

Kennesaw Mountain's Whitlock rolls for 179 yards and three touchdowns



*Kennesaw Mtn. Mustangs
Kennesaw, Ga.*

VS.



*Pope Greyhounds
Marietta, Ga.*

38

21

**8/30/08 By Bobby C. Tedder Marietta Daily Journal Sports Writer
KENNESAW - In a tale of two halves, the Kennesaw Mountain Mustangs pulled away after the break to top visiting Pope 38-21 Friday night.**

The teams fought to a 14-14 tie heading into halftime. The deadlock gave way not long after as the bigger and bruising Mustangs ultimately imposed their will.

"Both sides decided to take things in their own hands and then we went toe to toe there for a couple of quarters," Kennesaw head coach Scott Jones said, adding, "We challenged our kids at halftime to come out here and try to regain their composure.

"The kids came out and accepted that challenge and got back in it. Our offense kept clicking all night long. Somebody had to take the lead (Friday) and they did."

Clayton Whitlock was the lead horse in Kennesaw Mountain's stable of Wing T-certified running backs, rushing for 179 yards and three touchdowns.

His last score, a 2-yard scamper up the middle, put the Mustangs up 28-14 and Pope never recovered.

"It was anybody's ball game in the first half; we came out strong in the second half," said Whitlock. "The (offensive) line was blocking for me and I just hit the holes as hard as I could."

The Greyhounds, playing their first game under new coach Matt Kemper, made costly mistakes at inopportune times to contribute to their own undoing.

Kennesaw Mountain linebacker Diamond Stewart was the first to capitalize, baiting Pope quarterback Steve Wilkerson into an interception and 25-yard pick 6 on the Greyhounds' opening possession of the game.

The dynamic Wilkerson redeemed himself later in the first quarter when he hooked up with wideout Garrett Brown for a 62-yard touchdown pass with 2:18 left to play.

The Mustangs answered with a long drive lasting into the second quarter and culminating in a 7-yard run to pay dirt by Whitlock at the 7:34 mark.

Pope, hanging tough just the same, countered with an effective mix of roll-out pass plays and shifty running, including Marcorus Graham's 17-yard dash to the end zone with 4 minutes to play in the half.

The second half was a different story as Kennesaw Mountain eventually wore down the feisty Greyhounds.

"When you're playing a big, strong team like that that's what happens," Kemper said afterward. "After a while, strength and talent kind of overtakes enthusiasm, and, unfortunately, that's the case.

"We had a couple of plays that we just didn't make and a good team like that is just gonna roll you up when they get you on your heels..."

Defensive Player of the Week: Cole Rudder

Offensive Player of the Week: Clayton Whitlock

Defensive Lineman of the Week: Matt Staub

Offensive Lineman of the Week: Kieth Green

Special Teams Player of the Week: Devon Stookey

Kennesaw Mountain improves to 2-0 with shutout of Eagles



*Kennesaw Mtn. Mustangs
Kennesaw, Ga.*



*South Cobb Eagles
Austell, Ga.*

VS.

13

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Published: 09/06/2008

By Steve Ruthsatz MDJ Sports Correspondent

KENNESAW – In the Region 5AAAAA opener for both teams Friday night, the Kennesaw Mountain Mustangs used a solid running game and stingy defense in shutting out the South Cobb Eagles 13-0 on Scott Jones Field at Cobb Energy/Mustang Stadium.

“Coming into the game, we were respecting their speed and felt that we needed to keep them from breaking off any big plays, and we did that,” Kennesaw Mountain coach Scott Jones said. “Our defense did a great job and the offense really controlled the clock the whole game,

moving up and down the field and moving the chains. We controlled the line of scrimmage and kept the ball out of their hands.”

South Cobb (1-1, 0-1) punted on the opening drive of the contest with the Mustangs (2-0, 1-0) taking over at their own 27-yard line. After running 11 plays and moving the ball to the Eagles’ 5, Devon Stookey connected on a 22-yard field goal, giving KMHS a 3-0 lead with 5:23 left in the first quarter.

Following another South Cobb punt, Kennesaw Mountain again started at its own 27-yard line. After driving to the Eagles’ 15 on 11 plays, Stookey’s 32-yard field goal attempt was no good at the 8:36 mark of the second period, and the score remained 3-0 in favor of the hosts.

