

Wood River Beats Salem After Being Down At Half – Improve To 4-0 For First Time in Nearly 20 Years

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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WOOD RIVER – For the first time since 2004, the East Alton-Wood River High School football team is 4-0 to begin their season. They achieved that feat at home Friday night (September 16) after a come-from-behind victory over Salem by a score of 42-34.

The Oilers trailed 27-21 at halftime.

Senior running back Seth Slayden once again had a big night for Wood River and was called upon offensively and defensively yet again.

His two touchdowns to kick off the second half would end up giving his team the lead.

His first one came with 7:22 left in the third quarter to make it 28-27 and then his team immediately stopped the Wildcats on third down forcing a punt.

Slayden had a huge run and took the ball all the way to Salem's five-yard line. He would rush in the TD to extend the lead to 34-27. The Oilers missed the extra point on both those touchdowns.

The Wildcats marched back down the field with a drive of their own and ended up a few yards from the endzone. It seemed like the Oilers were going to hold them, but instead, Salem went for it on 4th and 1 which led to a touchdown. After the PAT the game was tied 34-34 with just over nine minutes to play.

It was unclear if Salem tried for an onside kick or just had a miscalculation during their next kickoff, but it didn't matter, Wood River still came up with the ball and had it on their own 40-yard line but weren't able to come up with anything on that possession.

After stopping Salem on their drive, the Oilers received the ball with not much time left. All they had to do was get a score and kill some time.

They went downfield and ended up on the one-yard line with 1:40 to go in the game. It would once again be Slayden picking up the touchdown and then scoring again on the successful two-point conversion. His team led 42-34 with 1:36 left on the clock.

Salem made it interesting but eventually had some penalty trouble as the clock ran out.

"Getting this game is huge for us," head coach Garry Herron said postgame after picking up the first conference win of the season. He had previously mentioned that their conference schedule was going to be tough, yet his team remains undefeated.

"It feels amazing," he said about starting the season 4-0, something the Oilers' football program hasn't done in nearly 20 years.

"The guys have been working hard and I'm glad it's all finally coming together for us."

The Oilers will be on the road next Friday to take on Breese Central (3-1) who are coming off a 31-19 win over Freeburg. The game will be at 7 p.m. Friday night.

