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Deborah Cannon AMERICAN-STATESMAN

(enlarge photo)

Pflugerville's Sammy Flowers stiff arms Akins' Ben Bejil as the Panthers showcased their running depth at Burger Center. The Panthers, heating up as the season wears on, scored a 42-10 win over the Eagles. Pflugerville is 5-3 overall and 3-2 in District 25-5A.

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High school football roundup: Class 5A, 4A

Saturday, October 24, 2009

ROUND ROCK — With its playoff chances in serious need of a boost, Westwood turned to its second offensive option to notch its most important win.

Quarterback Ben Johnson helped the Warriors build a big lead in a relatively easy 31-8 win over the McNeil Mavericks. The win pushes Westwood to 5-3 and, more importantly, 3-2 in District 16-5A, which puts the Warriors in excellent shape to make the postseason. It also sets up a huge matchup with surging Cedar Park next week.

"We put ourselves in the driver's seat, at least," Westwood coach Anthony Wood said. "There's still work we need to do."

The Warriors are heading in the right direction, though.

It took a quarter to get its offense started, but once it did, Westwood didn't look back. While McNeil (2-6, 2-3) keyed on star running back Princeton Collins, Johnson took care of business himself. Back-to-back runs of 25 and 21 yards put the Warriors on the 2 yard line. Johnson pushed the ball over two plays later for the first touchdown of the game and a 10-0 lead with 6:18 left in the first half.

Johnson increased that to a comfortable 17-0 lead at halftime with his arm. He hit Forster Zeitz for a 24-yard gain to get deep in McNeil territory and then had a 17-yard run to get inside the 20. He hit Zeitz from nine yards out for the score with only 36 seconds left in the half in which Johnson ran for 116 yards and threw for 40 more.

McNeil's offense consistently left its defense in bad situations. Eventually it wore down, and Collins took over. He ran through two tacklers and outran two defensive backs down the sideline for a 67-yard touchdown with 6:57 left in the third to push the lead to 24-0. Johnson added a 12-yard scoring run in the fourth to close out the Westwood scoring.

Johnson ended the night with 189 yards of total offense, 125 on the ground. Collins had a big second half to finish with 182 yards on only 16 carries.

— Mark Swanson

Round Rock 29, Vista Ridge 23: The Dragons (3-5, 1-4 District 16-5A) picked up their first district victory, a homecoming decision over the Rangers (1-7, 1-4). Three second-half touchdowns lifted Round Rock from a seven-point halftime deficit, and the Dragons defense made an interception and held on downs twice on the Rangers' final three possessions to secure the win.

James McKinney scored the first of two rushing touchdowns for Round Rock on its first possession, a 13-yarder to cap a short drive after a punt snap sailed over Vista Ridge's Blake Estes' head, giving the Dragons the ball at the Rangers 36.

The teams went back and forth for the rest of the night. Vista Ridge led 14-7 at the half, but Round Rock regained the momentum in the third quarter, thanks largely to homecoming king Ryan Buscha. The senior receiver and defensive back ran the kickoff 65 yards to the Vista Ridge 10, and two plays later Jordan Wells rushed in from 9 yards out to tie it. On the Dragons' next possession, Buscha fell on a Round Rock fumble at midfield to preserve possession.

After the Dragons took a 21-14 lead, Calvin Thompson tore off a 50-yard touchdown run to tie it again for the Rangers. Round Rock gave Vista Ridge a 23-21 lead late in the third when a punt snap sailed out of the end zone for a safety.

Matt Hightower spotted a wide-open Buscha on a slant pass for a 59-yard

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touchdown to open the fourth quarter. McKinney ran in for two points on a direct snap for the game's final points.

— Bob Brinkman

Leander 52, Georgetown 19: The Lions (6-2, 4-1 District 16-5A) unleashed their punishing ground game, steamrolling to 423 yards on 41 carries, in a blowout of the Eagles (0-8, 0-5).

Silvio Diaz got Leander started by blocking a punt and recovering it for a touchdown. Jon Henderson had scoring runs of 10, 14 and 66 yards on his way to 123 yards on 7 carries for the Lions, who led 45-6 at the half. Taylor Ratcliff had 101 yards in 9 carries.

Pflugerville 42, Akins 10: Depth at running back and the maturation of a young defense have played a part in the Panthers' midseason turnaround. But more than anything, perseverance has saved their season.

With a 32-point rout of Akins at Burger Stadium, Pflugerville (5-3, 3-2) won its third straight after a 0-2 start in District 25-5A. The Panthers continue to position themselves for a postseason berth without top tailback Storm Woods, who injured his knee against Round Rock in week 3.

