

No. 2 Saints earn date with No. 1 Pella

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 05 November 2016 09:10 - Last Updated Saturday, 05 November 2016 09:21



The Xavier Saints peeked ahead a little when the Class 3A football brackets were announced two weeks ago and saw they would play top-ranked Pella in the semifinals if both clubs got that far.

They don't have to peek anymore.

The mighty clash between the No. 1 Dutch (11-0) and the No. 2 Saints (11-0) is all set for Thursday at 8:21 p.m. in the UNI-Dome.

Bryce Schulte heaved three long touchdown passes and Maliki Wilson broke another school record Friday night as Xavier ripped Waverly-Shell Rock, 38-14, in the quarterfinals of the Class 3A tournament at Saints Field to set up the meeting against Pella.

It would have been nice if the No. 1 and No. 2 teams could have faced each other in the 3A championship game, but the geographic brackets did not work out that way.

The Saints are certainly not complaining.

"I think the state did a pretty good job putting it (the bracket) together," said Schulte. "It makes sense, because they're not all the way across the state."

The other semifinal will pit fifth-ranked Glenwood (8-2) against seventh-ranked Webster City (10-1) Thursday at 5:36 p.m.

No. 2 Saints earn date with No. 1 Pella

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 05 November 2016 09:10 - Last Updated Saturday, 05 November 2016 09:21

"You've got to get to the championship somehow," said Nolan Butkowski, who hauled in two of the long TD passes from Schulte. "You have to go through teams, so I'm excited for the challenge.

"Obviously I want to take them down. That's the best team the past few years."

Pella has won 39 straight games and captured back-to-back Class 3A titles in 2014 and 2015. One of those victories came against Xavier, a 27-0 conquest in the 2014 semifinals in the UNI-Dome.



Schulte was the starting quarterback in that 2014 playoff game as a sophomore and does not have many good memories. "Hopefully it will be a different story this time," he said.

Schulte reached back and unfurled his three long TD passes on three consecutive attempts in the second quarter against Waverly-Shell Rock as the Saints grabbed a commanding 31-6 bulge at halftime.

The first touchdown pass was a 44-yard beauty to Butkowski to make it 10-0. The next was an 84-yard bomb to Butkowski on a ball that traveled more than 60 yards in the air. And the last one was a 48-yarder to his brother Quinn Schulte that made it 31-6.

All three of Schulte's passes were perfect spirals that landed softly on his receivers' hands for six points. It looked like the Waverly defensive backs did not think he could throw the ball that far, but he did.

No. 2 Saints earn date with No. 1 Pella

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 05 November 2016 09:10 - Last Updated Saturday, 05 November 2016 09:21

"Bryce is unbelievable," said Butkowski. "The kid has a cannon."

All three TD passes were right on the money.

"He had great protection from his line and his receivers made great catches," said Coach Schulte. "Three great throws by a really good high school quarterback."

Waverly-Shell Rock crowded the line of scrimmage, giving Xavier's receivers some room to operate.

"They stopped the run pretty well and we thought we could get behind them a little bit," said Bryce Schulte. "And my receivers made great catches."

"I have faith that they'll catch it, so I just try to put it in a spot where they can catch it and the other team can't."

Schulte has shattered most of the school passing records this season and Wilson has shattered most of the school rushing marks, giving the Saints a formidable 1-2 punch in the backfield. Wilson rushed for 133 yards against Waverly-Shell Rock and has 1,800 for the campaign, snapping the old single-season mark of 1,702 set by Will Martin in 2006 when the Saints won the Class 4A state title.

Wilson raised his career total to 3,073, making him only the eighth running back in Metro history to crack 3,000.

"More important than all the records, he's been a great kid," said Coach Schulte. "He's just a humble kid that's been real fun to coach."

No. 2 Saints earn date with No. 1 Pella

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 05 November 2016 09:10 - Last Updated Saturday, 05 November 2016 09:21

The Saints blanked Waverly-Shell Rock, 42-0, during the regular season and outscored the Go-Hawks 80-14 this year. Waverly finished the campaign with a 7-4 record.

Xavier has cruised in its first two playoff games Davenport Assumption (52-20) and Waverly-Shell Rock, but life figures to get a lot harder against Pella. Coach Schulte has great admiration for the Dutch, who dominated the Saints in that playoff game in 2014.

"Well-coached. Big, strong, fast athletes," he recalled. "They just play solid. We'll have to do some study tonight and tomorrow and go from there."

XAVIER 38, WAVERLY-SHELL ROCK 14

WSR □ □ □ □ XAVIER

First Downs	11	18
Rushing	28-55	42-183
Passing Yards	193	239
Comp/Att/Int	14-28-2	8-11-1
Fumbles/Lost	0/0	0/0
Penalties	3-20	6-50
Punts	4-36.5	4-29.3

Waverly-Shell Rock □ 0 □ 6 □ 0 □ 8 - 14

Xavier □ □ □ □ □ □ 3 □ 28 □ 7 □ 0 - 38

Scoring Plays

X - FG Shane Scott 19

No. 2 Saints earn date with No. 1 Pella

Written by Jim Ecker

Saturday, 05 November 2016 09:10 - Last Updated Saturday, 05 November 2016 09:21

X - Nolan Butkowski 44 pass from Bryce Schulte (Scott kick)
X - Butkowski 84 pass from B. Schulte (Scott kick)
X - Erik Rodriguez 1 run (Scott kick)
W - Jordan Chandler 90 kickoff return (kick failed)
X - Quinn Schulte 48 pass from B. chulte (Scott kick)
X - B .Schulte 8 run (Scott kick)
W - Jack Seward 63 pass from Josh Stensland (Stensland run)

Individual Stats

Rushing

Waverly - Santoiemma 13-32, Little 2-14, Stensland 10-11, Seward 3-minus 2.
Xavier - Wilson 19-133, Junge 9-15, Rodriguez 6-14, Q.Schulte 2-13, B.Schulte 4-10, Stovie 2-minus 2.

Passing

Waverly - Stensland 13-27-2, 156 yards; Seward 1-1-0, 37 yards.
Xavier - B.Schulte 8-11-1, 239 yards.

Receiving

Waverly - Little 6-76, McNally 3-22, Seward 2-75, Chandler 2-15, Durscher 1-5.
Xavier - Q.Schulte 5-101, Butkowski 2-128, Wilson 1-10.