

Saints march into playoffs at 9-0

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 22 October 2016 07:12 -



TAMA - Xavier Coach Duane Schulte spotted several of his players sneaking up from behind with a bucket of ice water Friday night and tried to escape, but it was too late.

Schulte got drenched in the final minute of Xavier's 48-12 victory over South Tama that gave the Saints a perfect 9-0 record for the regular season.

For good measure, the head coach got doused again a short time later with another bucket.

"Whenever there's an undefeated regular season, my dad gets a little bath," explained quarterback Bryce Schulte, one of the perpetrators. "Reggie's group did it (in 2012). And we did it last year at Marion, too. It was pretty fun."

This is the fourth undefeated regular season in school history. It happened the first time in 2006, when the Saints marched all the way to Class 4A state title. It happened in 2012 with Reggie Schulte at quarterback on the way to another trip to the Class 4A finals, and now it's happened two straight years in Class 3A.

Coach Schulte would gladly take a cold bath in public every year in salute to a perfect regular season.

"I think it's great for our kids and our program," he said. "It's hard to win one game on a Friday night, let alone nine. I'm proud of our coaches and our players."

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Bryce Schulte passed for three touchdowns and tied his brother Reggie's school record for career completions with 265. Maliki Wilson scored three times and began the festivities with an 85-yard touchdown on the opening kickoff.

Xavier will host an opening-round game in the Class 3A playoffs next Friday. The opponent will be announced Saturday at 10 a.m. on the Iowa High School Athletic Association website (iahsaa.com).

This has been a special year for the Xavier football program with the freshman team, the sophomore team and the varsity all finishing the regular season with undefeated records for the first time in school history.

"It definitely shows what type of program Coach Schulte and the coaching staff are bringing up," said Wilson.



Wilson grabbed the opening kickoff at the 15-yard line, got some good blocks and broke into the clear for the team's first touchdown on a kickoff return this season.

"We finally got one," he said. "We were itching for it. It all opened up. Everyone hit who they were supposed to. Josh Gerke made an amazing block to spring me and it was just green grass after that."

Wilson is Xavier's star tailback and their career rushing leader, but he also showed good hands when he caught a pair of touchdown passes from Bryce Schulte for six yards and 18 yards. Wilson also kicked the first PAT of his varsity career for 19 points in the ballgame, lifting him into fourth place in Metro career scoring with 207 points in two years.

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Schulte also hit Nolan Butkowski with a 22-yard touchdown pass and scored on a 1-yard run. Fullback Erik Rodriguez collected a 1-yard touchdown and backup quarterback Jack Scott connected with Spencer Dempewolf for a 24-yard score.

The second-ranked Saints ignited the 35-point continuous clock in the third quarter and led 41-0 entering the final stanza.

Xavier outscored their seven district opponents, 287-47, this season and won all of its district games by at least 24 points.

The Saints went 8-0 during the regular season last year (one game was canceled due to bad weather), but they were upset by Decorah in the second round of the Class 3A playoffs and had an empty feeling when the year ended.

"It popped us in the mouth," said Bryce Schulte. "You can't take things for granted. You can't go through the motions or anything. You have to be prepared for the upcoming week and we'll go from there."

Decorah had a .500 team last year, but the Vikings whipped the Saints on their own field.

"I won't say we overlooked them, but we were looking forward to who we were playing next, kind of," said Wilson. "This year we all understand what can happen. You can't overlook anyone, especially in the playoffs. It's one and go home. And I would really like to bring the championship home with the guys."

"I was really upset last year," said Wilson. "I really wanted to get one with that group of seniors."

The Class 3A playoff field has been cut from 32 teams to 16 this year. Xavier, Pella, Carroll and

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Storm Lake all enter the playoffs with 9-0 records. Webster City, West Delaware, Solon, Norwalk and Creston are 8-1.

Sergeant Bluff-Luton, Boone, Benton Community, Davenport Assumption, Oskaloosa and Glenwood are 7-2. Waverly-Shell Rock, which qualified as a Wild Card from Xavier's district, is 6-3.

"Everyone that's left is a good football team," said Coach Schulte, "so we have to be ready to go."

The Saints are participating in the playoffs for the 11th straight year, including the last three years as a Class 3A district champion.

South Tama quarterback Clayton Rosenberger completed 16 of 27 passes for 276 yards and two touchdowns, including a 93-yard connection to Brady Fritz. Both touchdown passes came against Xavier's substitutes in the fourth period.

South Tama finished the season with a 3-6 record.

XAVIER 48, SOUTH TAMA 12

Xavier □ □ □ □ S.Tama

First Downs	15	11
Rushing	33-138	22-30
Passing Yards	204	276
Comp/Att/Int	13-18-0	16-27-1
Fumbles/Lost	2/2	1/1
Punts	3-35.7	6-32.2
Penalties	4-40	3-34

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Xavier 14 13 14 7 - 48

South Tama 0 0 0 0 - 12

Scoring Plays

X - Maliki Wilson 85 kickoff return (Shane Scott kick)

X - Bryce Schulte 1 run (S.Scott kick)

X - Erik Rodriguez 1 run (Wilson kick)

X - Wilson 6 pass from B.Schulte (kick failed)

X - Wilson 18 pass from B.Schulte (S.Scott kick)

X - Nolan Butkowski 22 pass from B.Schulte (S.Scott kick)

ST - Riley Davenport 25 pass from Clayton Rosenberger (kick failed)

ST - Brady Fritz 93 pass from Rosenberger (kick failed)

X - Spencer Dempewolf 24 pass from Jack Scott (S.Scott kick)

Individual Stats

Rushing

Xavier - Wilson 13-69, Junge 5-30, Rodriguez 5-16, B.Schulte 4-12, Q.Schulte 1-8, J.Scott 3-6, Drahozal 1-minus 1, Team 1-minus 2.

South Tama - Kolbie Clark 6-28, Isaac Judge 7-5, Probasco 4-5, Dillon Graves 1-4, Rosenberger 4-minus 12.

Passing

Xavier - B.Schulte 11-16-0, 170; J.Scott 2-2-0, 34.

South Tama - Rosenberger 16-27-1, 276.

Receiving

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Xavier - Q.Schulte 6-92, Butkowski 3-54, Dempewolf 2-34, Wilson 2-24.

South Tama - Clark 7-76, Fritz 2-116, Davenport 2-42, Judge 2-22, Probasco 2-13, Vest 1-7.