

Class 9B Preview: Pirates Look To Get Back On Top



P&D FILE PHOTO

Avon's Jackson Powers, 4, finds running room during a game earlier this season. The Pirates look to add to their impressive championship resume as they take on top-seeded Waverly-South Shore in the Class 9B championship game, today (Friday) at 11 a.m. in the DakotaDome.

Top-Seeded Waverly-South Shore Aims To Sink Avon In The Dome

BY JEREMY HOECK
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On Oct. 7, Avon was handed a surprising 34-6 home loss to Corsica-Stickney. Many, at the time, weren't sure what to make of the veteran Pirates. Yet those around the team knew what the ultimate goal was, head coach Tom Culver said.

"After we lost to Corsica-Stickney, people were wondering if we were for real," Culver said this week. "The guys wanted to get back to the dome. That's been their goal all year long and they've done a great job with it so far."

That desire will be put to the test in today's (Friday) Class 9B state football championship game against top-seeded Waverly-South Shore (11-0), at 11 a.m. inside the DakotaDome in Vermillion.

The matchup pits a team (Wa-

verly-South Shore) making its first-ever title game appearance against one (Avon) playing in its third championship game in four years.

Avon (10-1) won the Class 9A title in 2008, lost in the 9A final in 2009 and did not make the finals last season, losing to eventual champion Hanson in the semifinals. As Culver said, the motivation was obvious for the Pirates this year.

"These kids have been there a couple times, but not making it there last year really pushed them," Culver said. "They spent more time in the weight room and really worked hard to get to this point."

The key to that progression, especially late in the season after the Corsica-Stickney loss, has been the rushing attack. Seniors Jackson Powers (115 rush-1,038 yds, 18 TD) and Duffy Ducheneaux (81-688, 14 TD) give the Pirates a 1-2 punch on the ground

that not many teams can boast.

"People can't really key on Jackson because Duffy is just as capable of scoring on any play," Culver said. "You have to have some balance, especially as you get further in the playoffs."

Ducheneaux would have inched closer to the 1,000-yard mark if not for injuries. He left in the first quarter of the quarterfinals against Dell Rapids and didn't play at all against Harding County in the semifinals.

Senior quarterback Nick Poppe has passed for 328 yards and six touchdowns, with four interceptions, most of those throws going to senior wide receiver Luke VanGerpen (16 rec.-204 yds, 6 TD).

Defensively, Powers leads Avon in total tackles (103), while VanGerpen leads in sacks (6) and Poppe ranks first in interceptions (3).

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Quarriers Run To 11A Title

Dell Rapids Defends Title; Rushes For 339 Yards In 35-0 Rout Of West Central

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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VERMILLION — Earlier this season, Dell Rapids used big plays to upend West Central. With the state title on the line, big plays set the state for another Quarriers victory.

Channing Barber broke the opening play of the game 59 yards for a touchdown, then scored on runs of 54, 73 and 35 yards later in the game to claim a 35-0 Dell Rapids victory over the Trojans in the Class 11A championship game, Thursday at the DakotaDome in Vermillion.

The Quarriers finish with an 11-1 record and a second consecutive state title.

"It's the best feeling," Channing Barber said after the victory. "We've prepared for this all year. To come and play well here is a great feeling."

It took all of 20 seconds for Barber to get the orange-and-black clad faithful on their feet, turning a simple sweep play into the game's opening score.

"We wanted to do something safe. We didn't want a big loss on the first play," said Dell Rapids head coach Steve Hansen. "We figured we'd slip Channing off the edge."

Barber quickly credited his line for allowing him to go the 59 yards virtually untouched.

"I told them if they get right out there, I'll be right behind them," he said. "Our linemen got the blocks."

West Central fumbled three plays into the ensuing drive, and the Quarriers took advantage of the short field. After converting a fourth-and-1 to keep the drive going, Barber found brother Zachary Barber on a 10-yard fade to give Dell Rapids a 14-0

also

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line, the Trojans' Josh Auble blocked the kick and was off to the races. But Quarrier kicker Gus Haskell ran Auble down on the Dell Rapids 5-yard line, and the Dell Rapids defense holds on the 1-yard line.

