

Panthers Spoil Dobbins' Debut

Written by Mike Kelly

Saturday, 20 October 2012 13:37

Watauga High freshman Aaron Dobbins made his first varsity start Friday night with mixed results. Dobbins was an impressive 19-29 passing for 170 yards and a touchdown, but it couldn't save WHS (4-6 overall; 1-4 Northwestern 3A/

4A Conference), mired in a five-game losing streak, in a 38-18 loss to Hibriten in a NW3A/4A Conference game at Jeff Storie Memorial Stadium in Lenior Friday night. Dobbins threw his first career touchdown pass at the varsity level as he hooked up with Hunter Isaacs on a 32-yard scoring pass with 6:25 left in the first quarter that tied the game at 7-7.

But from that point on, the Panthers took control with their strong running game. The Panthers (6-4; 3-2) piled up 400 yards on the ground, and they averaged 9.1 yards a carry as they defeated WHS for the fourth time in the last five years.

"Their outside speed really gave us problems tonight," said WHS coach Tom Wright. "I really felt we had a chance to contain them, but they turned the corner on us, and broke some big plays. But I was pleased with Aaron. I thought he played well. I was real impressed with that (47-yard) drive just before halftime. He got us into scoring position and we kicked a field goal."

Trailing 21-7 with 38-seconds left in the second quarter, Dobbins marched WHS into field goal range as he completed three passes on the drive. A 14-yard completion to DeWayne Mackey gave WHS a first-and-goal at the Panthers' five-yard-line with 2.1 seconds left in the first half. That set up Stephen Shirley's 22-yard field goal as time expired.

"I just got more comfortable with the game as it went along," the soft-spoken Dobbins said. "It's definitely a lot faster up here. The biggest thing for me is getting use to the speed of the game and slowing things down. I felt good, and my confidence kept growing as the game went on." Dobbins displayed his confidence with a ten-yard, first-down run in the third quarter. And thanks to Dobbins, the Pioneers had their most productive game in five weeks. They amassed 266 yards, including 96 on the ground. The return of senior Collin Augustine boosted an anemic running game that was averaging a meager 46-yards an outing in the last four games.

Augustine, who suffered a broken collarbone against Avery on August 31, ran for a team-high 58 yards on 11 carries. And Augustine, who rambled in on a beautiful eight-yard run with 5:15 left in the game, finally rediscovered his rhythm in the second half. Augustine started to his left and reversed field and raced in to score WHS' final TD.

"It felt great to be back out there," Augustine said. "I really wanted to play last week (against South Caldwell). But it felt great just to be back on the sidelines. Tonight, it was just a matter of shaking off the rust. I really felt strong in the second half. I'm a little sore, and that's expected with the injury I had, but I'll be all right."

Augustine, a linebacker/running back, only played on offense Friday night. But the Panthers did a good job keeping Dobbins off the field in the second half. Hibriten held the ball for nearly 13 minutes in the third-and-fourth quarters combined. A 5:34-minute drive to start the second half led to a 36-yard Jacob Vasquez field goal and a 24-10 lead. After WHS turned the ball over on downs at the Hibriten 42 on its first possession of the second half, the Panthers marched 58 yards in four plays for a 31-10 lead.

Daquan Suddreth rambled in from 35-yards away for what turned out to be the game-clinching score. Suddreth's burst was one of three big TD runs by the Panthers. Devell Maxwell, who was

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shaken up and left the game in the first half, scored on a 62-yard run in the first quarter; TiShawn Daniels scored on an 80-yard run in the second period.

"And thank our offensive line for our successful running game," said Hibriten coach Clay Lewis. "They've got size, and they can move up there. And with our speed, all we need is a crease, and our guys can break through."

The Panthers used nine different running backs Friday night. And they picked up 400 yards on just 44 plays. But despite the loss, the Pioneers got a huge shot in the arm from Dobbins and Augustine. And with a must-win game waiting in the wings next Friday night at home against St. Stephens on Senior Night, the Pioneers hope to salvage their season by snapping a five-game slide and earning a state-playoff berth.

