

Miller sets records as Saints top Lions

Written by Jim Ecker

Friday, 25 October 2013 23:30 -

Xavier High School tailback Brendan Miller fumbled the football the first time he touched it Friday, but it was the only thing the 5-foot-9, 175-pound senior did wrong all night.

Miller broke one school record and tied another as the eighth-ranked Saints rolled into the Class 4A playoffs with a 44-14 conquest of the Linn-Mar Lions on a chilly night at Linn-Mar Stadium.

Xavier (8-1) will host Clinton (4-5) in the first round of the playoffs Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Miller carried the ball 27 times for 268 yards and scored four touchdowns on gallops of 48, 43, 8 and 6 yards as Xavier grabbed a share of the Valley Division title in the Mississippi Valley Conference.

Miller's 268 yards snapped the former school mark of 241 yards set by Will Martin in 2006, and his four rushing touchdowns tied Miller's record from 2006.

His record-setting performance began inauspiciously when he lost the ball on his first carry of the game, although he alertly fell on the loose pigskin to keep possession. After that, he was nearly unstoppable.

"You just have to have a short memory and bounce back," said Miller, who has rushed for 1,115 yards and scored 13 times this year.

The Saints finished the regular season with an 8-1 record and sport a 21-2 mark the past two years, including a 13-1 record last year and a trip to the state finals.

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"Getting eight wins in the Mississippi Valley Conference is a good thing. It's hard to do," said Xavier Coach Duane Schulte. "People have no idea how hard it is to win football games on Friday nights and all the work that goes into it.

"I'm happy for the guys and hopefully they can keep going. These kids have put in the work. It's not just Friday nights. It's all through the year. And the coaches the same thing."

Xavier tied Washington for the Valley Division title with a 5-1 mark.

Linn-Mar tailback Perrion Scott, who missed much of the season with a stress fracture in his leg, showed what he can with a pair of healthy legs by carrying the ball 21 times for 200 yards and two long touchdowns.

The track star broke loose for a 73-yard touchdown in the second quarter against Xavier's top defensive unit and raced 54 yards for another touchdown with 37.2 seconds left in the game.

Scott had a broken hand last year and the stress fracture this season, slowing his development as a football player. "I'm very fragile, I guess," he said with a smile.

Linn-Mar finished a rough season with a 2-7 record, but there's hope for the future. The Lions had only 12 seniors on the varsity this year and 33 juniors. Scott returns next season and so does quarterback Ryan Schmidt, who got knocked out of the game in the second quarter Friday with a back injury.

"He took a helmet to the back," said Linn-Mar Coach Bob Forsyth. "It was tough. Ryan is such a tough competitor and such a hard-nosed kid. He's given us everything he had and he gave us everything he had tonight. He could not continue on. It was a tough situation for him."

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The Lions finished 3-6 last season and have a 5-13 record the last two years. Scott hopes there are better days ahead in 2014.

"Hopefully we can do some damage," he said. "Don't go through the motions in the weight room, don't go through the motions in summer camp and stuff like that."

Forsyth said he'll evaluate the entire program as the Lions move forward. "Coaches are eternal optimists," he said. "You're talking to one here. We're going to get going on it."

Miller was the guy who got it going at Linn-Mar Stadium Friday. He averaged nearly 10 yards a pop with jaunts of 48, 43, 42, 16, 14, 13, 12 (twice) and 11.

"It felt great," he said. "The O-line did a great job of opening up holes and our receivers did a great job of blocking down field. Can't do it without the O-line."

Schulte said there was no reason to harp on Miller after he began the game with a fumble. "Forget about it," was Schulte's line of thinking. "You don't want it to happen again, but sometimes if you harp on the negative it gets stuck on the brain. And so you just move on."

"He ran hard. He fumbled early on, but he overcame that and came back and ran hard."

The Saints nearly won the Class 4A state title last year, falling 23-17 to Ankeny in a controversial finish, but Schulte claimed it has not been a hot topic of conversation on the club.

"We haven't brought it up," he said, but noted of his players, "I'm sure they're thinking about it."

Miller has not forgotten the 2012 state championship game or the way it ended. "We were motivated," he said. "We know we have to keep working hard to get back and just do our jobs."

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We just have to be ready to go and play good football."

Xavier is the No.3 seed in the Eastern side of the state for the Class 4A playoffs. Clinton is seeded No.14.

XAVIER 44, LINN-MAR 14

CRX	LM	
First downs	22	12
Rushes-yards	43-348	42-245
Passing yards	76	19
Comp-Att-Int	7-9-0	3-8-1
Fumbles-lost	2-0	3-0
Punts-avg	1-41.0	4-23.8
Penalties-yards	3-40	4-26

Xavier	3	21	7	13	- 44
Linn-Mar	0	7	0	7	- 14

X - FG Ryan Persick 35

X - Brendan Miller 48 run (Persick kick)

LM - Perrion Scott 73 run (Austin Wolter kick)

X - Miller 43 run (Persick kick)

X - Miller 8 run (Persick kick)

X - Wes Gardner 14 pass from Quinton Scholer (Persick kick)

X - Miller 6 run (Persick kick)

X - Christopher Ball 6 run (run failed)

LM - Scott 54 run (Wolter kick)

Individual statistics

Rushing

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Xavier - Miller 27-268, Ball 7-46, Sullivan 1-26, Schulte 4-7, Kortemeyer 2-6, Scholer 1-minus 3, Team 1-minus 2.

Linn-Mar - Scott 21-200, Ho 10-19, Ramsey 1-5, Schmidt 7-16, Gassmann 2-7, Evans 1-minus.

Passing

Xavier - Scholer 6-7-0-64, Schulte 1-2-0-12.

Linn-Mar - Schmidt 1-5-0-31, Ho 1-5-0-31.

Receiving

Xavier - Grimm 3-19, Gardner 2-33.

Linn-Mar - Noble 1-31, Scott 1-minus 3, Cosgrove 1-minus 8.