Another South Cobb punt resulted in the Mustangs taking possession at their own 33-yard line, where they mounted another long, time-consuming drive. After 12 snaps, KMHS was at the Eagles’ 17, where Stookey made a 34-yard field goal, giving Kennesaw Mountain a 6-0 advantage with 1:03 remaining before halftime.

In the opening half, the Mustangs played nearly flawless with no penalties, no punts and no turnovers.

The second half began with KMHS starting at its own 11-yard line. From there, Kennesaw Mountain put together a 14-play scoring drive that concluded with sophomore Diamond Stewart reaching the end zone on a 5-yard run for the game’s only touchdown. Stookey’s extra-point increased the Mustangs’ lead to 13-0 with 5:39 to go in the third quarter.

On the ensuing possession, South Cobb was driving but fumbled the ball at the end of a 21-yard pass play. Cole Rudder recovered the fumble, giving KMHS the ball at its own 38-yard line.

From that point on, neither team was able to do much offensively, resulting in six punts, including three by each squad.

“We couldn’t get on the field and when we did get on the field, we couldn’t stay on,” Eagles head coach Ed Koester said. “Both sides of the ball have to compliment each other, and they didn’t.”

Defensive Player of the Week: Matt Chitwood

Offensive Player of the Week: Zack Vrtis

Defensive Lineman of the Week: Patrick Shipman

Offensive Lineman of the Week: Jay Finch

Special Teams Player of the Week: Zach Burgess

Etowah stops Kennesaw Mountain's winning streak at two



Kennesaw Mtn. Mustangs
Kennesaw, Ga.

VS.



Etowah Eagles
Woodstock, Ga.

12

21

Published: 09/13/2008

By Steve Ruthsatz MDJ Correspondent

KENNESAW - In an early-season matchup of unbeaten Region 5AAAAA teams, Etowah played outstanding defense and came from behind to pick up a hard-fought 21-12 road win over the Kennesaw Mountain on Friday night.

"We have never had a game with Kennesaw that just did not come down to the wire," Etowah head coach Bill Stewart said. "It's a blood fest. They coach it great over there, they've got big strong guys and they're the most physical people we play every year."

After the two teams traded punts to begin the game, Kennesaw Mountain (2-1, 1-1) went from its own 31-yard line to the Etowah (3-0, 2-0) 47 before the Eagles' Taylor Majors came up with an interception.

On the ensuing possession, Etowah moved from its own 44-yard line to the Mustangs' 32 before Devon Jones stepped in front of a pass and returned the interception 65 yards down the left sideline for a touchdown. The extra-point attempt sailed wide and Kennesaw Mountain would carry its 6-0 lead all the way to halftime.

Etowah started quickly in the second half, going 80 yards on just two plays for a score. Ryan Boykin busted through the middle on a 73-yard TD run, Kyle Riordan added the point-after and the Eagles led 7-6 with 11:10 left in the third period.

When the Mustangs got the ball back, the Etowah defense came up with another interception on the first play from scrimmage, and Jordan Padgett raced 48 yards into the end zone to increase the visitors' lead. Riordan's PAT made the score 14-6 in favor of the Eagles with 10:54 to go in the third quarter.

"We exploded in that third quarter, which was awesome," Stewart said. "We got some momentum on that big run right off the bat and then after that, we hit another big one."

Kenensaw Mountain drove 28 yards on its next possession but wound up missing a 48-yard field goal attempt that hit the crossbar with 7:18 to go in the third period.

Etowah traveled 35 yards when it got the ball back but when in punt formation, the snap from center sailed over the punter's head with Kennesaw Mountain taking over at the Eagles' 17-yard line.

From there, it took just one play for Mustangs' sophomore Diamond Stewart to reach the end zone, but the two-point conversion failed and Kennesaw Mountain had cut the deficit to 14-12 with 1:35 left in the third-quarter.

Etowah bounced back with a 15-play, 80-yard scoring drive that was capped off by an 8-yard TD pass play from James Harris to Joey Gilkey. Riordan's kick again went through the uprights and the Eagles led 21-12 with 4:40 remaining in the contest.

"We had a couple of things happen early in the third quarter, but that's just part of the game and we needed to bounce back from that," Kennesaw Mountain head coach Scott Jones said. "I felt like we played well defensively. We just gave up that big play."

