

Sep. 18 JoJo's/Fish4Scores.com Athlete of the Week

Now that it's his turn, Stroman taking full advantage of the opportunity

By Rich Fisher

Fish4Scores.com

Sep. 18: During the 2010 football season, Hamilton West's Bret Stroman spent ample time in the offensive wings as Jamie Williams either come close to, or set, rushing records for the Hamilton West football team.

Every so often, however, Stroman showed signs of things to come.

"We had Jamie Williams last year so we rode him," Hornets coach Tom "The Lord of Lambeau" Hoglen said. "But if you look at his stats, whenever Bret touched the ball, because teams were keying on Jamie, he scored touchdowns for us in big games."

There is no Jamie to key on this year.

There is Bret.

And if teams haven't keyed on him yet, they certainly will start.

To paraphrase John F. Kennedy, Ask not what Bret Stroman can do for the Hornets. . .ask what he can't do.

Despite fumbling once, Stroman had a game for the ages in Hamilton's 40-17 win at Lawrence Saturday. The senior amassed 353 total yards and five touchdowns. He rushed for 211 yards and four TDs on 31 carries; returned a late interception 55 yards for a score; returned the opening kickoff 21 yards; caught three passes for 24 yards and threw an option pass for 42 yards.

If that wasn't enough, from his free safety spot he chipped in with six tackles, the interception and a pass break up.

For his efforts, Stroman is the slam dunk pick as *JoJo's Tavern/Fish4Scores.com Athlete of the Week* for the week ending Sep. 17.

"He's a special talent," Hoglen said after the Lawrence game. "He's just steady. Last week he was cramping up and I just kept saying 'Whenever you're ready let me know' and he kept hopping out there (and rushed for 201 yards and three touchdowns against Hightstown).

"Today we wanted to run him a lot and have him get used to another hot day. That's why we fed him the ball a lot. I'd like to get more guys involved with the offense and at times we were able to that. But when crunch time came we were able to grind it out with Bret and Javed James"

Stroman started his career in the Hamilton Football League playing offensive and defensive line. When he arrived at West, the 5-11, 197-pounder was switched to linebacker and running back, which suited him just fine.

"I like to make plays," he said.

He played for the freshman team in ninth grade and jumped right to varsity as a sophomore. Last year, he was a regular at safety but saw limited action offensively behind Williams.

"I was just waiting for my turn," Stroman said. "I knew eventually I would get my turn. I was just worrying about defense mostly last year.

"I would watch Jamie, he hits the hole pretty quick and likes to get to the outside. He's pretty fast."

Stroman isn't slow, but his game seems predicated on power and toughness. Like most running backs, he talks about keeping his legs moving at all times until the whistle blows. Unlike a lot of them, he actually does it.

“I’ll never stop my feet from moving,” he said. “My freshman coach, Gerry Van Slooten, he always told me never stop moving my feet, and that’s what I do.”

He added with a smile “I like to deliver the punch before I get hit.”

Stroman has done a good job of picking up extra yards on his own, but he is quick to praise the Hornets’ rebuilt offensive line as well.

“They’ve been doing a helluva job,” Stroman said. “Everybody’s working hard, trying to keep us moving.”

Stroman has certainly been moving in the right direction with 422 rushing yards and seven rushing touchdowns in Hamilton’s 2-0 start.

“I told him, now’s your opportunity, take advantage of it,” Hoglen said. “He’s stepping up to the plate.”

And hitting tape measure home runs.