Desmond Smith accounted for 118 total yards and two scores, and Sammy Flowers rushed for 110 yards and a touchdown. But the Pflugerville offense was hardly one-dimensional. An 80-yard touchdown pass from Alex Dean to Drew Travis on the game's first play from scrimmage set the tone for the Panthers' 35-point first half.

Pflugerville, in fact, scored on the game's first two plays from scrimmage. On Akins' first offensive play, defensive lineman Savon Thomas scooped up a fumble and returned it 42 yards.

The Panthers led 14-0 after 40 seconds and 21-0 less than 4 minutes into the game. The Eagles (2-5, 1-4) turned the ball over four times in the first half, and interceptions by Andre Taylor and Dante Jackson both led to Pflugerville touchdowns.

Akins sophomore D'Auuhndre Raindle rushed for a game-high 140 yards and a touchdown on 16 carries.

— David Robb

Westlake 38, Anderson 10: It took Westlake sophomore Brice Dolezal 13 seconds to return the second-half kickoff for a touchdown and set the tone for a dominant third quarter by the Chaps. Westlake (6-2, 4-1 District 25-5A) scored three touchdowns in the third quarter to drill Anderson (4-4, 1-4) at House Park.

"That was just what the doctor ordered," Westlake coach Darren Allman said about Dolezal's kick return. "We were a little sluggish in that first half, but we got things rolling."

A pilfering Westlake secondary gave the team plenty of push by picking off three passes from Trojan quarterback Sam Wehmeyer in the third quarter, including two by Markham Sayers.

Chap defensive back Sean Potter added another interception on the first play of the fourth quarter.

"We talked about the opportunities that we would have on defense," Allman said. "When they throw the ball, they take their shots. Our secondary has played well all season."

Westlake quarterback Tanner Price had a 27-yard touchdown run in the third period and ended the game with 158 yards through the air and 69 yards rushing. Van Gramann added a 45-yard rumble up the middle as Westlake scored a season-high in points.

Wehmeyer had a good game on the ground for the Trojans with 186 yards rushing, including a 56-yard scoring run in the fourth period.

Westlake opened the scoring with a deliberate drive that covered 80 yards in 16 plays and chewed up 6:36. Lewis Guilbeau punctuated the possession by taking a direct snap and spinning off a hit by Anderson linebacker Connor Sheehan for a 2-yard touchdown run on the first play of the second quarter.

Westlake's next score came a bit quicker. After Price moved the Chaps into Anderson territory with an 18-yard run and an 8-yard pass to Jason Prideaux, he found Miles Berger running wide open down the middle of the field for a 43-yard touchdown pass.

Anderson's best chance at a touchdown came late in the first half when Wehmeyer connected with a leaping Cameron Gravelle for a 36-yard gain that placed the Trojans at the Westlake 6. The Chaps held, however, and Anderson had to settle for a 22-yard field goal by Ryan DeNucci that cut Westlake's lead to 14-3 at halftime.

— Thomas Jones

Bowie 27, Connally 7: Down 20-0 and its offense struggling to stay on the field, Connally was in need of motivation. The Cougar Stadium PA announcer thought he could provide it as the team came onto the field after halftime by reciting the list of school records Steven Sheffield, now a quarterback at Texas Tech, broke during his career as a Cougar.

The monologue only served as a reminder: Sheffield isn't running the offense anymore.

Connally (2-6, 1-4 District 25-5A) fell to Bowie (5-3, 2-3) after a first half that

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featured more Cougar penalty yards (58) than total offense (55).

Bowie's Brylen Sorrells capped off a four-play, 66-yard drive on the first possession of the game with a 1-yard touchdown run that put the Bulldogs in control.

An interception killed Connally's ensuing drive and a 16-yard sack after a botched snap stalled the next one. Bowie finished the quarter with an 11-yard touchdown pass to Deandre Perry and hit the senior again for a 14-yard touchdown just before halftime. Perry finished the game with 83 yards on six receptions.

Connally finally managed a productive drive late in the third quarter. The Cougars started at the 22 and strung together

five first downs, including a fourth-down conversion, to put the ball in the red zone. But three consecutive plays were stuffed by the Bowie defense, and Connally's second fourth-down conversion of the drive was intercepted in the end zone by Stefan McKinney, his second pick of the game.

Bowie marched down the field on the following drive, finishing with a 15-yard touchdown run from Sheldon Catley that kept the Bulldogs' playoff hopes alive.

— Colby White

LBJ 29, Travis 21: A stout defense and an opportunistic offense thrust the Jaguars (4-3, 3-1) in the thick of the District 26-4 title race as they thwarted the Rebels (6-3, 3-1) at Nelson Field. LBJ pulled into a second-place tie with Travis behind McCallum's 3-0. The Rebels and Knights clash next week.

