

THE INDEX-JOURNAL

Sports

Playoff-bound Vikings Destroy Walhalla

By KEVIN POMEROY/Special to The Index-Journal
Published: Saturday, November 1, 2008 12:45 AM EDT

WALHALLA -- The season ended abruptly Friday night for the Walhalla High School football team, as it lost 29-6 to Emerald, failing to capitalize on an opportunity to advance to the postseason for the first time in five years.

A victory would have given Walhalla a second-place finish in the Region 1-AA. Instead, the Razorbacks find themselves on the outside looking in once again. "We couldn't run the ball," Walhalla coach John Boggs said. "They whipped us inside. Their interior is good. They're as good as any we've seen. "They just got after us and whipped us. We struggled there all night long and what little bit we were able to throw, it was sporadic."

Emerald set the tone early by driving down the field quickly on the game's first drive. It did not finish the drive, however, when quarterback Zane Newton fumbled and Walhalla recovered. The Razorbacks did not take advantage of the turnover, though, and promptly punted the ball back to the Vikings. Starting at its own 39-yard line, Emerald systematically moved the ball in six plays and went ahead 7-0 when Newton found the end zone from 3 yards out.

Walhalla showed some signs of life on its next drive, but could not convert on a Ryan Metz 32-yard field goal attempt. "We couldn't find a groove," senior receiver Nick Tubbs said. "We couldn't find our rhythm tonight."

Emerald added a Jeremy Tommie 27-yard field goal as time expired in the second quarter to take a 10-0 lead into half. The second half led to more of the same. Walhalla had difficulty moving the ball offensively and had no answer for Emerald's running game. That running game was led by Jared Norman, who racked up 198 yards on 16 carries. He torched Walhalla on option plays, breaking runs of 53, 51 and 39 yards.

The 51- and 39-yard runs resulted in two Emerald touchdowns. Those points put the Vikings up 26-0, clinched a playoff spot and made the final quarter a mere formality. Walhalla's only points came after a blocked punt with 4:19 left to play. Quarterback Lane Rochester moved the ball 2 yards into the end zone, but those points were too late for the Razorbacks.

Emerald's final points came on a 40-yard field goal by Tommie with 1:20 to play in the fourth quarter.