Defensive Player of the Week: Jay Finch

Offensive Player of the Week: Christian Lewis

Co-Defensive Lineman of the Week: Patrick Shipman

Co-Defensive Lineman of the Week: Steven DeCarlo

Offensive Lineman of the Week: Jay Finch

Special Teams Player of the Week: Christian Lewis

KMHS claims city pride with shutout of North Cobb



*Kennesaw Mtn. Mustangs
Kennesaw, Ga.*

VS.



*North Cobb Warriors
Acworth, Ga.*

13

0

Published: 09/20/2008

By Carlton D. White Marietta Daily Journal Sports Writer

KENNESAW - The last time Kennesaw Mountain began a season 3-1 was in 2004. It then lost five of its next six games and finished the year with a 4-6 record.

The 2008 version of the Mustangs, however, doesn't look like it will falter down the stretch.

Kennesaw Mountain executed its Wing-T offense to near perfection Friday and rose to the occasion defensively in dismantling a tough North Cobb squad, 13-0, in the third annual "Civil War Classic" at Emory Sewell Stadium.

The victory was the second win for the Mustangs (3-1, 2-1 Region 5AAAAA) in the seven meetings between the two Kennesaw rivals and it marked the first time North Cobb (1-2, 0-2) had been shut out at home since a 34-0 loss to Marietta in 2004.

"This win is just an amazing feeling," said senior Justin Farmer, one of six players in the Mustangs' stable of running backs that helped the

team gain a total of 261 yards on the ground. "We couldn't have done any of this without our offensive line. We practiced hard all week and they made things happen for us up front. Our quarterback (T.J. Eifert) and defense really stepped up, too. It was a great game." Kennesaw Mountain dominated the time of possession and threw the ball only when it needed to, which was only five times. Otherwise, the Mustangs ran to the right, ran up the middle or ran to the left. Almost every running opportunity resulted in positive yards, kept the chains moving and kept the ball out of North Cobb's hands.

"(Kennesaw Mountain) runs the football and they did it well (Friday)," said Warriors coach Shane Queen, whose team remains winless in region play for the first time since 2005. "They just outplayed us on offense and defense and kept the ball away from us. They were the better team."

The Mustangs scored two touchdowns in the first half - one in the first quarter and the other in the second. On its second possession of the first quarter, Eifert found wide receiver Tyreece Johnson open down the right sideline and hit him for a 51-yard touchdown pass to put the Mustangs ahead, 7-0, with 3:18 left.

Kennesaw Mountain capitalized with a 27-yard interception return by Cole Rudder in the second to position itself at the Warriors' 47. Seven rushing plays and 5 minutes later, Clayton Whitlock punched the ball into the end zone from 3 yards out. The Mustangs bobbled the snap on the point-after to make the score 13-0, which stood for the rest of the night.

The Warriors made it inside Kennesaw Mountain's 20-yard line on only one of their nine possessions and went three-and-out four times. Rashaud Moore carried the ball 14 times for 69 yards for the Mustangs, while Clayton Whitlock finished with 11 rushes for 64 yards and a touchdown. Eifert threw five times for 66 yards and a touchdown.

Donatello Brown paced North Cobb on the ground with four carries for 39 yards. Even Hester completed seven passes for 146 yards.

"We challenged our team in practice after (last week's) Etowah game (a 21-12 loss) and they came prepared to play," said Mustangs coach Scott Jones, who received a celebratory water shower at the end of the game. "We played all phases of the game well. You can't go in against North Cobb and make a lot of mistakes and expect to win. We went toe-to-toe with them and it was a hard-fought win."

Defensive Player of the Week:

Jacob Carmean representing for Defensive Unit

Offensive Player of the Week: Justain Farmer

Co-Defensive Lineman of the Week: Patrick Shipman

Co-Defensive Lineman of the Week: Jay Finch

Offensive Lineman of the Week: Zack Vrtis

Special Teams Player of the Week: Zach Burgess

Hoyas silence Mustangs' RBs



*Kennesaw Mtn. Mustangs
Kennesaw, Ga.*

VS.



