylor Shuford backboned the defensive line with nine tackles, a quarterback sack and 3.5 tackles-for-loss. Cameron Baker and Colin Augustine each had an interception. Augustine's pick turned into a 65-yard touchdown return that gave the Pioneers a commanding 26-7 lead in the third quarter. In all, the Pioneers scored two defensive touchdowns against the Huskies. "We forced turnovers tonight and it showed on the scoreboard," Pruitt said. "That's something we couldn't do last week against A.C. Reynolds. Tonight, I really thought we forced the issue tonight."

The Huskies finally got on the board as they took advantage of great field position at the Pioneers' 49. Ashe County marched eight plays and scored the tying touchdown on a ten-yard pass from Gammons to Matthew Sexton with 2:04 to play in the opening quarter. But the game turned in WHS's favor in the second period.

The Pioneers marched 68 yards on nine plays to take a 14-7 lead with 9:07 left in the first half. Chambers scored his first touchdown of the night on a 33-yard run to cap-off the drive. On the ensuing kick-off, Dustin Guy of the Huskies brought the ball out to his 34-yard-line. But a holding call, and an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty (Chris Cole of the Huskies was ejected on the play as well) pushed Ashe County all the way back to its 12-yard-line.

A fumble on the very next play pushed the Huskies back inside their one, and they were forced

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to punt from their six two plays later. That gave WHS great field position at the Huskies' 32, and the Pioneers punched it in four plays later on a 26-yard scoring toss from Ethan Greene to Ethan Poulos for a 20-7 halftime lead.

And thanks to WHS's improved running game, Greene, who threw for 272 yards last week against the Rockets, was 5-9 for 57 yards, and he was picked off twice. Poulos had four receptions for 47 yards.

"Kyle is going to have a great year for us," Pruitt said. "He's our fastest and strongest guy. He's the best running back we've had a Watauga since I've been there. He more than exceeded his time in the weight room this summer. That's why he's a leader, and someone we're really counting on to have a big year."

The Huskies made it 26-14 on Gammon's second touchdown pass of the night. He hooked up with Cox on a ten-yard toss with 1:59 left in the third quarter that made it 26-14. But Chambers put it out of reach as he scored on a ten-yard run with 8:27 left in the game.

The Pioneers continue their three-game road trip in Newland next Friday night against Avery. Our coverage begins at 6:30 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

NOTES: Ashe County was 1-11 on third-down conversions.....Alex Fox had 11 tackles to pace WHS defensively; Cline Trivette had nine stops and one tackle-for-loss; Will Morgan had six tackles.....The Huskies haven't beaten WHS since 2001. They haven't led the Pioneers in a game since 2004.

WHS 32, ASHE COUNTY 14

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WATAUGA 7 13 6 6 - 32
ASHE COUNTY 7 0 7 0 - 14

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SCORING:

FIRST QTR:

10:48 WHS: MARTIN 25-YARD FUMBLE RETURN (PARSON'S KICK) 7-0
2:04 AHS: GAMMONS 10 YARD PASS TO SEXTON (LOPP'S KICK) 7-7

SECOND QTR:

9:07 WHS: CHAMBERS 33 YARD RUN (PARSON'S KICK) 14-7
5:20 WHS: GREENE 26 YARD PASS TO POULOS (KICK FAILED) 20-7

THIRD QTR:

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4:41 WHS: AUGUSTINE 65 YARD INTERCEPTION RETURN (PASS FAILED) 26-7

1:59 AHS: GAMMONS 10 YARD PASS TO COX (LOPP'S KICK) 26-14

FOURTH QTR:

8:27 WHS: CHAMBERS 10 YARD RUN (KICK FAILED) 32-14

STATISTICS:

TOTAL YARDS: WHS 185, AHS 137

RUSHING: WHS 128, AHS 27

PASSING: WHS 57, AHS 110

TURNOVERS: WHS 3, AHS 4

WHS:

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PASSING: GREENE 5-9-2 INT, 1 TD, 57 YARDS
RECEIVING: POULOS 4-47 YARDS 1 TD
RUSHING: CHAMBERS 13-120 YARDS 2 TD

AHS:

PASSING: GAMMONS 16-24-2 INT, 2 TD, 110 YARDS
RECEIVING: SEXTON 4-40 YARDS 1 TD; GAMBILL 3-32 YARDS; CAFFEY 4-29 YARDS
RUSHING: GOSS 13-30 YARDS

NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A SCOREBOARD

NEWTON-CONOVER 42, HICKORY 28
BANDYS 27, FRED T. FOARD 7
BUNKER HILL 28, ST. STEPHENS 14
SOUTH CALDWELL 48, WEST CALDWELL 0
HIBRITEN 44, TUSCOLA 25
FREEDOM 29, ALEXANDER CENTRAL 10

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