

Rockets Race By Pioneers In Season Opener

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 18 August 2012 11:41

A.C. Reynolds High spoiled Tom Wright's head-coaching debut Friday night with a 51-20 win at Dalton Stadium in Asheville. It was ACR's (1-0) fifth consecutive win against the Pioneers, and it was also the most lopsided win in the series in

five years (the Rockets defeated WHS 49-0 in Asheville in 2008). The Rockets piled up 445 yards offensively, and they also took advantage of an interception, a blocked punt and a fumble recovery that handed them 23 points.

"I was proud the way our kids kept after it," Wright said. "There was no finger pointing, or getting on each other. They just kept playing football. We played a very good team tonight, and we made some mistakes. I felt we played with them in the first half, but they eventually took control of the game in the second half."

The Rockets, thanks to a fumble recovery by Reid Sams late in the first quarter, grabbed an early 8-0 lead on a 22-yard run by Jave Jones with 1:17 to go; a blocked punt by Justin St. Onge to start the second quarter gave ACR the ball at the WHS (0-1) two. Jones scampered in one play later for a 16-0 lead; an interception by John Nick Setterland early in the third quarter led to Jones third TD of the game with 10:56 left in the period that gave the Rockets a commanding 30-8 lead.

Jones paced the Rockets' running game with 115 yards on 16 carries; he also scored four TD---three rushing and one receiving. The Rockets had 176 yards on the ground. Quarterback Levi Ledford also had a good night throwing the football. He was 23-32 with 252 yards with a touchdown and no interceptions.

"We'll do whatever the defense will give us" said ACR coach Shane Laws. "It just worked out tonight that we were able to throw the ball, and we were very successful with our passing game. Levi (who suffered a broken leg last season) really dedicated himself in off-season. He has a lot of confidence in himself this season."

Tripp Taylor wasn't too bad himself. The WHS senior, making his first varsity start at quarterback, was 13-18 for 132 yards with three TD passes. He hooked up with DeWayne Mackey on a pair of scoring tosses---a five yard scoring pass in the second quarter and a 37-yard strike in the third period.

"We went to a two-back set, something we haven't really practiced that much," Taylor said. "But it worked to my advantage because it gave me more protection back there. They were really coming hard all night. But the guys up front gave me time to work. We moved the ball at times, but we were also inconsistent at times. We've just got to get better."

Mackey finished with three catches for 62 yards; Cameron Baker was WHS's leading receiver with seven grabs for 71 yards and a touchdown. He hooked up with Taylor on WHS's final TD, a 27-yard strike in the fourth quarter with 9:05 left. Collin Augustine led the WHS running game with 92 yards on 13 carries. He also had two huge runs of 34 and 31 runs. WHS had 89 yards on the ground and 264 yards offensively.

"Their defense is pretty stout," Augustine said. "They gave us problems, but we also had some success moving the ball. I thought Tripp played great. You don't like to lose, and you want to put this one behind you. But it's also a game you can learn from. We still have a lot of games left." The next one finds WHS opening up a three-game home stand with Ashe County next Friday

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night at Jack Groce Stadium. The Pioneers have beaten the Huskies ten consecutive times dating back to 2002. Coverage of that game begins at 6:30 p.m. on Oldies 100.7 FM.

NOTES: The Rockets own an 11-2 lead in their series with WHS....Rockets coach Shane Laws is 5-1 against the Pioneers. He's won five straight after losing his debut in 2007 at the old Jack Groce Stadium. That win gave WHS a share of the old Northwestern 4A Conference championship, its first conference title since 1981....The Pioneers haven't won in Asheville since 2006, when they beat the Rockets in the Class 4A Western semifinals.

Score by Quarters 1 2 3 4 Total

Watauga 0 8 6 6 20

AC Reynolds 8 15 21 7 51

Qtr Time Scoring

1st 01:17 ACR - Jave Jones 22 yd run (Levi Ledford rush), 2-28 0:29

2nd 11:47 ACR - Jave Jones 3 yd run (Levi Ledford rush), 1-3 0:04

08:15 WHS - DeWayne Mackey 5 yd pass from Tripp Taylor (Cameron Baker pass from C. Augustine), 8-60 3:32

04:22 ACR - Levi Ledford 11 yd run (Thomas Blakey kick), 11-75 3:43

3rd 10:56 ACR - Jave Jones 22 yd run (Thomas Blakey kick), 1-22 0:06

07:03 ACR - Jave Jones 20 yd pass from Levi Ledford (Thomas Blakey kick), 7-62 1:50

04:47 WHS - DeWayne Mackey 37 yd pass from Tripp Taylor (Alex Parsons kick blockd), 5-66 2:08

00:00 ACR - Levi Ledford 7 yd run (Thomas Blakey kick), 5-49 1:20

4th 09:05 WHS - Cameron Baker 27 yd pass from Tripp Taylor (Collin Augustine rush failed), 7-71 2:48

06:19 ACR - Khiry Lytle 12 yd run (Thomas Blakey kick), 9-80 2:42

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FIRST DOWNS: WHS 12, ACR 24
RUSHING YARDS: WHS 89, ACR 176
PASSING YARDS: WHS 175, ACR 252
TOTAL YARDS: WHS 264, ACR 445
TURNOVERS: WHS 2, ACR 0
PENALTY YARDS: WHS 7-49, ACR 9-75
3RD DOWN EFF. WHS 2-11, ACR 4-12
4TH DOWN EFF. WHS 1-3, ACR 3-5
TIME OF POSS, WHS 25:39, ACR 22:14

RUSHING

WHS: AUGUSTINE 13-92

ACR: JONES 16-115-3TD, LYTLE 7-67-TD

PASSING

WHS: TAYLOR 13-18-1 132-3TD

ACR: LEDFORD 23-32-252-TD

RECEIVING:

WHS: BAKER 7-71-TD, MACKEY 3-62=3TD

ACR: RHINEHARDT 7-50, WATERS 5-41, CAGLE 5-38.

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FRIDAY NIGHT'S SCORES:

NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE

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A.C. REYNOLDS 51, WATAUGA 20

STATESVILLE 37, HICKORY 0

BANDY'S 35, ST. STEPHENS 0

SOUTH CALDWELL 21, FREEDOM 12

EAST BURKE 21, HIBRITEN 17

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 41, NORTH IREDELL 22

FRED T. FOARD 16, NORTH LINCOLN 13

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OTHER GAMES:

ASHE COUNTY 20, WEST CALDWELL 14

AVERY 20, MITCHELL 13

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