

***** SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2014 • STAR TRIBUNE • SPORTS • C5

prep football state semifinals

CLASS 4A DELASALLE 35, HUTCHINSON 14

DeLaSalle opens a few ears

Billy Hart and the Islanders backed up bold talk by halting Hutchinson's streak at 37.

By DARRICK JOHNSON
Special to the Star Tribune

All season, Billy Hart has been telling anyone who would listen that DeLaSalle was the state's best football team.

With a 35-14 victory over two-time defending state champion Hutchinson in the Class 4A state semifinal on Saturday, Hart and DeLaSalle came one step closer to proving that true. "We've talked about legacy and what you want to leave behind," Hart said. "This senior class has been determined to bring state title back to DeLaSalle."

DeLaSalle scored 22 unanswered points in the fourth quarter to pull off the upset in the game at TCF Bank Stadium. No. 1-ranked Hutchinson's 37-game win streak dating to 2011.

After the game, Hutchinson coach Andy Romberg said he told players "to try to look at the book they've written. This is a bad chapter, but there's been a lot of good chapters over the past three or four years."

Hart threw two touchdown passes and had just one incomplete pass in the second half. He totaled 291 yards — 121 rushing and 169 passing.

"It was about who wanted it more," said senior receiver Isaac Hodges, who had eight catches for 87 yards. "We weren't done playing football."

DeLaSalle QB opened up a 13-0 lead on Hutchinson 13:10 on a 13-yard rushing touchdown by freshman Sage Booker, who filled in for injured senior tailback James King Jr.

Trailing for the first time this season, Hutchinson countered with senior running back Robbie Grimsley. He blocked an extra point, caught a 69-yard touchdown, forced and recovered a fumble, and ran in a touchdown to help put the Tigers ahead 14-13 at the half.

But the second half was all Islanders. Hart III Hodge for a 25-yard touchdown converted a two-point conversion three to Marquis Bridges that put DeLaSalle ahead 21-14. Then Hart scored untouched from 5 yards out, making it 28-14 with 4:50 left. A 94-yard interception return by Bridges with 3:52 to play sealed the victory.

Hart III Hodge's confidence grew that his team was a victory away from the title. The Islanders play Becker on Saturday at TCF Bank Stadium.

"They just better watch out," he said.



DeLaSalle freshman Sage Booker's two early touchdowns in the Islanders' 4A victory gave a big lift to his teammates, who largely returned the favor.



Hutchinson quarterback Marcus Hahn watched one of his passes turn into an interception as he was tackled by DeLaSalle's Isaac Hodges. The Islanders shut out the top-ranked Tigers in the second half Saturday at Prior Lake.

CLASS 4A: BECKER 39, STEWARTVILLE 20

In a game played in snow and cold at Crane High School, Becker (11-3) made adjustments first. Becker quarterback Michael Valdmann threw for two touchdowns and ran for another to lead the Bulldogs attack. Senior C.J. Schwartz gained most of his 100 yards rushing for the Bulldogs between the 20-yard lines. At the goal line they turned to running back Deen Pardy, who scored touchdowns on runs of 4, 7 and 2 yards. Becker's defense allowed only two Stewartville drives to cross midfield in the first half.

Key of the game: Stewartville (10-2) cut the lead to 12-6 late in the first half, but Becker answered with just 38 seconds left. Valdmann, a senior, scored on a 6-yard touchdown and then ran for the two-point conversion to secure the Bulldogs' lead to 20-6 at halftime. The Bulldogs offensive line helped Becker answer nearly 200 total yards in the first half.

Quote: "It's nice if we played physical with them we could stop their running game. All of our defensive linemen got into it right away." — Dillon Radtke, Becker defensive end

One thing to know: This is Becker's 14th trip to the state tournament and seventh time in the championship game. Each appearance was with the leadership of Dwight Lundgren, the only head coach in program history. Becker won its only state title in 2005.

