

Saints defense smothers City High, 34-0

Written by Mike Condon

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Hunter Baldus is the “other” defensive end.

The 6-foot-1, 210-pound Xavier senior just happens to play opposite Matt Nelson, a 6-8, 250-pounder who is heading to the University of Iowa next season.

Baldus may not get the headlines Nelson does, but make no mistake, he is a fine player in his own right.

And you likely wouldn't get any arguments from a physically-whipped Iowa City High team that left Saints Field a 34-0 loser Monday night in the second round of the Class 4A playoffs.

The victory moves Xavier (10-1) into quarterfinal against 42nd Street rival Cedar Rapids Kennedy, which upset Davenport Assumption, 35-12, Monday in Davenport. That game will kickoff at 7 p.m. Friday at Saints Field.

The Saints defense was suffocating from start to finish, holding the high-powered Little Hawks offense to 133 total yards, just 42 on the ground.

It was Baldus and Nelson who set the tone early. Baldus had two crushing tackles on City High's standout tailback Xavier Washpun in the first quarter. Then it was Nelson who came

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crashing in on Little Hawk quarterback Mitch Wieland, slamming him to the turf as he attempted to pass.

The focus on Washpun was obvious. He came in as one of the state's top 4A rushers and with a target on his No. 20 jersey. Washpun carried 15 times, gaining just 23 yards, by far his lowest output of the season.

When asked for his reaction after the game, Baldus sounded a lot like his coach, Duane Schulte, taking attention away from his effort, focusing on the team.



"We got a great look from our scout team this week," Baldus said. "We were looking forward to this game all week.

"We read our keys the entire game," he continued. "By reading our keys, we were able to hit the gaps and slow them down."

Schulte echoed his defensive end's view of the contest.

"They all just did their jobs," Schulte said of the defense. "They went out and did what their defensive coaches told them."

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And, as good as the defense was, the Saints offense, though not spectacular, did more than enough to win the game.

“We didn’t get off to a great start on offense,” said Saints’ quarterback Quinton Scholer, “but after that I thought we did well.”

The teams played a scoreless first quarter before Xavier put together an impressive 12-play, 80-yard drive, capped off by a slick 13-yard slant pass from Scholer to Wesley Gardner. After the Xavier defense held again, the Saints drove down and Ryan Persick kicked a 29-yard field goal to give the Saints a 10-0 halftime lead.

City High opened the second half with a successful onside kick and appeared to have the momentum, but the Xavier defense responded with a big stand and took over after a short City High punt.

“They have a history of doing that kind of stuff,” Schulte said of the Little Hawks. “You have to be prepared in those types of situations.”

From that point on, it was all Saints. After the stop, Scholer drove the team down the field on another solid drive. Tailback Brendan Miller, who finished with 132 yards on 28 carries, capped it off with a 1-yard plunge to make it 17-0.

Miller’s effort left him just under 100 yards shy of Will Martin’s school career rushing mark. Martin rushed for 2,483 yards from 2005-06.

Scholer then found Frank Hill on his second scoring pass of the night, an 8-yard strike with 1:22 left in the third. Persick added a 25-yard field goal midway through the fourth and reserve tailback Christopher Ball capped the scoring on a 3-yard run with 2:36 remaining.

Next up is a rematch with Kennedy. The Saints blanked the Cougars, 24-0, in a Week 5

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match-up at Kingston Stadium.

"It'll be fun," Baldus said while trying to hold back a smile. "It's just another week, another game we have to get ready to play."

Schulte doesn't put much stock in the earlier result against the Cougars and said it can be both a positive and a negative playing a team for a second time.

"You can look at it both ways," he said. "In a way, you are familiar with them, but it was a long time ago that we played them and you know they are better than when we played them. We hope that we are better too."

C.R. XAVIER 34, IOWA CITY HIGH 0

ICH	CRX
First downs	7 14
Rushes-yards	29-42 43-200
Passing yards	91 71
Comp-Att-Int	6-16-0 7-11-0
Fumbles-lost	0-0 1-0
Punts-avg.	5-27.2 2-29.5
Penalties-yards	3-30 7-51

I.C. High	0	0	0	0	-	0
Xavier	0	10	14	10	-	34

XAV – Wesley Gardner 13 pass from Quinton Scholer (Ryan Persick kick)

XAV – FG Persick 29

XAV – Brendan Miller 1 run (Persick kick)

XAV – Frank Hill 8 pass from Scholer (Persick kick)

XAV – FG Persick 25

XAV – Christopher Ball 3 run (Persick kick)

Individual Statistics

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Rushing

I.C. High – Xavier Washpun 15-23, Bryson Runge 3-17, Mitch Wieland 6-(minus 5), Brian Schweer 1-(minus 2), Bryce Frantz 3-12, Marco Barengi 1-(minus 3)

Xavier – Brendan Miller 28-132, Christopher Ball 4-21, Jay Kortemeyer 5-27, Quinton Scholer 4-17, Wesley Gardner 1-4 Team 1-(minus 1).

Passing

I.C. High – Mitch Wieland 6-16-0-91

Xavier – Quinton Scholer 7-11-0-71

Receiving

I.C. High – Jason Jones 3-76, Ivan Diaz 1-10, Bryson Runge 1-3, Xavier Washpun 1-2.

Xavier – Wesley Gardner 3-17, Bryce Grimm 2-33, Frank Hill 2-21.