

## Wilson shines as Saints belt Assumption

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 29 October 2016 06:32 -

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The Xavier Saints are always looking to improve, but if they get much better than this it's going to get downright scary.

The second-ranked Saints exploded for touchdowns on their first six possessions in the first half Friday night and clobbered Davenport Assumption, 52-20, in the opening round of the Class 3A playoffs at Saints Field.

Xavier (10-0) will host Waverly-Shell Rock (7-3) in the quarterfinals next Friday. The Saints whipped the Go-Hawks, 42-0, in the seventh game of the regular season three weeks ago.

Xavier tailback Maliki Wilson galloped for 230 yards and scored four touchdowns on runs of 4, 69, 7 and 62 yards, giving the mercurial senior 1,665 yards for the campaign. And pinpoint passer Bryce Schulte was on the money again for 172 yards and two TD strikes to Nolan Butkowski in the easy victory.

Schulte broke another of his older brother's passing records with 4,061 career yards, snapping Reggie Schulte's old mark of 4,002.

The Saints led, 42-6, midway through the second quarter and it was time for the congregation to pass in the song books, because this service was over.

"It was just all clicking tonight," Wilson said after the romp on a balmy night, "and hopefully it continues on like that."

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Xavier led 45-6 at halftime and it quickly became 52-6 in the first minute of the second half when Wilson broke loose for his 62-yard touchdown.

Coach Duane Schulte cleared his bench on the next possession, saving his starters for next week's game against Waverly-Shell Rock.

"I'm pleasantly surprised," the wily coach said after the lopsided triumph. "It seemed like we were clicking. And you've got to take it when you can, because it's not always there."



Davenport Assumption (7-3) got Xavier's attention at the start of the contest when tailback Justus Burke broke loose for a 58-yard touchdown on the second play of the game to make it 6-0, but it was all Xavier from there.

Josh Gerke, who has starred for the Saints on defense and special teams all season, snuck into the offensive backfield on Xavier's first possession and hauled in a 68-yard pass from Bryce Schulte to the 4-yard line and Wilson scored from there. Shane Scott's PAT made it 7-6 and the Saints never looked back.

Schulte hit Butkowski with a 14-yard touchdown pass to make it 14-6, Wilson dashed 69 yards to make it 21-6, Schulte found Butkowski for a 65-yard bomb to make it 28-6, Erik "E-Rod" Rodriguez scored on a 1-yard plunge to make it 35-6 and Wilson tacked on a 7-yard score to make it 42-6 with 6:31 left in the first half.

The crowd was ecstatic and the visiting Knights were stunned.

"They looked like a pretty good football team. We knew that going in," Assumption Coach Wade King said in his concession speech. "It's been a hard time, maybe, getting our kids to

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understand the kind of football team they were this week."

Wilson has cracked 200 yards in four games this season with his quick cuts, acceleration and speed. If you don't get him at the line of scrimmage, you might not stop him before he hits paydirt.

Wilson credited his offensive line, along with the blocking from Butkowski and Quinn Schulte (the wide receivers) and Rodriguez (the fullback).

"My line did an amazing job," he said. "The reason I got outside was E-Rod, Nolan and Quinn. All the big guys made a mess in the middle and those guys blocked very well today. If we can keep that going and if we can throw like we did, I like our chances."

Bryce Schulte threw the ball only six times, but completed six of those passes for more than 34 yards per pop.

Gerke broke loose for a 36-yard punt return that set up a touchdown and a 55-yard return that set up a 19-yard field goal by Scott at the end of the second quarter, but he seemed happiest with the 68-yard reception that went into the books as his only catch of the year.

"We're always trying to find a way to get around our opponents," he said. "Coach Schulte drew up a good play and it worked pretty well. I was pretty excited."

Xavier rolled up 488 yards of total offense, despite much of the second half going by quickly with a continuous clock and all of the starters on the bench.

Burke finished with 161 yards and scored all three touchdowns for Assumption. The Knights rushed for 223 yards, but completed only three passes for 13 yards.

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The Saints suffered an early exit in the playoffs last season when they were upset by Decorah in the Round of 16 after having an undefeated regular season. They didn't want it to happen again last night.

"I didn't want people to see much, but it was definitely in the back of my mind," said Wilson. "I don't want to go out and feel like that again. I want to try and make it all the way with my team.

"It's a great bunch of guys. I want to make it as far as possible with these guys. I love them."

If Xavier defeats Waverly-Shell Rock in the quarterfinals, the Saints would face either top-ranked Pella or seventh-ranked Solon in the semifinals in the UNI-Dome in Cedar Falls on Thursday, Nov. 10.

### XAVIER 52, ASSUMPTION 20

#### Assumption Xavier

First Downs	9	12
Rushing	39-223	41-311
Passing yards	13	177
Comp/Att/Int	3-9-0	6-7-0
Punts	8-30.5	3-27.3
Penalties	2-15	5-40
Fumbles/Lost	0/0	1/0

**Assumption  6  0  6  8 - 20**

**Xavier     28  17  7  0 - 52**

#### Scoring Plays

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A - Justus Burke 58 run (kick failed)  
X - Maliki Wilson 4 run (Shane Scott kick)  
X - Nolan Butkowski 14 pass from Bryce Schulte (Scott kick)  
X - Wilson 69 run (Scott kick)  
X - Butkowski 65 pass from Schulte (Scott kick)  
X - Erik Rodriguez 1 run (Scott kick)  
X - Wilson 7 run (Scott kick)  
X - FG Scott 19  
X - Wilson 62 run (Scott kick)  
A - Burke 42 run (pass failed)  
A - Burke 1 run (Ryan Wohlers pass from Jayce Lacy)

### Individual Stats

#### Rushing

Assumption - Burke 16-161, Lacy 20-52, Wohlers 2-10.  
Xavier - Wilson 18-230, J.Scott 2-33, B.Schulte 3-15, Lang 7-13, Q.Schulte 1-9, Junge 4-8, Rodriguez 3-7, Team 3-minus 6.

#### Passing

Assumption - Lacy 3-9-0, 13 yards.  
Xavier - B.Schulte 5-6-0, 172 yards; J.Scott 1-1-0, 5 yards.

#### Receiving

Assumption - Wohlers 2-12, Miller 1-1.  
Xavier - Butkowski 2-79, Q.Schulte 2-25, Gerke 1-68, Corrigan 1-5.