

Lexington reaches title game



Lexington quarterback Kris Clark (12) makes the perfect pitch just as Spartanburg's Tim Reid delivers the hit.

Photo/James Jordan

Lexington preview

Wildcats looking for sweet revenge

By JAMES JORDAN
The Dispatch-News

When Lexington played Dorman in the season opener, the Wildcats let a two-touchdown lead slip away in the waning moments. Lexington led 35-21 with less than four minutes remaining. Dorman scored to tie the game on a desperation pass in the final seconds sending the game into overtime.

Lexington hopes for a different outcome this Saturday when the same two teams meet for the state championship at Williams-Brice Stadium.

The Wildcats have improved defensively since then, and have made some lineup changes that have helped.

When the playoffs began, John Wheeler was moved from receiver to defensive back, and in three games he has grabbed three interceptions.

Also during the season, Chris Knoepfel emerged as a defensive lineman. He was not starting at the beginning of the year, but has since developed. "We finally found him," Satterfield said.

Also on defense, Mario Davis has emerged as a defensive back.

Early in the season, Lexington was susceptible to the long pass, but in recent games the defense



Lexington's Jacobe Jones (23) and Mario Davis put the wraps on Spartanburg's offense.

Photo/Tracy Anderson

has played the pass much better. In addition to Wheeler's interceptions, safety Jacobe Jones has also had interceptions in each of the last four games.

The emergence of the defense has been a key for Lexington for its late season run, but it has been the offense that has carried the team and will be expected to continue to be explosive Saturday. Demetris Summers leads the

team with 2,582 yards rushing and 37 touchdowns. He also has 442 yards receiving and four scores.

Quarterback Kris Clark has rushed for 1,153 yards and passed for 1,307 yards and 11 touchdowns. He has rushed for 11 touchdowns.

Fullback Dustin Curtis has also been carrying the ball more, and has 960 yards and nine touchdowns.

Lexington's offense is regarded as one of the best in the state, and immediately grabs the attention of opposing coaches.

Dorman coach Dave Gutshall said no one has stopped Lexington's offense all season.

"They are going to get their yards. It is just a matter of slowing them down, or trying to make sure they don't get a lot of that yardage at once," he said.

Lexington coach Jimmy Satterfield also praised Dorman's offense, and their quarterback Trey Rodgers.

"They have a great quarterback. They run that Clemson offense better than anyone in the state, including Clemson," he said. Wheeler will be one of the defenders trying to stop Dorman's offense. When the two teams met last time, Wheeler was a receiver and was playing on a slightly sprained ankle.

He said he has enjoyed the switch to defense.

"I love it, it is a nice switch," he said.

So far the position has liked him as well as he has grabbed three interceptions.

"Defense is more intense. Offense is more calmed down and there is more to remember. On defense you just stick them," he said.

Wildcats edge Vikings 28-24

By JAMES JORDAN
The Dispatch-News

Every time Spartanburg scored, Lexington had an answer, and then the Wildcats got a couple of breaks late to beat Spartanburg 28-24.

The win puts Lexington in the state championship game this weekend against Dorman at Williams-Brice Stadium. Lexington led 21-14 going into the final quarter, but Spartanburg put 10 points on the board fairly quickly to take a 24-21 lead.

The Wildcats responded by scoring just as quickly. Wildcat quarterback Kris Clark passed 55 yards to Brandon Gardner, and then connected with Gardner again for a seven-yard scoring strike. The score put Lexington ahead 28-24 with four minutes left.

Spartanburg drove to the Lexington 30, and had a run for an apparent score called back on an illegal formation penalty. On the next play the quarterback bobbled the snap and Lexington defensive tackle Grant Oliver pounced on the loose ball.

The fumble recovery put the game away for the Wildcats.

The game marked Lexington's first win over a Region 2 team.

Lexington coach Jimmy Satterfield said the big plays were the difference.

"They don't get any better than this. It was just a great game between two good teams. That fumble was big," he said.

Oliver said he saw the ball coming loose and tried to take a swat at it. He said he thought he got a piece of it, "and there was no way I was going to let that ball get away."

For the first time this season the Wildcat offense struggled.

Satterfield credited Spartanburg with playing good defense against the Wildcats' option attack.

"They made it hard for us. It was just a heck of a game, either team could have won," Satterfield said.

Both teams scored on their opening possession, and the game remained close from that point.

Spartanburg quarterback Zion White directed the Vikings down the field with the help of tailback Kendrick Keenon. White scored

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Keystones to the Lexington offense: quarterback Kris Clark (left) and tailback Demetris Summers.

