

No.8 Saints blank Cedar Falls, 14-0

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 18 October 2013 23:41 - Last Updated Saturday, 19 October 2013 21:39



Xavier quarterback Quinton Scholer limped around school all week with a sore ankle. Then he helped the Saints limp past Cedar Falls Friday night.

Scholer made two key plays and the eighth-ranked Saints pitched their fifth shutout of the season with a gritty 14-0 victory over the Tigers at Saints Field.

Xavier (7-1) scored twice in the fourth quarter, first on a 3-yard touchdown pass from Scholer to Matt Nelson and then on a 62-yard punt return by Wes Gardner.

There was no scoring in the defensive slugfest for 40 minutes, and then the Saints scored twice in 64 seconds to whip Cedar Falls for the third straight time.

Scholer rolled his ankle in a 40-14 victory at Waterloo West last week and wasn't sure if he'd be able to play against Cedar Falls. "It was a game-time decision," he said.

Freshman Bryce Schulte, the son of Xavier Coach Duane Schulte, practiced all week with the varsity in case he was needed at quarterback, but Schulte got into the game for only one play as Scholer felt good enough to go.

Scholer limped through the game, but toughed it out.

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"He actually reminded me a lot tonight of Sam Richardson at Iowa State," Coach Schulte said, referring to ISU's quarterback. "He's been playing all year with an ankle bothering him. He's been gutting it out, and Quinton kind of reminded me of him tonight.

"People were smart with him all week and he was smart all week and he ended up being ready to go," said Schulte. "He was able to pull through."



The game featured 18 punts - nine by both sides - with both clubs looking for a big break to get things started. It finally happened on the first play of the fourth quarter and gave Xavier the opening it needed.

Cedar Falls tailback Elijah Berregard ran for eight yards, but Xavier defensive back Ben Valentine knocked the ball loose and defensive end Hunter Baldus pounced on it at the Cedar Falls 33-yard line.

"I was coming back to the middle of the pile and the ball came right to me, so I just hopped on it," said Baldus.

Scholer hit Bryce Grimm with a 19-yard pass to the Cedar Falls 14, but two running plays netted only four yards and left the Saints staring at 3rd-and-6 at the 10-yard line.

Scholer limped over to the sideline to get the next play from Schulte, then limped back to the huddle with instructions. Schulte told Scholer to run an option keeper, despite his sore ankle,

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and gave him some friendly advice.

"I just kept telling him 'Don't limp,'" the coach said with a smile.

Scholer faked a handoff to fullback Jay Kortemeyer and ran for eight yards toward the corner of the end zone before being stopped, giving the Saints a first-and-goal at the 1.

"It didn't hurt on that one," he said.

The next play lost two yards, putting the ball at the 3. Scholer limped back to the sideline for instructions, then limped back to the huddle with a pass play.



Scholer spotted 6-foot-8 tight end Nelson at the 1-yard line with a pass at his ankles, forcing Nelson to reach down for the catch. Nelson turned and barreled through Lewis Mickey into the end zone for a 6-0 lead.

Ryan Persick booted the PAT and the Saints had a 7-0 lead with 8:07 left in the game.

Cedar Falls got the ball and lost one yard on three plays, setting up another punt from its own 18-yard line. Gardner, a fearless punt returner, waited for a chance and got it.

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He caught the punt at his own 38-yard line, made a quick move to avoid a tackler and headed toward his left and the Xavier sideline.

"The whole team set up a great wall," said Gardner. "I pretty much just saw green all the way to the end zone."

Nic Ekland threw the final block to spring Gardner for six points and a 13-0 edge with 7:03 left in the game. Persick's boot made it 14-0.

Cedar Falls (5-3, 3-3) reached the Xavier 8-yard line in the final two minutes, but the threat ended when Xavier defensive back Nick Drahozal dove and batted away a fourth-down pass near the goal line.

"I was just trying to prevent them from scoring," he said.

The Saints won the game despite collecting only eight first downs and 161 yards of total offense, with tailback Brendan Miller gaining 96 yards on 31 carries.

The Tigers finished with 11 first downs and 209 yards, with Berregaard rushing 26 times for 162 yards. Cedar Falls quarterback Trey Hansen misfired on his first 10 passes and finished 6 of 26 for 42 yards.

Scholer hit 7 of 15 passes for 56 yards.

Baldus and Nelson, Xavier's defensive ends, knocked heads with Cedar Falls offensive tackle Ross Pierschbacher all night and prevented the Alabama signee from controlling the line of scrimmage.

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"It was fun," said Baldus, who gave away 85 pounds. "He got me a couple of plays, but I had to keep going."

Xavier ends the regular season at Linn-Mar next Friday night.

XAVIER 14, CEDAR FALLS 0

CF	CRX
First downs	11 8
Rushes-yards	34-183 40-105
Passing yards	42 56
Comp-Att-Int	6-26-0 7-15-0
Fumbles-lost	1-1 1-1
Punts-avg	9-30.8 9-30.4
Penalties-yards	4-25 2-20

Cedar Falls	0	0	0	0	-	0
Xavier	0	0	0	14	-	14

X - Matt Nelson 3 pass from Quinton Scholer (Ryan Persick kick)

X - Wes Gardner 62 punt return (Persick kick)

Individual Statistics

Rushing

Cedar Falls - Berregaard 26-162, Harrington 2-9, Hansen 5-7, Fienup 1-5.

Xavier - Miller 31-96, Scholer 2-7, Kortemeyer 2-6, Schulte 1-1, Vega 1-minus, Team 3-minus 4.

Passing

Cedar Falls - Hansen 6-26-0-42.

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Xavier - Scholer 7-15-0-56

Receiving

Cedar Falls - Boomgarden 2-21, Busch 2-4, Fritz 1-12, Schmidt 1-5.

Xavier - Grimm 2-25, Baldus 1-12, Hill 1-9, O'Connell 1-8, Nelson 1-3, Gardner 1-minus.