

## Edgewood survives a great football battle, wins another state title

Written by News Desk

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**Edgewood's Taylor Hawthorne quarterback became a wide receiver early in the first quarter. Hawthorne leaped high to catch a pass from Josh Crawford to score the Wildcats first down.**

**Photo: Art Parker**

By [ART PARKER](#)

It was like a heavyweight fight, where both boxers deliver knockout blows, but neither one will yield and both return to their feet. The battle doesn't stop until the last possible moment and one prevails over the other. That was the case last Friday afternoon at Veterans Stadium at Troy University when the Edgewood Academy Wildcats outfought and outlasted an ultra-tough Clarke Prep Academy Gators team 61-52. Edgewood ended the season undefeated at 14-0, and the state championship game was the seventh time the Wildcats were forced to come from behind to win in 2013.

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Edgewood set a new Alabama Independent School Association (AISA) record by notching its 45th consecutive victory. The Wildcats won their fourth consecutive state championship and their fifth in six years. None of this was easy especially last Friday's game, which was the toughest assignment the 'Cats ever had. "They are a well disciplined and well coached team. We've played some good teams but they are the most disciplined and determined," Edgewood senior Trey Gothard said afterwards of Clarke Prep. "They deserve a lot of credit and they are very, very good."

Edgewood never had the lead until the third quarter was down to its last 6 seconds. And from that point, the Wildcats outlasted the Gators.

The first half was not good for the Wildcats. They lost the battle of the line of scrimmage and surrendered 300 yards and almost all of that was on the ground. Early last week Edgewood head coach Bobby Carr said, "Clarke runs the ball very, very well." Carr was right. The Gators scored the first five times they had the ball and, other than completing a couple of pass plays, ran the ball right down the throats of Edgewood. Clarke scored on drives of 61, 73, 55, 71 and 31 yards.

The Wildcats stayed in the game because of their potent offense and scored the first three times they had the ball on drives of 60, 57, and 54 yards. The first touchdown came when quarterback Taylor Hawthorne went to wide receiver and running back Josh Crawford took the snap. The lob pass was caught by the tall, leaping Hawthorne in the end zone. "That's a great play for us and it works often," Crawford said. "Of course sometimes we use it as a decoy." Hawthorne scrambled and connected with Heath Young for a 54 yard touchdown pass for the second touchdown.

Edgewood's third score came after Jackson Tate, who ran the ball well all day, made an unbelievable catch for a 41 yard gain. That play kept the drive alive. Moments later Crawford, in the decoy position at quarterback with Hawthorne as a wideout, scrambled and passed to Young from the 18 yard line for the score. The Wildcats fumbled on their fourth possession, which led to a Gators score, but came back to score on a drive of 65 yards with just 23 seconds remaining in the first half when Crawford scored from the 2 yard line.

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