BRIAN BEZAK

CLASS 1A DAWSON-BOYD 28, MINNEAPOLIS NORTH 12

North suffers numbing loss in semis

Dawson-Boyd's Blackjacks cracked the Polars for four scores, a week after ousting the reigning IA champions.

By HEATHER KULE
Special to the Star Tribune

Still riding high from defeating two-time defending Class 1A champion Mahanomen last week in the quarterfinals, Dawson-Boyd took through the Minneapolis North defense with its run game on a snowy, chilly Saturday at Hopkins High School.

The Blackjacks (12-1) didn't stop until they had defeated the Polars 28-12 and earned a return to the IA Prep Bowl game Saturday at TCF Bank Stadium. Last year they fell to Mahanomen in the title game.

"We ran the ball exceptionally well, and maybe that's one thing they didn't expect," said Dawson-Boyd coach Cody Larson, noting that the passing game was a big factor in the team's streak-erasing victory over Mahanomen.

"That was such a huge win...to try to bounce back and try to back that up and not allow that game to kind of be the exclamation mark on your season," he said. "You have to continue to forge forward and continue to make it happen."

Evge ahead they did.

Senior running back Dalton Palmer returned the opening kickoff to the North 25-yard line, leading a 69-yard touchdown run from senior Kevon Laxabada for a 7-0 lead.

Junior quarterback Jess Hansen found a wide open Michael Lee early in the second quarter for a 39-yard touchdown pass to extend the lead to 14-0. Hansen threw three touchdowns, including a fourth- and 80 pass to Noah in the third quarter.

It was the most points North allowed all season. Before Saturday, only two opponents had scored more than six points. The Blackjacks, who won the 2011 Prep Bowl, are in their fourth consecutive state tournament.

North (12-3), in its first state tournament since 2009, was trying to become the first Minneapolis city team to reach the state championship game in 37 years. Washburn won the AA crown in 1977.



The pain of loss was heavy for Minneapolis North's Martice Clark, left, as he leaned on a Polars teammate as the fourth quarter ticked down in their Class 1A semifinal defeat.

roundup

Rochester Lourdes advances to Class 3A title game with OT win

• **ROCHESTER LOURDES 14, PINE 24** After missing three scores from a yard out to give Pine (11-3) a 24-17 lead in overtime, Rochester junior QB responded with a 24-yard touchdown run to pull within one point. With 3:10 left in the Prep Bowl on the line, Lourdes head coach Mike Miller threw 12 for a two-point conversion and the victory. Running back Carter Gibson's initial burst in the conversion attempt was thwarted, but he managed to lateral the ball to teammate coach Hoffman, who did so for the score and tied Rochester Lourdes into the Class 3A state championship.

CLASS 2A

• **MINNEAPOLIS 24, PIPESTONE AREA 18** Undrafted senior tailback Matt Hanson rushed for the tough yards, picking up 119 yards on 34 carries and a touchdown. Meanwhile, fellow senior Nathan Britner provided encouragement, carrying the ball six times, gaining 189 yards and scoring three touchdowns. Britner or added an 85-yard kickoff return on the final play of the first half. On defense, sophomore Blake Parks picked off two passes by Pipestone (12-3). This is the first time head coach (18-2) will coach in an appearance in the championship game since 1982.

CLASS 1A

• **MINNETONKA 12, SHANAHAN 14** Junior Grant Hanson rushed for four touchdowns to help Minnetonka cruise to the semifinal victory. The undefeated Vikings (12-0) dominated Beaver (18-2) from the outset and led 41-0 at halftime. Freshman quarterback Alex Polase charged in with two touchdown passes. Minnetonka is seeking redemption after having lost last year's Class 3A championship game to Chaska.

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CLASS 1A - 10 A.M.

Dawson-Boyd (12-1) vs. Minnetonka (12-0)

CLASS 2A - 1 P.M.

New London-Spicer (11-1) vs. Rochester Lourdes (12-0)

CLASS 3A - 4 P.M.

Mankato West (11-1) vs. Simley (10-3)