



By TOMMY BRYAN
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LEBANON -- With jack-of-all-trades Lee Maasen at the controls, Friendship Christian steamrolled East Robertson 56-12 Nov. 13 in a TSSAA Class 2A playoff game at Pirtle Field.

Maasen, somehow snubbed in the Mr. Football nomination process, threw for three touchdowns, ran for two more, piled up 318 yards in total offense and even picked off a pass for good measure.

"It's really something," FCS head coach John McNeal said. "When the stakes are highest, Lee always seems to play at his best."

The Commanders improved to 10-1 with the victory and advances to the TSSAA quarterfinals Friday, Nov. 20 at No. 1-ranked Trousdale County.

One third quarter play typified Maasen's value when an errant shotgun snap sailed over his head. Instead of merely falling on the ball and taking a loss, Maasen fielded the pigskin on one hop, circled right end where he ran through two tackles and sprinted 31 yards down to the one to set up an FCS score.

"I was just trying to make something happen, to help the team," the modest senior said.

On Friendship's first possession, the Commanders took advantage of an misalignment by the East Robertson secondary to score an uncontested touchdown on a 56-yard pass from Maasen to tightend Kyle Neal. Following Michael Self's booming PAT, FCS lead 7-0 with 11:40 left in the first quarter.

Maasen hooked up with John Markham on a 26-yard pass and catch to give the Commanders a 14-0 lead at the 7:05 mark of the first period.

East Robertson answered as Austin Cope sped 31 yards down the visitors' sideline for a TD with 5:28 remaining in the first.

The early scoring flurry saw the Commanders strike again as Maasen swept right end for a 50 yard scoring run and a 21-6 FCS lead.

Maasen completed 8-of-12 passes for 171 yards and three scores, two to Markham and one to Neal. He also ran 12 times for 147 yards -- an average of 12.3 yards per carry.

Markham added seven rushes for 64 yards, Dekolas Reeves ran six times for 58 and Neal added six carries for 44 yards.