

Edgewood eyes playoffs after undefeated season

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He's back. Edgewood's Taylor Hawthorne makes his first appearance in five games after a knee injury.

Photo: Anita Barnes

By ART PARKER

Edgewood completed its regular season with a 57-0 victory over Lyman Ward Academy Friday night. Many of Edgewood's regular starters got a rest and rode the bench in the game. After a ton of injuries this season the Wildcats' coaching staff decided to rest all the players they could. The younger players that got to play not only gained valuable experience but they did a very good job.

But one player that did not sit the bench, at least for one quarter, was quarterback Taylor Hawthorne. The tall senior was prepared to carry a heavy burden this season, not only as the signal caller, but as one of the few seniors on the team. An injury midway in the season placed Hawthorne in crutches and the first word heard was "finished." But after a few days and another medical review it was determined that Hawthorne's knee injury was not as serious as first thought. With the good news Hawthorne vowed to be back before the playoffs and he kept his word by starting at quarterback Friday night. "I told him that he would play about a quarter and that was it. He was a little rusty but he did fine," Edgewood coach Bobby Carr said. Hawthorne

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tossed 4 touchdown passes during his brief outing. "He will be ready. We got what we needed for him and that was a game time workout," Carr said.

Sophomore Christian Smith relieved Hawthorne and made sure the Wildcats kept rolling. The young quarterback threw for one touchdown and ran for another. Hunter Woodruff scored his first career touchdown in the game.

With Hawthorne's return running back Josh Crawford will return to his regular duties. Crawford, who was converted to quarterback when Hawthorne was injured, did a great job for the Wildcats and proved his versatility. In four and a half games Crawford accounted for 2,500 total yards and 35 touchdowns. "Not a bad deputy when your star quarterback goes out," Carr said. "He did everything for the team we could possibly hope for and much more."

The Wildcats are 11-0 and have won 42 games in a row. As Carr explains it, all of the records now go out the window. "I told them after the game that everyone is now 0-0. It is the second season and everyone starts out with a clean slate. We are not interested in the streak anymore because if we reach our top goal we will break the record. That's just something that will take care of itself," Carr said. "Our entire mission is to win the next three ball games. And, when you win one game the next gets tougher. It's a different world and a different view in the playoffs. It has to be."

The record for consecutive victories in the AISA is 44 games held by Pickens Academy.

The Wildcats have the home field advantage the first two weeks of the playoffs and if they get past their first two foes they will play for the AISA Class AA State Championship at Troy University on November 22.

This week the Wildcats will host South Choctaw Academy. The Rebels are 6-4 and have a past history of being difficult for Edgewood to handle. They will run a Wing-T offense. "Their record does not indicate how good they are. They have given us fits in the past. I'm sure we will see things we will not see in game film," Carr stated.

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The winner of the Edgewood-So. Choctaw game will play the winner of the Wilcox Academy-Coosa Valley game on November 15.