

Football team wins, rests up for playoff run

BY MATTHEW SHERMAN

The West Linn Tidings, Nov 3, 2011

West Linn put the finishing touches on another stellar regular season and avoided a power rankings disaster last week, enduring some nasty weather conditions along the way in a 38-17 win over Clackamas.

The Cavaliers, who have won just one game this year and haven't beaten a Three Rivers League opponent since Milwaukie and Putnam dropped to 5A, gave the Lions a fight, cutting the lead to seven points in the third quarter before the Lions put things away.

The conditions certainly took their toll on West Linn as the team had six fumbles, two of which were lost, and three total turnovers.

The Lions, as has been their standing operating procedure of late, also only attempted six passes, completing just one of them.

But West Linn got big plays from its running game and picked up more than 300 yards on the ground to pick up the win.

The Lions started the evening well, scoring on their opening drive when Rhett Olmstead broke through the line for a 71-yard touchdown run.

Just one minute later, West Linn capitalized on a Clackamas miscue and Mason Finnerty punched the ball in from one-yard out and the Lions were cruising, up 14-0 just five minutes into the game.

Clackamas would put together a drive late in the opening quarter and score on a one-yard run to cut the lead in half but the Lions would answer with a solid drive of their own.

West Linn moved the ball on the ground into the red zone and would settle for a 34-yard field goal attempt from Ryan Harman.

With the wind in his face, Harman made perhaps his most difficult kick of the year and put West Linn up 17-7.

On the Lions' next possession, the team got another big play when the offensive line opened a big hole for Finnerty who took the ball 60 yards for another score.

Clackamas would pick up a modicum of momentum heading into the locker room with a 36-yard field goal to make it 24-10.

The Cavaliers were able to make things interesting in the second half. Clackamas scored on a 51-yard run by Oliver Farnes to make it a one-possession game.

Farnes was the Cavaliers' primary weapon on offense as he racked up 161 yards on 32 carries. Clackamas was also more adventurous in the passing game, completing 17 of 31 attempts but those 17 attempts went for just 103 yards as the Lions did a nice job not giving up the big play.

Meanwhile, West Linn continued to stick with what worked and both Finnerty and Olmstead ran for more than 100 yards in the game.

Early in the fourth quarter Finnerty found another gap, breaking a 34-yard touchdown run to nearly put the game on ice for the Lions.

Finnerty would tack on one more touchdown with 3:36 to play in the game to cap the scoring.

With the victory, the Lions stayed in the top four in the OSAA's power rankings, giving them a No. 1 seed in the upcoming state tournament.

West Linn won't know who its first round opponent will be until after this Friday's play-in games are completed but the team will host a game the following week.

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The Lions will now enjoy a bye week, giving the team a chance to recover from a solid regular season and prepare for what they hope is a long playoff run.