

Ann Arbor Pioneer's speed, big-play productivity key in 45-0 shutout of Dexter

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All week, Jeremy Gold was concerned that a quick turnaround could take its toll on his Pioneer High School offense's ability to produce points.

But only five days after an impressive season-opening win at the Big Day Prep Showdown last weekend, the Pioneers weren't short on big plays or points their second time out.

Pioneer, sparked by four scoring plays of 45 yards or more, puts its full arsenal of playmakers on display, shutting out Dexter in an impressive 45-0 win Thursday night at Holloway Field.

Brandis Yarrington's 50-yard punt return proved to be the spark that got the Pioneers going. But that proved just to be the beginning.

"That just made us step up more," said senior receiver Ricardo Miller, who scored on a pair of second-quarter touchdown passes of 55 and 45 yards. "Us as players, we want to compete with other and that's going to make us better.

"So when he came off that first (punt return) and took it back, it just let us know, 'Hey - we have to step up and play our game.'"

Pioneer (2-0, 1-0 Southeastern Conference) used Miller's two touchdown catches to build a 28-0 lead.

But Gold, who wanted to see exactly what the Pioneers were capable of, challenged his team at halftime, pushing for more.

After Dexter (1-1, 0-1 SEC) went three and out on its first possession of the second half, Terrell Moran ripped off a 68-yard touchdown run, extending Pioneer's lead to 35. And when the Dreadnaughts' next possession was cut short by an interception, the Pioneers needed only two more plays to strike again.

Charles' Boyd 29-yard touchdown kept Pioneer's offensive machine rolling before Jeremy Ross capped the scoring with a 43-yard field goal in the fourth quarter.

"The kids really played their butts off tonight," Gold said. "We knew Dexter is a pretty dangerous team offensively so we knew we were going to have our hands full, but our kids responded tonight."

For Dexter, which remained close until the final two minutes of the first half when Miller reached the end zone twice in the span of a minute, Pioneer's punch was too much.

The Dreadnaughts finished the night with 21 yards of total offense, held in check by a Pioneer defense that controlled the line of scrimmage and often had surrounded quarterback Alex McMurray and running back Seqyoyah Burke-Combs before they could build up steam.

The Pioneers completely shut down Dexter's running attack, which registered -11 yards on 25 carries

"We're young in certain areas and our young kids - their heads were spinning," Dexter coach Tom Barbieri said. "This shows them that you can't be slow in doing stuff. Things are going to happen fast and athletically and that's what Pioneer brings."

Pioneer's offensive output comes on the heels of its impressive win over Inkster last weekend. But with plenty of the season still ahead, the Pioneers realize that they can't rest in two weeks of point-producing performances.

But at 2-0, they certainly won't complain about the way they've burst out of the gates.

"We knew what we could do," Yarrington said. "We just had to execute and we executed. It took a while to get going, but it worked out pretty well."

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