

Mustangs come from behind to beat Vols, I-65 battle this week

Written by News Desk

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Mustangs QB Jaryus Wilson left the JD game with a shoulder injury. His status for this week against Prattville is uncertain.

File photo

By ART PARKER

Legendary Alabama football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant often said that he "first wanted a good kicking game, then good defense and then he would figure out how to score." Today, the kicking game is called special teams, even though they are the same today as it was decades ago. And if one doesn't believe Coach Bryant was right, just ask Stanhope Elmore (SEHS) coach Jeff Foshee. "There's truth in that, about the kicking game and special teams. Kicking game makes things happen and good things happened to us Friday night because of what our special teams did," Foshee said.

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The Mustangs won a hard fought decision against the winless Jeff Davis Volunteers last week, 34-21, and the special teams deserve a great deal of the credit.

The Mustangs seemed to be playing from behind for the first 3 quarters. Things went in the wrong direction on the Mustangs' second offensive play of the game when starting quarterback Jayrus Wilson injured his shoulder and was removed from the game. He did not return. Running back B.J. Smith put the offense on his shoulders and began his greatest game with a touchdown run from 7 yards in the first quarter to tie the game at 7-7. Reserve quarterback Bishop Frazier brought the Mustangs back to tie the game at 14-14 with a 4 yard run just before halftime.

Behind in the third quarter, Smith and Frazier combined for the scoring effort on a 20 yard pass play to tie the game again, this time at 21-21.

And then the special teams elevated their play.

Although it did not lead to a score, Bra Moss blocked a Vols punt. And then lightning struck again when a few minutes later Martel Watson blocked a Vols punt inside the Vols 10 yard line. The effort set up another Smith touchdown. The 6 yard run put the Mustangs ahead on the scoreboard 27-21.

But the Mustangs special units had another trick up their sleeve. On a fourth down and 8 yards to go, Cortez Williams ran a fake punt for a first down to keep a SEHS drive alive. The trick play led to another Smith touchdown as the Mustangs work horse hit the end zone with a 3-yard run with 5 minutes left in the game. The score was the icing on the cake the Mustangs needed. "Jeff Davis came here to play. They may not have a win but they played like a winning football team and they played us tough," Foshee said. "They made us play hard for all four quarters and hopefully we can build on that."

Smith ended the game with 32 carries and 146 yards.

SEHS is now 3-2 on the season and 1-2 in the region. Next week the Mustangs will cross I-65

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for the biggest regular season game of the season. SEHS and Prattville will face off at Stanley Jensen Stadium at 7:00 pm Friday night. Prattville is 2-2 on the season and all of its games have been region events.

Despite losing its first two games, Prattville will be the toughest test for SEHS thus far. It will also be the most critical game of the season since the Mustangs have a losing record in the region going into the game. A loss to Prattville will greatly diminish the Mustangs post season hopes, but a win will put them in playoff contention. Prattville will certainly remember last year's battle when the Mustangs came from behind to win 24-21, which will surely provide an extra incentive for the Lions to give a top effort.

"It's always a big game. Even before we were in 6A and in the same region," Foshee said of the rivalry. "I think they are a much improved team from last year and they have quite a few players returning. The two games they lost were to very good teams. I know we will need to play our very best. I expect Prattville to be as tough as they always are."

As of Monday the status of Wilson was uncertain. "We probably will not know about Jaryus until late in the week," Foshee said.