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## Madison County defeats Williston in Saturday matchup



**Red Devil speed demon Gerard Williams spots a big hole in Madison County's defense and sprints 50 yards for a touchdown.**

**By Terry Witt, Senior Reporter © Sept. 17, 2017 at 2:47 p.m.**

**WILLISTON** -- The Madison County Cowboys Varsity Football Team defeated the Williston Red Devils 54-22 in a rare Saturday night game that saw more than the usual amount of scoring.

Madison County is the state's number one ranked Class 1A team and had never played Williston previously, but despite the size and speed of the Cowboys the Red Devils proved they had the athletes and talent to compete.



**Williston's Jeramiah James finds running room around right end for a big gain.**

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**Madison County speedster Derrick Staten Jr. follows blockers for a 45-yard touchdown run in the second quarter.**



**Cowboys' runner Marcus Ghent applies the brakes and looks downfield as he prepares to make his cut and run for a first down.**

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**Williston runner Quinton Mitchell returns a kickoff for big yardage.**

The two teams had never met previously. P.K. Yonge had played Williston for 40 years but decided this year not to schedule the Red Devils, leaving an open spot for Williston. Madison County needed an opponent. Hence the match came to be.

Williston Head Varsity Football Coach Justin Wentworth commended his players for the fighting spirit they displayed, but he said they can't let opposing teams take big leads.

"Our kids played hard. We have to play all four quarters," Wentworth said. "We were trading blows with them early. They got away from us and they do what they do. We have to do a better job of what we do."

Wentworth said he was proud of his team playing hard and doing what the coaching staff asked of them, but he said Madison County is a championship caliber team "and that's where we want to be. That's what we need to see."

Cowboys Head Varsity Football Coach Mike Coe said his team started out "kind of flat defensively" and he said Williston speedster Gerard Williams proved to be everything they expected.

"He's fast. He can run that ball. We knew that coming in," Coe said. "In the second half, I thought we fought a little harder. We had more energy. Anytime you win you're not disappointed."

The Cowboys will play Class 7A Columbia County next week. Asked why Madison County would take on a school of that size, Coe responded, "We can't find a game if we don't."

He commended Wentworth for getting his team ready for battle in the week following

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Hurricane Irma.

“I give Coach Wentworth a lot of credit, a lot of respect, especially this week with the hurricane and all that. Almost 90 percent of all coaches would have cancelled this game and he kept it – a lot of respect for that guy over there, a lot of respect.”

Williston is scheduled to play Newberry Friday (Sept. 22).

Williston quarterback C.J. Strange said the Red Devils weren't intimidated by playing the number one Class 1A team in the state. He said the Red Devils fought hard.

“It was a battle but we didn't come out on top of the battle, but it was a good test for us to see where we are at this point in the season,” Strange said.

Strange said Williston doesn't have a lot of depth, “but we have to be strapped on tight. We don't have a lot of depth but we have a lot of fight in our heart.”

Madison County has the type of explosive offense that few teams expect. The Red Devils fell behind 27-7 by midway through the second quarter, but they came back after the half ready to do battle.

Strange said the home team was never discouraged during the game.

However, he added, the team “has to be ready when adversity comes and when adversity hits don't fold. They (Madison County) are the number one team for a reason and we have to prove we are the number one team.”

Williams gave Williston a spark midway through the second quarter with the Red Devils trailing by 20 points. He found a gaping hole in the defense on the far right side of the line of scrimmage and ran 50 yards for a touchdown.

The Cowboys answered quickly on a 45-yard run by Derrick Staten Jr., Madison County's elusive halfback who runs with the same authority as Williams.

Madison County led 54-14 late in the game before Williston's Quinton Mitchell broke loose for a 35-yard touchdown run. Strange caught the Cowboys napping and threw a pass to Jermon Collins for the two-point conversion.

The clock ran continuously in the fourth quarter due to the mercy rule. The Cowboys finished the game by running a couple of plays and taking a knee to let the clock run out.