The Jaguars put tremendous pressure on Travis quarterback Adam Solis, who took over from starter Jonathan Sterling early in the game, limiting him to 69 passing yards on 6-of-9 completions while holding the Rebels rushing attack to 162 yards on 33 attempts.

Solis managed to get Travis to halftime leading 14-9 on two touchdown runs of 14 and 29 yards. LBJ scored a safety in the first quarter, and Steve Cannon returned a kickoff 85 yards for a TD.

In the third quarter, LBJ took the lead for good when Cameron Brown capped a 16-play, 90-yard drive with a 1-yard plunge.

The Jaguars added to their lead on a flea flicker when Daryl Roberts found Elijah Cash in the end zone on a 22-yard pass play.

Brown increased the lead to 29-14 in the fourth period when he exploded on a 45-yard touchdown run with a little over six minutes to go.

Travis finished the scoring when Solis hit DeGregory Thomas with a 21-yard pass play in the final minute.

The Jaguars rushed 173 yards and passed for 75.

— John Boyce

Killeen 35, Hutto 18: Michael Cummings passed for two touchdowns and returned a kickoff 87 yards for a fourth-quarter score as the Kangeroos (6-2, 3-1 District 25-4A) beat the Hippos (5-4, 2-3). Killeen took advantage of three Hutto turnovers, and the visiting Roos scored twice in 11 seconds in the second quarter.

Hutto managed a pair of first-half field goals by Michael Cottingham and scored in the second quarter on a 3-yard run by Alondre Thorn. Darrin Allen's fourth-quarter run rounded out the Hippo scoring.

Hendrickson 49, Dripping Springs 0: Kenny Williams ran wild for three touchdowns — from 35, 13 and 61 yards — as the Hawks (5-2, 3-1 District 25-4A) hammered the Tigers (2-7, 0-5). Williams rushed for 200 yards on just 8 carries, 25 yards per pop. Hendrickson ran for 348 yards and led 43-0 at halftime before calling off the dogs.

Elgin 32, Lockhart 8: Sam Works exploded for 163 rushing yards, including scoring runs of 10, 1 and 75 yards to lead Elgin (2-6, 1-2) past visiting Lockhart (3-5, 0-3) in District 17-4A action.

Del Valle 34, Lehman 28: Jozef Cortez ended an intense, tightly fought contest by scoring on a 10-yard run in the second overtime as the Cardinals (7-1, 3-0 District 17-4A) nipped the Lobos (5-3, 1-2).

Lehman had tied the game at 28 in the third quarter on a razzle-dazzle 27-yard pass from John Martell to Matthew Anguiano. Lehman outgained Del Valle 398 to 246, and Matt Riojas had 121 yards receiving on 9 catches. But Del Valle found a way, with Aaron Chisholm running for 79 yards and a touchdown.

Hays 49, Manor 21: The Rebels (3-5, 3-0) started out slowly but finally gathered enough steam to roll past the visiting Mustangs (1-6, 1-3). The win keeps Hays undefeated in 17-4A and sets up a matchup at Del Valle next Friday night that will likely decide the district title.

Manor's LaDarrien Williams returned a punt 74 yards for a touchdown to trim Hays' lead 21-13 late in the second quarter, but quarterback Sam Breyfogle led the Rebels right back before halftime.

Breyfogle completed a 30-yard pass to Anthony Garza and a 17-yard strike to Kaimen Carpenter to set up a 10-yard scoring pass to Torrance Smith, and Hays led 28-13 at the break.

It was all Hays in the second half, as Trace Gandy's 4-yard run on fourth-and-2 set up Garza's 1-yard TD plunge, his third score of the game.

After Alan Marin recovered a fumble by Manor receiver LaDarrien Williams, Smith used his blazing speed to break free for a 74-yard TD run.

— Jason Gordon

Belton 47, Killeen Ellison 20: The Tigers (7-1, 4-1 District 12-5A) forced five turnovers by the Eagles (4-5, 1-4) and held them without a pass completion. Anthony Huber paced Belton with 86 yards on 14 carries. Ellison backs David Cobb had 94 yards on 17 carries and Devon Hocutt had 60 yards on 10 trips.

Schertz Clemens 28, San Marcos 21: Quarterback Ryan Schweers had a 9-yard fourth-quarter scoring run to bring the Rattlers within a score, but they couldn't get over the hump against Clemens.

Alamo Heights 31, N.B. Canyon 28: The Cougars passed for 316 yards, but the Mules kicked a 26-yard field goal late to win the game.

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