

East Side Blows By Familiar Playoff Opponent Lemont

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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EAST ST. LOUIS - The East St. Louis Flyers hosted a familiar foe in the first round of the IHSA Class 6A football playoffs.

The No. 4-seeded orange and blue took on Lemont. It was the third straight season the two teams met in the playoffs.

Last year, the Flyers took down Lemont 32-29 in the state semifinals before handing Prairie Ridge a 57-7 loss to win the state title. Lemont was seeded No. 1 last year and was 12-0 when they met the Flyers.

The year before that, East Side beat an 11-0 Lemont team in the quarterfinals before ending up second in the state.

This year was much different.

Lemont came into the game, sneaking into the playoffs with a 5-4 record, and East St. Louis came out and played like they had something to prove in a dominant 61-0 win Saturday afternoon in the first round.

The Flyers won the coin toss and elected to receive, hoping to get out to an early lead, and that's exactly what they did.

Junior running back Larevious Woods had himself a day and he began with a couple of big runs. Starting out at their own 33-yard line, Woods had two lengthy runs which took it deep into Lemont territory at their 15. Woods got the ball again and ran it in for his team's first of many touchdowns.

After the extra point was missed by freshman kicker and backup quarterback Reece Shaklin, the Flyers led 6-0. He went 6-8 on PATs on Saturday.

After losing three yards, Lemont punted on fourth and long from their own 32. Sophomore wide receiver Christopher Bennett Jr. ran it back to his own 49-yard line before running it again on the next play taking it all the way down to the 15. Woods would run it in and Shaklin would make the kick to make it 13-0.

After going for a fourth-and-seven play, Lemont was stopped after a big hit from junior Charles Bass. The Flyers took over on downs from their own 27.

It only took one play to find the end zone. Senior quarterback Robert "Pops" Battle found senior wideout Jesse Watson for a 73-yard catch and run. Watson caught the ball around the Lemont 25-yard line before juking his way past a few defenders and into the end zone.

Lemont once again had to punt on fourth down. Battle made them pay on the next drive after finding a hole and taking it 75 yards back to the house to make it 27-0 after the first quarter.

Battle found Woods with a 66-yard catch and run touchdown to open up the second quarter at 34-0. Lemont punted on fourth again, with the Flyers getting the ball back at the 50. They marched downfield before Woods ran it in from nine yards away.

Later, Battle found senior wide receiver Joh Daily for a 10-yard completion into the end zone.

Finally, in the flashiest play of the game, Battle found his soon-to-be Lindenwood teammate senior wide receiver Travon Bond. Bond brought down a short pass with one hand as he found his footing and danced into the end zone to make it 55-0 heading into halftime.

With the running clock rule in effect, the Flyers scored just once more in the second half to get to the final scoreline of 61-0.

Battle threw for 239 yards and three touchdowns. He also rushed for 99 yards and another TD.

Woods ended the day with four TDs rushing for 87 yards.

The Flyers had a combined 594 yards against Lemont.

East Side will remain at home for their round two matchup. They will take on Normal Community West (8-2) on Saturday at 1 p.m.

No. 5-seeded Community West defeated No. 12 Chicago-Simeon (5-4) by a score of 37-6.