

No. 4 Saints overwhelm Wahlert

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 09 October 2015 22:37 - Last Updated Friday, 09 October 2015 22:46



The Dubuque Wahlert football team was in big trouble Friday night the moment it stepped off the bus with only 23 players for a Class 3A football game against the powerful Xavier Saints.

It was like firing a water pistol against a bunch of guys with super-soakers. Sure enough, the Golden Eagles got soaked.

The fourth-ranked Saints roared to a 38-0 lead at halftime and whipped their Catholic cousins from Dubuque, 41-6, in a mismatch at Saints Field.

Dubuque Wahlert brought two big buses to the game, but one of those Tri-State Travel vehicles would have been enough to carry all the varsity guys and their equipment. Heck, a couple of school vans might have done the job.

The Golden Eagles played hard, but they had no chance of winning.

Xavier coach Duane Schulte saluted the 23 Wahlert players who gave a good effort against his ballclub.

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"It takes a lot of effort to play this game and they're out (for the team)," Schulte said. "I know there are some kids in that school that probably should be playing and aren't. But these guys are playing.

"It's still a great game and they chose to play," Schulte said. "I can't give them enough kudos."

Wahlert coach Travis Zajac was proud of his guys for battling to the very end, capped by their only touchdown against Xavier reserves with 17.9 seconds remaining.

Xavier listed 54 players on its roster, which is actually a lot fewer than in recent years.



"My first year at Wahlert was in 2013," Zajac said, "and that year they traveled 92 kids to the Rock Bowl to play us. So I'm watching tape and I'm counting kids, and it's different."

Zajac knew his team was headed for a rough game when it stepped on the bus. There were a half-dozen sophomores on the 23-man travel roster, making the task even harder.

"Tonight it got away from us in a hurry," he noted. "We had a hard time stopping them and we had a hard time getting anything going offensively. The result is up there on the scoreboard because of it."

Xavier tailback Maliki Wilson rambled for 206 yards and three touchdowns with impressive runs

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of 10, 52 and 62 yards to lead the parade. The Saints piled up 24 points in the first quarter, made it 38-0 by halftime and played the entire second half with a continuous clock.

Wilson did a lot of damage, but he also had a few aches and pains after the game. Wahlert had only 23 guys, but they played hard.

"I give them credit," he said. "They can hit."

Xavier raised its records to 6-0 overall and 5-0 in District 4. The Saints visit Iowa City Regina next Friday, then will be heavily favored to beat Marion in the final game of the regular season and finish with a perfect 6-0 district record.

Like everybody else, the Xavier players looked across the field Friday and saw only a smattering of Wahlert players on the other side. They probably could have thrown their helmets on the field and gotten a victory, but they looked sharp from the beginning.

"We've been trying to challenge them this year, to stay focused without distractions," Schulte said. "Whether it's a girlfriend or school or home. Whatever it is, don't have any distractions."

"When you come to practice and to these games, stay focused. And I thought for the most part they did tonight."

The Saints excelled in all aspects. They rolled up 420 yards of offense, split nicely between rushing (237) and passing (183).

They held Wahlert to 154 yards and six first downs. And they scored 13 points with their special teams on a 51-yard punt return by Nick Stark and two field goals by Dallas Klein.

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Wahlert gained nearly half of its 154 yards on one play when Colton Bartow broke loose for a 75-yard run late in the game. Bartow scored a few plays later on a 5-yard run to spoil the shutout.

The Saints were very good, but they weren't perfect. "We had a couple of turnovers that I'd like to have back," Schulte said, "but of course coaches always seek perfection."

Both of those turnovers were committed by quarterback Bryce Schulte, the coach's son, who threw two interceptions. Schulte had suffered only one interception all season, so throwing two in one game was a freak of nature.

Schulte hit 14 of 22 passes for 183 yards and a 6-yard touchdown to Ryan Stulken.

The Saints kept their focus for most of the game, but star linebacker Bryce Charipar admitted he lost focus for a few moments at halftime when he learned that his beloved Cardinals had beaten the Cubs, 4-0, in a National League playoff game.

"When I heard the Cardinals won -- I'm a big Cardinals fan -- I was going ecstatic," he confessed.

Other than that, Charipar spent most of his night in the Wahlert backfield with a slew of tackles.

XAVIER 41, WAHLERT 6

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First downs 6 16

Rushes-yards 26-119 29-237

Passing yards 35 183

Comp-Att-Int 5-18-0 14-22-2

Fumbles-lost 1-0 0-0

Punts-avg. 7-23.6 1-33.0

Penalties-yards 2-30 6-55

Wahlert 0 0 0 0 6 - 6

Xavier 24 14 0 3 - 41

Scoring plays

X - Maliki Wilson 10 run (Dallas Klein kick)

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X - Wilson 52 run (Klein kick)

X - Klein 21 FG

X - Ryan Stulken 6 pass from Bryce Schulte (Klein kick)

X - Wilson 62 run (Klein kick)

X - Nick Stark 51 punt return (Klein kick)

X - Klein 32 FG

W - Kolton Bartow 5 run (kick failed)

Individual statistics

Rushing

Wahlert - Bartow 9-96, Klein 10-16, Bahl 3-11, Flynn 3-1, Ripley 1-minus 5.

Xavier - Wilson 17-206, Rodriguez 3-17, Miller 3-5, Schulte 3-3, Scott 2-3, Smith 1-3.

Passing

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Wahlert - Ripley 5-18-0, 35.

Xavier - Schulte 14-22-2, 183.

Receiving

Wahlert - Evans 2-27, Weber 2-5, Klein 1-3.

Xavier - Stulken 4-48, Whitten 3-52, Murphy 3-35, Rodriguez 1-18, Stark 1-12, Wilson 1-11, Butkowski 1-7.