

Eastern football team gets first win

Written by George Browning

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It took eight weeks, but the Eastern High School football team finally earned its first win of the season, 35-8, last Friday at Crawford County.

The Musketeers wasted little time taking control of the game as they scored 13 points in the opening quarter and 15 in the second.

They managed just seven points in the second half, but the win-less Wolfpack never threatened .

Eastern totaled 227 yards on the ground led by Kaleb Nicholson, who had 144 yards on nine carries.

On offense Nicholson found the end-zone three times.

The Musketeers other offensive touchdown was scored by Austin Roberts.

Eastern also scored a touchdown via their special teams when Nicholson returned a blocked punt for a score.

“Defensively I thought we were real solid,” said Head Coach John Dablow. “Offensively, we came out, put two quick scores on the board and then kind of stalled out. I don’t think the pouring rain helped.

“We had a couple of fumbles, but overcame those and went up 28-0.”

Dablow said it was the kind of game Nicholson will remember for the rest of his life.

“Kaleb had four of our five touchdowns,” he said. “He had a great night. He had one of those games you get to tell your grandkids about.”

Eastern entered the season with just nine seniors. One of those, Jacob Hornung, suffered a concussion and has been out since early in the year, which made a thin team even thinner.

That has forced Dablow and the EHS coaches to rely on kids with little or no varsity experience.

Dablow said getting a win could help those young players turn a corner.

“I think winning is a big thing for these guys,” he said. “Confidence is a huge factor no matter what sport you play. So from that standpoint it is good to get a win in convincing style.”

The Musketeers continued to have a good week Sunday when the Indiana High School Athletic Association announced pairings for the state tournament.

For the first time in the history they will play a home game in the sectional tournament.

The Musketeers will host Clarksville.

The Generals will be making their second trip to Pekin this year.

The first time they won the game 42-20.

“It’s a time we are familiar with and that is good for our kids,” Dablow said.

In the first meeting against the Generals, Eastern struggled to move the ball.

“They are a team that keeps getting better from week to week,” he said.

In the first game Eastern was hanging with Clarksville, but a score just before half gave them all the momentum.

“We turned the ball over a couple times early and gave them a short field,” Dablow said.

Before Eastern can turn their full attention to Clarksville, they must first get ready to face one of the best Class 3 A teams in the state when the Charlestown Pirates come to town.

Charlestown is being mentioned as favorites to win the Class 3A title.

“We are going to go in and try to find a way to move the football a little bit and then slow them down offensively,” Dablow said. “We want to get the kids ready to play. It’s really a good opportunity for them to go against one of the best teams in the state.”

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“They may never have another opportunity to play against a team this good.”

Dablow said his goal is to be healthy after Friday’s game and then get ready for sectional.