*Harrison Hoyas
Kennesaw, Ga.*

0

21

Published: 09/27/2008

By Greg Oshust Marietta Daily Journal Sports Writer

KENNESAW - Harrison got big efforts from its defense and running back Robbie Godhigh as the Hoyas beat Due West rival Kennesaw Mountain, 21-0, in the latest Battle of the Bell matchup Friday at Cobb Energy/Mustang Stadium.

Harrison (4-0, 3-0) effectively shut down Kennesaw Mountain's potent rushing attack, limiting the Mustangs to 65 yards on the ground.

"Defense wins games and our defense came up huge for us," Harrison coach David Hines said. "We kept up the pressure all night and never let up."

Godhigh led the way on offense again for Harrison, carrying the ball 18 times for 88 yards and all three of the Hoyas' touchdowns - two on carries of 3 and 30 yards and the third on a 28-yard pass from Christian Burnett.

It was the second straight three-touchdown performance for Godhigh, who had three scores in Harrison's 42-14 win last week against South Cobb.

"Playmakers make plays and Robbie definitely made the plays for us," Hines said. "We just wanted to get the ball in his hands. He did an outstanding job."

Godhigh gave all the credit for his performance to the Harrison offensive line.

"Our offensive line did a great job of blocking," Godhigh said. "I couldn't have done it without them."

The first half was mainly a defensive struggle, with both Harrison and Kennesaw Mountain (3-2, 2-2) missing field goal attempts.

Harrison finally got on the scoreboard towards the end of the first half when it went on a 12-play, 80-yard drive that culminated with Burnett's 28-yard touchdown pass to Godhigh and Charlton Gutierrez's extra-point kick with 16.3 seconds left in the half to give the Hoyas a 7-0 lead.

Kennesaw Mountain appeared to be gaining momentum at the beginning of the second half when linebacker Matt Chitwood sacked Burnett for an 8-yard loss to bring fourth-and-4 at the Harrison 38 and then recovered the ball at the Hoyas' 16 after a fumbled snap on a punt attempt.

Harrison's defense quickly eliminated Kennesaw Mountain's big opportunity as defensive lineman Patrick Keller sacked Mustangs quarterback T.J. Eifert for an 11-yard loss and then intercepted an Eifert pass on the next play, taking the ball to the Harrison 40 with 8:46 left in the third quarter.

Harrison took advantage of its break as Robinson broke loose for a 48-yard run to move to ball from the Hoyas' 49 to the Mustangs' 3, setting up Godhigh's 3-yard touchdown run with 5:00 left in the third quarter. Gutierrez kicked the extra point to increase Harrison's lead to 14-0. Harrison put the finishing touches to its win in the fourth quarter when Robinson intercepted a pass from Eifert with 7:01 left in the game. Godhigh's 30-yard touchdown and Gutierrez's extra point with 4:37 left gavethe Hoyas their final margin of victory.

"Harrison stepped up and played a great game," Kennesaw Mountain coach Scott Jones said. "Their defense made some big plays and Robbie Godhigh was outstanding."

Defensive Player of the Week: Alex Urquhart

Offensive Player of the Week: Diamond Stewart

Co-Defensive Lineman of the Week: Steven DeCarlo

Co-Definsive Lineman of the Week: Ryan Kwinter

Offensive Lineman of the Week: TJ Helm

Special Teams Player of the Week: Diamond Stewart

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Mustangs run over Cherokee



*Kennesaw Mtn. Mustangs
Kennesaw, Ga.*

VS.



*Cherokee Warriors
Canton, Ga.*

27

7

Published: 10/11/2008

**By Zack Huffman Marietta Daily Journal Sports Writer
CANTON - Cherokee may have come out with a purpose, but it was no match for Kennesaw Mountain, which triumphed, 27-7, Friday in a Region 5AAAA game at Tommy Baker Field.**

The win came at an opportune time for Kennesaw Mountain. With the first half of the season over, every win is vital if the Mustangs hope to earn a playoff appearance.

Cherokee will have to wait until next week to try again for its first win of the season.

While the Warriors opened the game strong, scoring on the first drive of the game and rushing a total of 136 yards in the first half, the Mustangs were able to get their defense going, holding the Cherokee to just 64 yards in the second half.

"They scored on us quick," said Kennesaw Mountain coach Scott Jones. "They came out here and fought tooth-and-nail."

Jones was impressed with Cherokee's effort.

"(Cherokee coach Brian) Dameron is doing a great job," he said. "I know he's got a bunch of young kids, but they didn't play like young kids."