"It would be nice," Augustine said. "But we can't go in over confident. They're struggling, they've won (two games), and we've only won four. We just have to be ready to play. It's a game we have to win to make the playoffs. And I was real impressed with Aaron. Once he got into the second or third series of the game, he was no longer a freshman. He played a good game; he's a good quarterback."

The Indians, who dropped a 10-0 decision against Hickory Friday night at home, have beaten WHS three straight times, which includes a 25-22 win last season. The Indians own a 7-3 lead in the series. Coverage begins at 6:30 p.m. Friday night on Oldies 100.7 FM.

NOTES: Hibriten owns a 14-13 lead in this series....The Pioneers haven't won in Lenior since 2006....The Panthers find themselves in a two-way tie for third place with Hickory, but the Panthers will most-likely be the No.2 seed among the Class 3A schools in the league in the state playoffs....Dobbins is the first freshman to start at quarterback at WHS in the last 17 years.

Scoring Summary

Score by Quarters 1 2 3 4 Total

Watauga 7 3 0 8 - 18

Hibriten 14 7 10 7 - 38

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1st

08:11 HHS - Devell Maxwell 62 yd run (Jacob Vasquez kick), 2-72 0:40 0 - 7

06:25 WHS - Hunter Isaacs 32 yd pass from Aaron Dobbins (Alex Parsons kick), 4-53 1:36 7 - 7

04:44 HHS - Daquan Suddreth 6 yd run (Jacob Vasquez kick), 3-19 1:32 7 - 14

2nd

06:15 HHS - TiShawn Daniels 80 yd run (Jacob Vasquez kick), 1-80 0:12 7 - 21

00:00 WHS - Stephen Shirley 22 yd field goal, 6-47 0:38 10 - 21

3rd

06:14 HHS - Jacob Vasquez 36 yd field goal, 9-31 5:34 10 - 24

00:41 HHS - Daquan Suddreth 35 yd run (Jacob Vasquez kick), 4-58 1:12 10 - 31

4th

08:23 HHS - J'Quan Taylor 0 yd fumble recovery (Jacob Vasquez kick), 6-56 2:40 10 - 38

05:15 WHS - Collin Augustine 8 yd run (DeWayne Mackey rush), 9-71 3:02 18 - 38

Team Statistics

FIRST DOWNS: WHS 17, HB 15

RUSHING YARDS: WHS 96, HB 400

PASSING YARDS: WHS 170, HB 0

TOTAL YARDS: WHS 266, HB 400

FUMBLES: NUMBER/LOST: WHS 1-0, HB 2-0

TURNOVERS: WHS 0, HB 0

PENALTY YARDS: WHS 5-31, HB 8-75

TIME OF POSSESSION: WHS 25:22, HB 22:38

3RD DOWN CONVERSIONS: WHS 2-11, HB 3-7

4TH DOWN CONVERSIONS: WHS 2-6, HB 0-2

Individual Statistics

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RUSHING:

WHS: AUGUSTINE 11-58-TD

HB: SUDDRETH 7-92=2TD, DANIELS 6-92-TD, WALKER 12-71

PASSING:

WHS: DOBBINS 19-29-170-TD; HARRILL 0-1

HB: CALDWELL 0-2

RECEIVING:

WHS: BAKER 6-79, MACKEY 5-41

NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE

FRIDAY'S GAMES

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HIBRITEN 38, WATAUGA 18

HICKORY 10, ST. STEPHENS 0

SOUTH CALDWELL 42, ALEXANDER CENTRAL 27

FRED T. FOARD - BYE

OTHER GAMES....

ASHE COUNTY 33, FORBUSH 10

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE 36, AVERY 28 (OT)

DRAUGHN 49, WEST CALDWELL 7

NORTHWESTERN 3A/4A CONFERENCE STANDINGS

SOUTH CALDWELL 6-0; 10-0

ALEXANDER CENTRAL 4-1; 5-5

HICKORY 3-2; 6-4

HIBRITEN 3-2; 6-4

WATAUGA 1-4; 4-6

ST. STEPHENS 1-4; 2-8

FRED T. FOARD 0-5; 2-7

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26

ST. STEPHENS @ WATAUGA

FRED T. FOARD @ HICKORY

HIBRITEN @ ALEXANDER CENTRAL

R.S. CENTRAL @ SOUTH CALDWELL