Photo/James Jordan

Summers and Clark: winning on instinct

By JAMES JORDAN
The Dispatch-News

When Demetris Summers and Kris Clark lead the Wildcats into the state championship game Saturday there may be some surprises, but both of them know what to expect from each other.

The two have been playing together since the seventh grade when they split time at tailback.

Clark is now a junior quarterback, and Summers is a sophomore tailback. The two have combined to produce two thirds of the Wildcats' offense this season.

The option is a big part of Lexington's offense, and on nearly every play, Clark makes a split-second decision on whether to keep the ball or pitch it to Summers.

"It is just instinct now. We do it so much in practice," Clark said.

Summers said he usually knows when Clark will pitch him the ball, "but I try to keep running behind him just in case he pitches it to me."

So far Summers has rushed for 2,582 yards and 37 touchdowns. He leads the state with a 12.8 yards per carry average.

He has also caught passes for four scores, and threw for one touchdown early in the season.

Clark's stats are nearly as gaudy as Summers. Clark has rushed for 1,153 yards and passed for 1,307. He has accounted for 22 touchdowns.

Fullback Dustin Curtis could become the third back in the Wildcat offense to break the 1,000 yard mark Saturday. He has 960 and nine touchdowns going into the game.

Summers is regarded as one of the best backs in the state. Summers said there is a good side and a bad side to that notori-

"We each know what the other is going to do. . . . He is like a brother."

Demetris Summers

ety. "On the field it is frustrating because they are all trying to tackle me. Off the field though, it feels pretty nice," he said.

Summers said reaching the title game was the goal the team set at the beginning of the year, so it means a lot to the players.

Last week it took some time for him to get going, but while teams were keying on him, Clark was making long runs.

"I knew it was going to take time to get me the ball. I usually know when he is going to pitch it, we each know what the other is going to do. He is like a brother," Summers said.

Clark echoed those sentiments, saying that they both can sense what the other is doing.

"The thing about Demetris is, he can explode from anywhere on the field and score. He is amazing, but when they focus on him that opens our offense up," Clark said.

Clark said he believes the team has some momentum now, and he hopes that will continue into the championship game.

"It has been hard for teams to stop our offense. We have some weapons. Our passing game has opened up, with Scott Davis and Brandon Gardner," Clark said.

He said he also thinks the team has gotten closer together this year.

"We are closer. We have more confidence. We always think we can score," he said.

So far they have scored a lot.

Dorman preview

Can Cavaliers dodge another bullet?

By SCOTT J. BRYAN
The Dispatch-News

Dorman versus Lexington. A serious case of deja vu.

For the second time this season, the Cavaliers will tangle with the Wildcats, but this Saturday afternoon's game is for all the marbles.

Earlier in the season, the Cavaliers edged Lexington, 38-35 in an overtime thriller that left the Wildcats down, but not quite out. A rematch should bring feelings from both sides.

"We were lucky to win," Dorman coach David Gutshall said at the SCHSL press conference on Monday morning. "We felt very fortunate. Lexington outplayed us, but it really was a long time ago. Both teams have changed a little bit since then."

An entire season, in fact, Dorman, much like Lexington, has relied heavily on the run. But the Cavaliers have proven they can go to the air, as well.

"Since the first game, we've really gone from a passing team to a running team," Gutshall said.

"The last two games we've only thrown the ball eight and six times. I like to think we can pass the ball, but I prefer to run it."

And run it is what Dorman has done. Tailback Jack Ross has 257 carries for 1,319 yards and 25 touchdowns, while senior signal-caller Trey Rodgers has 1,085 yards rushing and 11 touchdowns to go with 169 carries.

Of course, the Cavaliers have had no problem throwing the ball, picking up nearly 40% of their offense by air. Rodgers has connected with 124 of his 243 passes for 1,849 yards and 23 touchdowns.

A big play man is senior wide receiver Brandon Turner. Turner has rushed for 324 yards and three touchdowns while accumulating 696 receiving yards and eight touchdown catches.

With such a big game at stake, both coaches were asked whether a Dorman-Lexington first-game tradition could evolve into an annual debut.

"I think both schools are very similar," Gutshall said. "It's a great



Dorman QB Trey Rodgers (16) has over 1,800 yards passing.

Photo/James Jordan

game, for sure."

Jimmy Satterfield's reply was slightly different.

"Is that quarterback a senior," he asked Gutshall.

"Yeah," the Dorman mentor replied.

"We'll play them," Satterfield responded.

So Lexington faithful can expect a rematch next fall against Dorman. The only question remaining is who will be out for revenge.