"Last week, we took a big step backward," Dameron said. "We went forward this week."

Both teams were evenly-matched in the first half, earning six first downs apiece. The Mustangs revved in the second half, holding the Warriors to just two first downs, while earning 11.

"They're a good, physical team and I think they just wore on us in the second half," said Dameron.

Cherokee made an early statement, with a 47-yard touchdown run from Matt Blaylock. Aaron Carrasquillo kicked the extra point to put Cherokee ahead, 7-0.

Although they came out looking for a fight, the Warriors struggled to move the ball after their first successful drive.

Kennesaw Mountain answered in the second quarter.

Clayton Whitlock scored on a 3-yard run, following by a successful kick from Devon Stookey to tie up the game.

The Mustangs then held the Warriors inside their own 20-yard line, reclaiming possession on Cherokee's 37-yard line.

When it appeared that Kennesaw Mountain was not going to get anywhere on the drive on third-and-11, T.J. Eifert connected with Tyreece Johnson for a 38-yard touchdown.

Stookey made the kick and the Mustangs were up, 14-7.

Kennesaw Mountain came out strong in the second half, before the Warriors held them to a fourth down on the 19-yard line, when Stookey came in for a 32-yard field goal. The Mustangs' offense returned to the field with just 39 yards to go.

It took just six plays before Whitlock scored on a 2-yard run. Stookey kicked again as the Mustangs marched on, 24-7.

In the third quarter, Cherokee senior Chrys Johnson, one of the few veteran leaders on the Warriors' young roster, went down with a leg injury and was transported to the hospital.

"It was his first game back since his hamstring pulled against Etowah," Dameron said. "The young man's just had terrible luck."

The Mustangs' offense returned to the field with just 39 yards to go. It took just six plays before Whitlock scored on a 2-yard run. Stookey kicked again as the Mustangs marched on, 24-7.

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"It was his first game back since his hamstring pulled against Etowah," Dameron said. "The young man's just had terrible luck."

Defensive Player of the Week: Patrick Shipman

Offensive Player of the Week: TJ Eifert

Co-Defensive Lineman of the Week: Matt Staub

Co-Defensive Lineman of the Week: Scotty Frieman

Offensive Lineman of the Week: Chris Huff

Special Teams Player of the Week: Devon Stookey

Kennesaw Mountain falls in OT



*Kennesaw Mtn. Mustangs
Kennesaw, Ga.*

VS.



*Woodstock Wolverines
Woodstock, Ga.*

14

17

Published: 10/18/2008

By Steve Ruthsatz

MDJ Sports Correspondent

KENNESAW - In Kennesaw Mountain's annual homecoming game on Friday, the Mustangs fell behind early, recovered to tie the game in the fourth quarter, but wound up losing 17-14 in overtime to

Woodstock in a Region 5AAAAA contest on Scott Jones Field at Cobb Energy/Mustang Stadium.

The game was decided in the first overtime period after the Wolverines (3-4, 3-3) got a 25-yard field goal from Jonathan Wiener. Following Wiener's kick, KMHS (4-3, 3-3) took over and on a third-and-10 play from the 15-yard line, Woodstock's Jonathan Bermudez came around the end, hit the quarterback and forced a fumble with teammate Shawn Haley recovering the ball to seal the win.

"We always work on turnover drills where when the quarterback lifts his arm up, we come by and swat it down for a fumble, so that's what I did and it turned out good," Bermudez said.

"Offensively, I thought we controlled things early in the ball game," Wolverines head coach Mike O'Brien said. "But then they turned it around on us and they started controlling the ball game. Our kids hung in there, though, and to go into overtime and win it like we did is big."

On the opening drive of the game, Woodstock drove 74 yards on 12 plays for a touchdown. Taylor Trotter found Evan Wilson in the end zone with 4-yard pass, and the Wolverines led 7-0 with 6:24 remaining in the first quarter.

An interception and 22-yard return by the guests' Tyler Knighton gave Woodstock the ball back at the Kennesaw Mountain 3-yard line, and from there sophomore Tanner Skogen scored on a 1-yard run, giving the Wolverines a 14-0 advantage with 2:42 left in the first period.

Three punts followed before Mustangs' sophomore Diamond Stewart halted a Woodstock drive with an interception.

