

Sports



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Sumner QB Luke Ross fires a pass under pressure from the Woodinville rush Saturday at Sparks Stadium.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

Woodinville ends Sumner's season in semis

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Few love physical football and technically sound defense more than Sumner High School football coach Keith Ross.

But a case could be made for one of his former protégés.

Ross' defense goes by the Black Flag. Woodinville coach Wayne Maxwell's is the Dark Side.

And it was Maxwell's defense that dimmed the Spartans' sea-

son, as No. 2 Woodinville escaped with a 10-0 victory in the 4A state semifinals on Saturday at Sparks Stadium in Puyallup, ending Sumner's bid at trying to reach the state championship for the first time since 1977.

"He is the best defensive coordinator in the state," said Woodinville safety and receiver Nash Fouch, a University of Montana commit who had a fourth-quarter interception. "He should really be coaching in the

SEE SUMNER, 5C

FROM PAGE 1C

SUMNER

college level. The man really knows what he's talking about."

Sumner never trailed in a 56-14 rout of Monroe last week. It never scored against a potent Woodinville defense in this one.

Fouch's interception with 10:01 remaining was the back-breaker.

Both he and Sumner's 4A SPSL MVP Tre Weed appeared to get their hands on a jump ball from Luke Ross, and Fouch snatched it and returned it 30 yards to Sumner's 36.

Woodinville drove to Sumner's 5 before the Spartans' defense, which held Woodinville to its fewest points all season, got a third-down stop. It looked like Woodinville was about to go for it before Maxwell sent kicker Blake Glessner for a 22-yard field goal to make it 10-0 with 5:24 to play.

"I knew we could play well against them," Sumner coach Keith Ross said. "I really thought we could hold them to less than 14 points, but they probably said the same thing. It's two defensive juggernauts. You play great defense and we just couldn't get on the board."

Thus, ending what Ross said could be the best senior class in Sumner history.

More impressive about Woodinville's play was how it handled Sumner's dynamic duo of Weed and

Ben Wilson - who will likely both be playing NCAA Division I football next year, with Wilson committed to Texas Christian University as a line-backer and Weed holding multiple D1 offers.

They combined for 401 total yards and seven touchdowns in last week's quarterfinal win to secure Sumner's second consecutive trip to the state semifinals, coming after they combined to lift Sumner over Woodinville in last year's state quarterfinals without TNT All-Area player of the year Connor Wedington (now at Stanford).

But on Saturday Weed and Wilson combined for 165 yards.

"We knew we had a tough task with stopping Tre and Ben," Maxwell said. "Very good athletes. It's not much of a secret, right? They get the ball to those guys and let them make plays. It was on the load of our front seven to get it done and that was the challenge. We felt great about the guys we have and you saw the result tonight."

Sumner needed a score after Woodinville's field goal but its drive stalled at the Woodinville 45 after four consecutive incomplete passes. Weed came off the field after a hard hit over the middle pried the ball loose and another pass over the middle on

fourth down sealed Woodinville's win.

"I mean, those are two really, really good football players," Fouch said of Weed and Wilson. "To be able to win those battles all game, that gives us major confidence that we can stop the best. We just have to do that again next week."

Woodinville advances to the Tacoma Dome where it will face Richland for the 4A state title, a year after Richland lost to Camas in the 4A title game.

And Woodinville has done this running through the South Sound. It beat Olympia in the district playoffs, then Kentwood and last week it beat Graham-Kapowsin.

What would have been Sumner's biggest play came on Weed's 30-yard catch to the Woodinville 18 in the second quarter. But he was called for offensive pass interference and after a holding penalty and a false start, the Spartans were instead pinned at their own 23.

So a punt gave Woodinville possession at about midfield and the Falcons took advantage. Matt Jones broke a tackle and busted a 34-yard run to Sumner's 5 before he punched it in from the 1 on third down for what would be the only score of the half - coming with 3:34 until halftime.

Jones ran for 80 yards on 17 carries and Brett Accimus ran for 110 yards on 20 carries as part of a Woodinville game plan that resembled much of Sumner's.

Maxwell and Keith Ross both played defense at Central Washington University, and Ross coached Maxwell, a safety, in Maxwell's first year there.

That's where Maxwell said he got his defense's Dark Side moniker.

"We called ourselves the Dark Side in college and I liked it," Maxwell said.

"You are going to be on the field from snap to whistle, relentlessly pursuing to the football and you are going to get there in a bad way. It's having that mentality of the dark side and it's going to be a dark night for the opponents."

Sumner lost to Bellevue in the first round of the 3A playoffs four years ago, then to Bishop Blanchet in the 3A first round when these seniors were sophomores, before falling to eventual state-champion Camas in last year's 4A semifinals and now Woodinville in this year's semifinals.

And Ross stood on the same field where Sumner last lost - 45-24 against Puyallup on Sept. 29. He told his players in their final huddle that he was proud of them.

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