

By George Browning gbrowning@gbpnews.com An Eastern team desamated by injuries combined with a Salem football team determined to get back to having a winning record made for a lopsided county match-up Friday.

Salem scored early, often and in a variety of ways as they rolled to a 57-7 victory over the visiting Musketeers.

It took just five plays for Salem to get the scoring started once they took possession, but that play, a 50-yard run by Austin Jerrell, was nullified by a holding penalty.

Salem couldn't recover from the penalty and eventually turned the ball over on downs deep in Eastern territory.

The Lions finally broke through just 29 seconds into the second quarter when when Andrew Maudlin scored on a seven yard scamper. Chris Bravo kicked the PAT (Point after Touchdown) and Salem was up 7-0.

After a Musketeer three and out, Salem scored on the next play when quarterback Jordan McNeely connected with Jason Zink on a 30-yard pass and catch. Bravo again booted the PAT, for a 14-0 SHS advantage with 9:37 remaining in the first half.

Before intermission Salem added touchdowns on a quarterback keeper when McNeely dove for a two-yard score and then threw a 25-yard pass to Jerrell.

On the first of those two scores Maudlin ran for the two-point PAT after a Musketeer penalty moved the ball half the distance. Then Bravo kicked the PAT on the second score and the Lions were in control 29-0 at halftime.

The second half opened with both teams getting three and outs. Eastern's three and out led to a punt.

Salem ran three plays then scored on the fourth when Storm Thomas scored on a 63-yard run. Bravo again kicked the PAT, Salem was up 36-0.

Eastern came up with a stop on the Lions' next possession when Ethan Watson recovered a fumble.

The Musketeers couldn't take advantage of the extra possession and to make matters worse were just a few plays from losing another player to injury when senior Brian Arnold took a shot to the head covering a punt.

An ambulance was called to the field and the mood lightened as he raised his thumbs to indicate to the crowd that he was OK.

The break in the action didn't stop Salem's momentum.

Christian Lamb scored on a 26-yard run and Bravo converted the PAT for a 43-0 lead.

Eastern finally had some success moving the ball against the Lion defense. The scoring drive ended with Austin Roberts crossing the goal line on a one-yard run.

Hunter Fleenor kicked the PAT and EHS had a positive, but still trailed 43-7.

The Lions added two more scores, one came on a the ensuing kick-off return with Brent Garriott scored on a 93-yard touchdown run. Bravo's PAT put Salem halfway to one hundred, up 50-7.

The finally scored off the night was a punt return by Spencer Meadows from 45-yards out. Bravo's PAT was the final tally, 57-7.

Salem Head Coach RJ Hartsfield was happy with his team's play in the second half.

"We set a goal at half time, to keep the shutout going and to play a penalty free half," he said. "Give Eastern credit they kept fighting and we didn't get the shutout, but we did play penalty free football."

The Lions are 4-3 with two games remaining. They will take on Corydon Central Friday before closing the year with a showdown for the Washington County championship on the regular season's final week.

When asked if he worried about his team losing focus against Corydon as they think about facing West Washington, Hartsfield laughed.

"If you lose focus during the week you play Corydon, you're not a very smart football team," he said. "They have a great program and will run you off the field if you aren't ready for them."

Friday's game will be at Corydon Central at 7 p.m.

Eastern will return home for a showdown against Crawford County.

Both teams are 1-6. The Musketeers lone win came over Clarksville and Crawford's only victory was over Springs Valley.

That game will also begin at 7 p.m. in Pekin.