More punts followed to start the second half before Woodstock fumbled deep in its own territory with the Mustangs' Patrick Shipman pouncing on the ball at the Wolverines' 3-yard line. Kennesaw Mountain could not capitalize, however, and missed a 24-yard field goal attempt at the 1:08 mark of the third quarter.

Woodstock was forced to punt on its next possession and Kennesaw Mountain responded with a seven-play, 26-yard scoring drive. Rashaud Moore's 1-yard TD burst and Quinton Townsend's first of two made extra-points made the score 14-7 with 7:48 to go in the fourth period.

The Mustangs forced another punt, and again were able to move the ball. It took Kennesaw Mountain five plays to cover 61 yards with Devon Jones reaching the end zone on a 12-yard run, tying the contest at 14-14 with 2:34 left in regulation.

A Kennesaw Mountain interception by Cole Rudder ended the Wolverines' ensuing drive, but the Mustangs had to punt, and the game went into overtime.

Mustangs fall at East Paulding



*Kennesaw Mtn. Mustangs
Kennesaw, Ga.*

VS.



*East Paulding Raiders
Dallas, Ga.*

7

27

Published: 10/25/2008

By Greg Oshust

Marietta Daily Journal Sports Writer

DALLAS - East Paulding scored all 27 of its points in the first half as the Raiders defeated Kennesaw Mountain 27-7 in a Region 5AAAAA game on Friday.

Kennesaw Mountain (4-4, 3-4) was unable to bounce back from East Paulding's early onslaught, with the Raiders scoring a touchdown in the first quarter and then three more touchdowns in the second.

The Mustangs settled down in the second half, however, and shut out East Paulding, while scoring a touchdown of their own on a 14-yard pass from T.J. Eifert to Christian Lewis in the third quarter.

East Paulding dominated Kennesaw Mountain on the offensive side of the football, with the Raiders outgaining the Mustangs 288-92 in total yardage.

Despite the loss, Kennesaw Mountain coach Scott Jones was proud of his team's effort.

"The kids played hard and I'm very, very proud of them," Jones said. "We fell behind early, but the kids never gave up and they stepped up in the second half."

The loss dropped Kennesaw Mountain a notch in the battle for the fourth and final state playoff spot in Region 5AAAAA, with the Mustangs now in a fifth-place tie with North Cobb and a game behind fourth-place teams McEachern and Woodstock.

East Paulding (7-1, 6-1), meanwhile, is now in a three-way tie for first place in 5AAAAA with Harrison and Etowah.

Running back Ayman Hassan and quarterback Idris Anderson led the way for East Paulding, with Hassan rushing for 119 yards on 17 carries and Anderson completing 6 of 10 passes for 110 yards and two touchdowns.

Hassan and Jahron Brown were the key players in East Paulding's first scoring drive, with Hassan running 32 yards to move the ball from the Kennesaw Mountain 48 to the Mustangs' 16 and Brown scoring on a 2-yard run five plays later with 1:38 remaining in the first quarter giving the Raiders a 7-0 lead.

After Kennesaw Mountain went three-and-out on the next offensive series, East Paulding came back with a 12-play, 57-yard drive that culminated in Anderson's 5-yard touchdown run with 7:04 remaining in the first half to give the Raiders a 14-0 advantage.

East Paulding didn't waste any time adding to its lead on its next offensive series as Blake Owensby took a slant pass from Anderson and stormed down the field 67 yards for a touchdown with 5:21 left in the first half to increase the Raiders' advantage to 20-0 after Cummins missed the extra-point attempt.

East Paulding got a big opportunity when Eifert fumbled the ball on a quarterback sack and Reace Hughes recovered the ball for the Raiders on the Kennesaw Mountain 6 with 4:03 left in the first half.

The Raiders quickly took advantage of their good fortune, as Anderson threw a 6-yard touchdown pass to Ed Cazanave on the first play and Cummins made the extra point with 4:03 left in the half for a 27-0 lead that East Paulding would take into the locker room at halftime.

Kennesaw Mountain got a break late in the third quarter when the Mustangs took advantage of a short punt by East Paulding to start their series on the Raiders' 40.

Five plays later, KMHS scored on Eifert's 14-yard pass to Lewis and then got an extra-point from Devon Stookey to help the Mustangs cut the East Paulding lead to 27-7.

