

Mustangs falter late, playoff chances are slim

Written by News Desk

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Right: Running back B.J. Smith put the Mustangs on the board first with a first quarter TD.

By [ART PARKER](#)

It was a good effort, at least for a while. But when the second half rolled around Stanhope Elmore's defense caved in on three successive drives to Spain Park's outstanding running game and the Mustangs were dumped by the Jaguars 34-13. The loss leaves the Mustangs at 2-4 in the region and the chances of making the playoffs are slim.

B.J. Smith put the Mustangs on the scoreboard first near the end of the first quarter with a 3 yard run and SEHS held a 6-0 lead after missing the extra point. Almost the entire balance of the first half was a defensive struggle. A major turning point came near the end of the half when a Mustangs penalty kept the ball in the hands of Spain Park. Instead of going into the locker room at intermission with a lead, the Mustangs trailed after the Jaguars found the end zone with only 12 seconds remaining in the first half.

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The let down paved the way for Spain Park to come out smoking in the second half. The Jaguars extended their lead to 20-6 before the Mustangs could mount a counter attack. Late in the third quarter Mustangs' quarterback Jaryus Wilson shook free for an 80 yard run and a touchdown to narrow the gap to 20-13.

But the fourth quarter was all Spain Park. A touchdown in the middle of the fourth quarter by the Jaguars' offense and a fumble returned for another score about a minute later sealed the Mustangs fate at 34-13. "It was like the Prattville game. We played well and were neck and neck with our opponent, but just before the fourth quarter things went in the wrong direction," Mustangs head coach Jeff Foshee said. "We played very well in the first half. Things changed in the second half."

Spain Park's running game was the difference. Running back Otis Harris collected 229 yards on 33 carries as the Jaguars offensive line eventually wore down the Mustangs defense. "They are the best team in the region and they are solid all the way around. Our guys hung in there as long as they could but their running game just became too much for us," Foshee.

Spain Park remains undefeated and is the region champion after Friday's game. Stanhope Elmore is 4-4 overall, and will need to defeat Wetumpka this week to even have an outside chance at the post season. The game will be played in Wetumpka. "We have to win and we need some others to lose. It's that simple. The Wetumpka game is always a big game and I know they will play their best against us. They have an athletic bunch over there and I expect them to run the ball well," Foshee said.

File photo