"We don't get it in because they run us down," West Central head coach Kent Mueller said. "You can't account for that speed, you can't prepare for it."

Neither team could move the ball on the other until the third quarter, when Channing Barber broke free again, this time from 54 yards out. A 73-yarder later in the period made it 28-0. The final score came when Barber recovered a Dell Rapids fumble 11 yards behind the line of scrimmage and wove his way 35 yards for a touchdown.

"Honestly, both those initial touchdowns were because of mistakes on our part," Mueller said. "But the next three were because of unbelievable individual effort by Channing."

Barber, who was named both Joe Robbie MVP and Outstanding Back of the game, finished with 227 yards on 11 carries, the majority of the Quarriers' 339 yards on the ground. His one

lead just 3:23 into the game.

The Trojan defense put them in position to score early in the first quarter. After stalling a Dell Rapids drive on the WC 9-yard-



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

West Central quarterback Connor Miles, 11, gets upended by Dell Rapids' Channing Barber, 12, and Bryce Koch during the Class 11A championship game, Thursday at the DakotaDome in Vermillion. Both Barber and Koch earned game honors, with Barber named Joe Robbie MVP and Outstanding Back of the game, and Koch named Outstanding Lineman as Dell Rapids won 35-0. .

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AH's Pearson Signs To Play Volleyball At Augustana

BY JEREMY HOECK
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ALCESTER — When it came time for a final decision, Ivy Pearson considered many factors: Location, size, potential and familiarity.

Ultimately, the senior from Alcester-Hudson chose to spurn a Division I offer at a school where her mother and both sisters attended, and sign with a college that would best suit her talents.

"I guess I'm bucking the trend," joked Pearson on Thursday, a day after signed a National Letter of Intent to play volleyball at Division II Augustana College in Sioux Falls.

Pearson, a 5-foot-9 outside hitter, was a four-year starter for the Cubs and holds school records for most kills in a match, season and career.

She led Alcester-Hudson to four district championships, but the Cubs came up one win short of qualifying for the state tournament all four years — including Tuesday's Region 4B loss to Parker.

Saying that she liked the size of the Augustana campus and that the school better fit her plans for a nursing major, Pearson said she chose Augie over an offer from the University of South Dakota.

"Ever since I was little, I've gone to their (Augie) camps, so I got to know a lot of the players



Pearson

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Shull, Wall Stand In Way Of Canistota's Second Straight Title

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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With over 2,300 yards of total offense on the season, Wall's Chavis Shull has shown he can fly. With an 11-0 record, the Eagles have flown to heights the team hasn't seen since winning state titles in 1990 and 1994.

But a 2010 state champion looms in the DakotaDome, determined to knock the Eagles out of the sky.

The Canistota Hawks take a 23-0 game win streak — all 23 games since a co-op with Bridge-water was dissolved — into the South Dakota State Class 9A championship, set for this afternoon (Friday) in Vermillion.

For a Hawks team that capped a 12-0 run in 2010 with a 66-0 rout of then defending champion Hitchcock-Tulare, this season's run may be equally impressive.

In 11 games this season, the Hawks have given up just 55 points, including 26 to Class 9AA finalist Bridgewater-Emery-Ethan and 21 to Class 9B semifinalist Viborg-Hurley. Eight Canistota games have resulted in shutout

victories, including all three playoff games by a combined 150-0.

"We mix it up on defense, try not to give them the same look," said Canistota head coach Lenny Schroeder. "We run a 3-5 with gap control, and we have kids that get to where they're supposed to be."

Up front, the Hawks sport offense-stoppers like Trevor Schroeder (70 tackles, 13 TFL, 7 sacks, 4 fumble recoveries), Jason Van Winkle (86 tackles, 8 TFL), Eric Tieszen (107 tackles, 6 TFL, 2 fumble recoveries) and Zack Hofer (53 tackles, 7 TFL, 2 fumble recoveries). When the guys up aren't getting the stops, Troy Hofer (101 tackles, 4 TFL), Boone DeKramer (69 tackles, 1 TFL), Nathan Dick (54 tackles, 4 TFL) and Cody Bunker (23 tackles, 6 INT) are making plays.