Jones and his Kennesaw Mountain squad are now looking ahead to a big showdown at home against McEachern that could decide the Mustangs' state playoff fate.

"We have a big game next Friday and we're going to get to work and get ready for that one," Jones said.

FATEFUL FAKEOUT



*Kennesaw Mtn. Mustangs
Kennesaw, Ga.*

VS.



*McEachern Indians
Powder Springs, Ga.*

30

27

Published: 11/01/2008

By Carlton D. White cwhite@mdjonline.com

KENNESAW - On Halloween night, Kennesaw Mountain received the treat, while McEachern got the trick.

Mustangs quarterback T.J. Eifert faked a handoff left to running back Diamond Stewart and ran a 3-yard bootleg to the right for the go-ahead touchdown in overtime, giving Kennesaw Mountain a 30-27 Region 5AAAAA victory on senior night at Cobb Energy/Mustang Stadium.

The game went into overtime tied 24-24 after Eifert capped a nine-play, 23-yard drive with a 1-yard touchdown plunge, followed by

Devon Stookey's successful point-after, with 32.7 seconds left. Kennesaw Mountain's Cole Rudder set up the game-tying score after blocking a punt on fourth-and-14 with 4:24 left, giving the Mustangs first-and-10 at the Indians' 23. Diamond Stewart's 6-yard rush on fourth-and-1 also was key.

McEachern's final drive in regulation ended with an incomplete pass and the Indians (4-5, 4-4) took possession of the ball first in the extra session.

McEachern had to settle for a 31-yard field goal from Troy Postell after Terrell Mitchell caught Daniel King's pass out-of-bounds in the end zone on third-and-9.

The Mustangs (5-4, 4-4) capitalized on their overtime possession with Eifert's 12-yard pass to Justin Farmer - his only completion of the game - on third-and-10, which resulted in a first down at the 3-yard line. On the very next play, Eifert, who also ran seven times for 23 yards and two touchdowns, cashed in with the winning score, setting off an emotional celebration.

"I was supposed to hand the ball off to Diamond, but I saw (McEachern) cheating into the inside on the right" Eifert said. "So, I just read it and took off."

Stewart had been a catalyst for McEachern all night, rushing 29 times for 236 yards, including a 66-yard score in the second quarter that tied the game, 10-10.

"We came into this game knowing it was going to either make us or break us," Stewart said. "Our goal is to get to the playoffs and this win helped out our chances a lot."

With one game remaining in the regular season, Woodstock, Kennesaw Mountain and McEachern could all finish tied with identical 5-4 region records.

"I wanted the seniors to win this game more than anything," Kennesaw Mountain coach Scott Jones said. "They've put a lot of sweat equity into this program and I'm really proud of them."

The Mustangs gained 343 yards on the ground behind a stout offensive line and tough running from Stewart, Eifert, Farmer and Clayton Whitlock.

Both teams scored their first points of the game off turnovers. King, who finished 4-for-13 for 88 yards with a touchdown and an interception while rushing 11 times for 98 yards, fumbled on third

down on the team's first possession and Stookey nailed a 36-yard field goal with 7:25 left for a 3-0 lead. On the Mustangs' next possession, they drove 60 yards to the Indians' 14, but fumbled the ball away. McEachern went 86 yards on nine plays, capped by Quenten Martin's 17-yard touchdown run to put the Indians ahead, 7-3.

Kennesaw Mountain turned the ball over again on its next drive and Postell kicked a 46-yard field goal with 3:42 left in the second quarter for a 10-3 Mustangs advantage. Stewart tied the

game in a hurry with his 66-yard run, but Rajaan Bennett's fumble on McEachern's first play of the ensuing possession led to a four-play, 17-yard score on Whitlock's 2-yard run, which put the Indians up 17-10 with 1:29 left in the second. McEachern responded with King, who led the Indians on a seven-play, 71-yard drive capped by a 24-yard pass to Bennett to tie the game, 17-17, heading into halftime.

McEachern took a 24-17 lead less than a minute into the fourth when Bennett, who rushed 18 times for 148 yards and a touchdown, drove left for a 10-yard score. The drive was set up after McEachern blocked a 23-yard field goal attempt from Stookey.

The Indians stopped the Mustangs on fourth-and-1 from the Mustangs 24 midway through the fourth, but fell victim to Rudder's blocked punt.

