

C4 · SPORTS · STAR TRIBUNE · SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2014

prep football state semifinals

CLASS 5A MANKATO WEST 26, ST. MICHAEL-ALBERTVILLE 21

West has a fun run in the snow

The Scarlets used their ground game to advance to the Class 5A title game.

By TIM PAULSEN
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There was snow and there were red cheeks and red faces and, for each and every member of the Mankato West football team, it was perfect.

The Scarlets, known for their potent offense and gaudy polar totals, got down to business Sunday, outgunning St. Michael-Albertville 26-21 in a Class 5A semifinal game at Eden Prairie High School.

Quarterback Ryan Schlichte showed why he's considered one of the state's top QB prospects, hitting his speedy wide receiver, Connor Wuits, for TDs of 60 and 65 yards in the first half. But, for all of Schlichte's passing prowess

— he managed to throw for more than 200 yards despite the wintry conditions — it was Mankato West's ability to control the line of scrimmage that was the difference.

"Oh man, my offensive line, they were unbreakable," Schlichte said. "They do not get enough credit. They deserve more kudos."

With the snow dictating the play-calling, West coach Mark Eich said that controlling the line of scrimmage was a top priority. It worked just the way it was drawn up as Schlichte and running back Van Neils were often 2 or 3 yards past the line of scrimmage before encountering a tackler.

Schlichte rushed 25 times for 74 yards and two TDs, and Neils carried the ball 12 times for 69 yards. Even more important, the Scarlets did not have a single negative-yardage play in the game.

"Our goal was to set the physical tone," Eich said. He added that having Schlichte carry the ball that frequently was a first, but the results were expected.

"We've been saving him a little," Eich said. "But at this time of year, there's no reason to do that anymore."

St. Michael-Albertville kept coming back, twice cutting the lead to one touchdown or less in the second half, but overall the Knight's inconsistent offense was their undoing. They had two potential TD passes dropped, and quarterback Jackson Greenwood was harassed in the pocket all game.

"We know we have a really good defense, we prepared amazingly for them and we came out huge," said head coach Kevin Marshall. "To be honest, with these conditions, it was more fun than any game we've had."



The Scarlets rushed 39 times for 159 yards, with the longest run a 16-yarder by Van Neils.



Mankato West's Connor Wuits reached back for a pass with St. Michael-Albertville's Jacob Moran defending. The Scarlets won 26-21 at Eden Prairie High School.

CLASS 5A SIMLEY 21, SPRING LAKE PARK 14

First-year Simley RB scores winning TD



Simley returner Cole Veth had a lot of room to run on a first-quarter kickoff against Spring Lake Park.

Michael Arvumama scored on a 5-yard run with 1:12 left.

By HEATHER BULL
Special to the Star Tribune

The temperature was cold, but the snow suit falling early in the Class 5A state football semifinal Saturday afternoon between Simley and Spring Lake Park.

Maybe that was all it took to help Simley senior Michael Arvumama score the game-winning touchdown to send his team to the Prep Bowl. It's the first year playing football for the Nigrita natives.

"I don't like the snow," he said. "I had to run up. We needed a win." Simley scored with 1 minute, 12 seconds left in the game for a 21-14 victory at Hopkins High School. The 5-yard run up the middle was Arvumama's second touchdowns of the game.

"I got the ball, so I just ran," Arvumama said. "That's what I do, I just run."

Spring Lake Park (7-4) tied the score at 14-all with 8:04 left. Simley (9-3) got the ball and with 2:39 on

the clock, it was starting at a fourth-and-2 on the Panthers' 17-yard line. But an encroachment penalty on the defense gave the Spartans a first down.

Faced with a third-down play from the 5-yard line and time running down, Simley took a timeout. The game-winning score came on the next play.

The Panthers got the ball at their 34-yard line with one timeout left. Simley junior Joe Matthews intercepted the ball in the final minute to clinch the victory.

The game was a different story in the first quarter which saw Simley stop twice on downs and Spring Lake Park fumble twice. Arvumama was upset with himself after the first half, coach Rex King said, so they talked.

"You can either pack it in and go home or you can get your butt out there and figure out that you got a future here," King said. "What's next? What are you going to do to bounce back?"

"He bounced back and this game put him over 1,000 yards for the season," King said.

CLASS 3A: NEW LONDON-SPICER 13, GLENCOE-SILVER LAKE 12

New London-Spicer was doing very little. Glencoe-Silver Lake scored its second touchdowns to take a 12-0 lead in the third quarter and was in control of the game at Eden Prairie.

So the Wildcats' Shane Zylstra took it upon himself to provide the spark.

The 4-foot-4, 215-pound receiver/defensive end returned the ensuing kickoff 80 yards for a touchdown. The return gave life

to the Wildcats and turned momentum in their favor as they rallied for a victory.

After forcing a Glencoe-Silver Lake punt, New London-Spicer put together its best drive of the game, going 66 yards and scoring on a 19-yard run by Trey Auvold that proved to be the game-winner.

"We just got bodies on bodies and made it up," Auvold said. "We just had put everything together."

Key of the game: New London-Spicer's defense came up big late in the fourth quarter, stopping the Panthers on fourth-and-2 at the New London-Spicer 11 with 2:21 left in the game.

Quote: "As a captain, it's up to you to take the initiative and make the big plays." — Shane Zylstra on his kickoff return

One thing to know: New London-Spicer returns to the Class 3A championship game for the second consecutive year.

By TIM PAULSEN

prep bowl friday • tcf bank stadium • ch. 45

NINE-MAN - 10 A.M.

Edgerton/Ellsworth (12-1) vs. Grand Meadow (13-0)

CLASS 2A - 1 P.M.

BOLD (12-1) vs. Holdingford (10-3)

CLASS 4A - 4 P.M.

Becker (11-1) vs. Delta/Salle (11-1)

CLASS 6A - 7 P.M.

Eden Prairie (12-0) vs. Totino-Grace (11-1)