

No.1 Saints demolish DeWitt Central

Written by Clete Campbell

Friday, 19 September 2014 23:39 - Last Updated Sunday, 21 September 2014 17:49

DeWITT – Follow the train.

Cedar Rapids Xavier return man Sean Murphy says all he had to do to find the end zone on his dazzling 96- and 89-yard kickoff returns for touchdowns Friday night was follow the lead of the calvary of Saints blockers clearing and paving the road.

Perhaps only the president had a better security detail Friday as the top-ranked Saints pulverized DeWitt Central, 59-3.

“We got the best work out of our blockers,” Murphy said. “The blockers did all their jobs. I really had the perfect setup.”

For Class 3A opponents, trying to tackle Xavier ballcarriers this fall has been like trying to corral a galloping bull guarded by an army of broncos in a china shop.

By rule, the Davenport Assumption and Solon defenses are not bowling pin units that get knocked down, stiff armed and shrugged off by most tailbacks.

These are among Iowa's most talent-rich units, fundamentally solid,

well-coached and well-schooled in the fine art of containing explosive offenses.

Yet neither defense could prevent Cedar Rapids Xavier's kinetic option offense from running all over them the last two weeks.

And as a sore DeWitt Central defense will testify, no Class 3A foe is anywhere close to

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developing a sound plan that will sedate the Saints' hyperactive offense.

“They're up there atop (the 3A rankings) for a reason,” Sabers Coach Mike Miller said.

Here's why: Quarterback Bryce Schulte ran for a pair of 2-yard TD runs and caught a 21-yard quarterback throwback score from Blake Whitten as top-ranked Xavier easily dismantled Central at Birney Field while issuing another declarative statement that it is the team to beat for the 2014 Iowa Class 3A state championship.

“They're going to capitalize on big plays,” Miller said of Xavier, the 2013 Class 4A state runner-up. “We told our kids, it's nothing fancy. They wear you down. They're going to run power. They're going to run isolation (plays).”

And Xavier is usually going to execute its game plan with superb execution.

As if they weren't facing enough of an uphill battle coming into their first-ever matchup with Xavier, the rules of momentum didn't favor the Sabers (2-2, 0-2 District 4) coming in. A week ago, state power Solon found itself stuck in the mud wearing concrete shoes against Xavier (3-1, 2-0). The Spartans mustered just four first downs in a 28-0 shutout loss.

Central fared even worse. The Sabers' first first down of the game didn't come until midway through the second quarter and Ferre Devos' 32-yard field goal was the only real damage Central – limited to 172 offensive yards – could do against Xavier's steady-as-always defense. Central only made its tall task harder by losing three fumbles.

Murphy returned the opening kickoff untouched 96 yards for a score, and the Saints never stopped running. With its offensive line opening up massive holes you could drive a limo through, the Saints rushed for 237 yards. Tailback Jay Kortemeyer's 73 yards led a diverse rushing opponent.

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"As a team, we're all just focused on doing our job," said Kortemeyer, who upped his season rushing yardage to 441. "Our offensive line does a great job of doing their job."

Xavier landed the knockout blow by halftime with a 45-point haymaker of a first half. The game was on ice just 24 minutes in and had the Saints marching onward with a running clock to their next test: Winless Maquoketa.

Murphy said the Saints' latest runaway victory was produced by a unit Xavier fans didn't even see in the first half.

"Our scout team is definitely the key to our success," Murphy said. "They do a great job preparing us for our opponent."

Xavier won't be sitting back admiring its latest highlight reel movie in the game film. The Saints have already turned the page.

"The word we've tried to use the last few years is engaged," Coach Duane Schulte said. "No matter what you're doing, every drill, every rep in practice, even in pre-practice, you have to be engaged.

"I think that carries over to the game."

Call it Xavier's Winning Rules of Engagement

Xavier 59, DeWitt Central 3

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Xavier Central

First downs 13 8

Rushes-yards 36-237 28-29

Passing yards 70 143

Comp-Att-Int 4-5-0 9-14-0

Fumbles-lost 1-0 3-3

Punts-avg. 1-41 4-40

Penalties-yards 3-15 2-15

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Xavier 28 17 0 14 - 59

Central 0 3 0 0 - 3

X – Sean Murphy 96 kickoff return (Dallas Klein)

X – Bryce Schulte 1 run (Klein kick)

X – Jay Kortemeyer 2 run (Klein kick)

X – Schulte 21 pass from Blake Whitten (Klein kick)

X – Schulte 2 run (Klein kick)

DC – Ferre Devos 32 FG

X – Murphy 89 (Klein kick)

X – Klein 32 FG

X – Andrew Steffensmeier 14 run (Klein kick)

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X – John Hovda 9 run (Klein kick)

Individual Statistics

RUSHING

X – Jay Kortemeyer 12-73, Bryce Schulte 7-68, Andrew Steffensmeier 4-32, John Hovda 2-19, Blake Whitten 1-15, Adam Steffensmeier 3-11, Nic Ekland 2-11, Nick Stark 1-10, Ryan Williams 2-1, Ryan Stulken 1-(minus-1), Gabe Smith 1-(-2).

DC – Levi White 4-17, Ryan Olson 2-15, Mason Cousins 8-10, Ryan Burke 1-2, Logan Sheppard 9-(-4), Gage Fuller 2-(-4), Elliot Arensdorf 1-(-1), James Grell 1-(-6).

PASSING

X – Schulte 3-4-59, Whitten 1-1-21.

DC – Sheppard 7-11-120, Fuller 2-3-23.

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RECEIVING

X – Nick Stark 1-40, Schulte 1-21, Ekland 1-11, Kortemeyer 1-9.

DC – Grell 3-64, Olson 2-45, Seth Eickert 2-31, Arensdorf 1-20, Colin Duffy 1-8.