Defensive Player of the Week: Alex Urquhart
Offensive Player of the Week: Diamond Stewart
Co-Offensive Player of the Week: Justin Farmer
Co- Offensive Player of the Week: TJ Eifert
Defensive Lineman of the Week: Zack Vrtis
Offensive Lineman of the Week: TJ Helm
Special Teams Player of the Week: Cole Rudder

Mustangs win, but Woodstock upset keeps them from playoffs again



*Kennesaw Mtn. Mustangs
Kennesaw, Ga.*

VS.



*Marietta Blue Devils
Marietta, Ga.*

28

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By Ryan Peck Marietta Daily Journal Sports Writer

MARIETTA - Kennesaw Mountain knew it simply had to handle its business before any scoreboard-watching could take place, and that is exactly what the Mustangs did on Friday night. Needing a win and some help to qualify for the state playoffs, Kennesaw Mountain ran at will on Marietta rolling up 371 yards on the ground and routed the Blue Devils, 28-0, to finish the season on a high note. Following the statement victory, all the winners could do was wait. The Mustangs' joy would eventually turn to disappointment.

Kennesaw Mountain (6-4 overall; 5-4 5AAAAA) needed East Paulding to defeat Woodstock in order for the Mustangs to qualify for the state playoffs. A late 16-13 fourth quarter lead evaporated for the Raiders, as visiting Woodstock rallied for two late scores and clinched the fourth and final region playoff spot with a 27-16 triumph in Dallas.

"Obviously the kids and coaches are very disappointed, but we did what we needed to do tonight," said Mustangs' coach Scott Jones. "Congrats to Woodstock. Evidently they were on a mission tonight. Our kids fought hard... we're very proud of them. We end our season on a high note, and that's pretty good, too."

Kennesaw Mountain had all the look of a team motivated by the prospect of making the first postseason trip in school history.

Following a first half in which it statistically dominated but led just 7-0, the Mustangs poured it on in the second half behind the strong running of senior Clayton Whitlock. Whitlock accounted for all three second-half touchdowns for the visitors, and Kennesaw Mountain ran the ball with authority to the tune of 371 yards on the ground.

"Our line stepped it up in the second half," said Whitlock, who paced the Mustangs' rushing attack with 162 yards on 21 carries. "We were doing our job in the first half, we just couldn't finish the drill. Finally they decided that we weren't getting stopped anymore and we just drove the ball down the field."

Kennesaw Mountain set the tone immediately in the second half. After the defense forced a Marietta (3-7; 2-7) punt to open the half, the Mustangs needed just three plays and 54 seconds to march 63 yards for a touchdown.

Sophomore Diamond Stewart and Whitlock carried for back-to-back gains of 35 and 25 yards. Whitlock then took a counter handoff from quarterback T.J. Eifert and barreled in from three yards out with 8:23 showing on the third quarter clock.

Stewart added 122 yards on 18 carries for the Mustangs.

Kennesaw Mountain probably would have had more points in the first half, but Eifert was stripped of the ball and lost a fumble on third down from the Marietta 15 ending the game's opening drive.

The Mustangs, however, would return the favor. They got on the board first when Marietta's Greg Franklin fumbled on a toss sweep deep in Blue Devils' territory in the second quarter.

The ball was recovered by Kennesaw Mountain's Zack Vrtis in the end zone for a touchdown, with 7:21 remaining in the half.

It was a bittersweet night for 31 Mustang seniors playing their final prep game.

game in a hurry with his 66-yard run, but Rajaan Bennett's fumble on McEachern's first play of the ensuing possession led to a four-play, 17-yard score on Whitlock's 2-yard run, which put the Indians up 17-10 with 1:29 left in the second. McEachern responded with King, who led the Indians on a seven-play, 71-yard drive capped by a 24-yard pass to Bennett to tie the game, 17-17, heading into halftime.

McEachern took a 24-17 lead less than a minute into the fourth when Bennett, who rushed 18 times for 148 yards and a touchdown, drove left for a 10-yard score. The drive was set up after McEachern blocked a 23-yard field goal attempt from Stookey.

The Indians stopped the Mustangs on fourth-and-1 from the Mustangs 24 midway through the fourth, but fell victim to Rudder's blocked punt.