"Our defensive line wrecks a lot of havoc," Coach Schroeder said. "They force teams to try to get outside, and we have a lot of speed to counter that as well."

The Hawks will be charged with shutting down Shull, who has rushed for 2,043 yards with an average of 8.8 yards a carry.

He also leads the team with 13 catches for 279 yards. He junior has 29 total touchdowns on the season.

"Shull, I believe, is the leading rusher in the state, regardless of class," Coach Schroeder noted. "Tyler Trask is another good sprinter. When they hit a seam, they're usually gone."

Trask has 808 yards rushing and 55 yards receiving, ranking second on the team in both categories. Eisenbraun Turan has 285 yards rushing. Lane Blasius has thrown for 355 yards and seven scores.

"Shull is quick and has good instincts. A lot of his yards are after the initial hit," said Wall head coach Dennis Rieckman. "Tyler has quietly put up over 800 yards. Lane Blasius came in our second or third game, and has made his mark as a sophomore."

Giving their linebackers a chance at the Wall backs will be key for the Canistota defense.

"We need physical play up front on the line, to open up things for our linebackers," Coach Schroeder said.

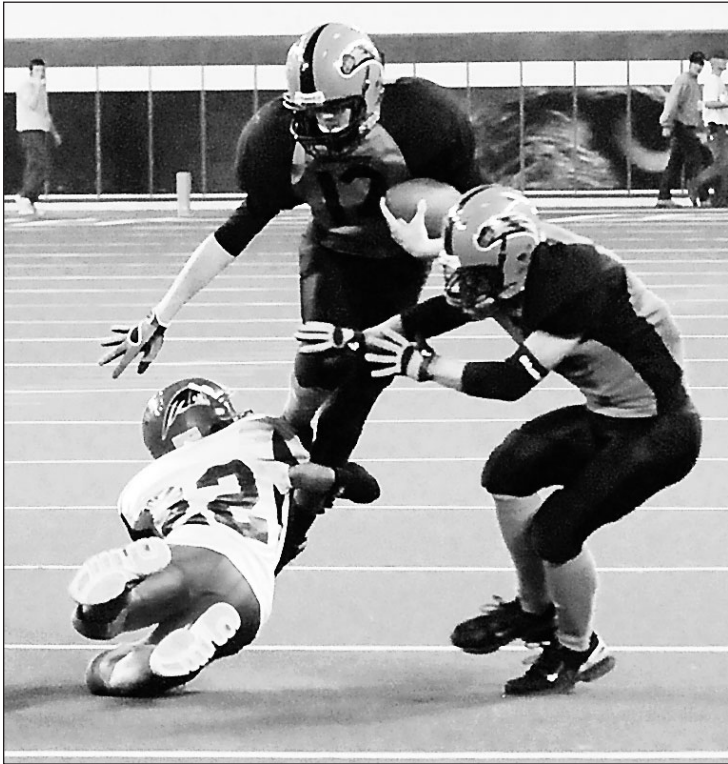
Defensively, Wall is led by junior Jess Williams, who has piled up 118 stops, two sacks and five fumble recoveries.

"His motor on defense is amazing," Rieckman said. "He's been hobbled most of the year, but he's still getting it done."

Trask (96 tackles, 4 INT, 3 fumble recoveries), Shull (84 tackles), Eisenbraun Taron (70 tackles, 3 fumble recoveries) and Tyler Peterson (71 tackles, 2 sacks) have all been big parts of the Eagles' defensive effort that has recovered 22 fumbles and picked off six passes this season.

The Wall defense will be charged with slowing down a Canistota offense that has rolled up better than 50 points a game. Bunker has a team-best 1,031 yards, but Alex Robertson (954 yards) and Troy Hofer (795 yards) are not far behind. Bunker has also thrown for 765 yards and 16 touchdowns, with just one interception in 81 attempts. Trevor Schroeder, a 6-4 end, has a team-high 25 catches for 411 yards and five scores.

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P&D FILE PHOTO

Canistota's Cody Bunker, 12, tries to leap over a would-be tackler during the 2010 Class 9B championship game. Bunker, the Hawks' starting quarterback and leading rusher, has led Canistota to a 23-game win streak, which is on the line today (Friday) as they face Wall in the Class 9A final.



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