

## Rome Breaks Another Record with Win Over Jackson, Atlanta



On a night where he became Rome High's winningest football coach and his charges won their 38th consecutive football game, surpassing the 37-game winning streak from West Rome High School's hey day, all John Reid wanted to talk about after the game was how his kids played.

And Reid had plenty to say, as the Wolves rolled to a 48-0 halftime lead over Jackson-Atlanta en route to a 62-14 win in the opening round of the GHSA Class 5A State Playoffs at Barron Stadium.

"I think we did a great job of preparing over the past two weeks. We haven't played in a week," Reid said. "I think it's tough toward the end of the year to have a rhythm and then kind of lose it. I was proud of our guys to be able to come out as strong as they did in the first half."

The Wolves looked just as ferocious as they had all season, scoring on all four offensive drives in the opening quarter. Senior tailback Jamious Griffin ran wild in the opening quarter, scoring four touchdowns, including a long of 75 yards on the second score of the night.

All told, Griffin tallied 231 yards on 16 carries and the four touchdowns.

"He's different from what he used to be, because he's worked super hard," Reid said. "Not only is he a great runner and finds holes, but he is very explosive with his speed."

The Wolves added three more touchdowns in the second quarter. Senior quarterback Knox Kadum got in on the action on an 18-yard quarterback keeper where he showed some toughness by lowering his shoulder to knock a Jackson defender back into the end zone for the score.

Tailback Traceton Lawrence added the other two first-half touchdowns for Rome on scampers of 18 and one yard, respectively, staking Rome to a 48-0 halftime lead and ensuring the second half would be played with a running clock.

Rome's special teams started the second half by forcing a fumble on the opening kickoff and Jamar Roberts recovered it and managed to get into the end zone for a score.

Jackson scored two touchdowns, cutting the Wolves' lead to 55-14, before Bryson Hill closed out the scoring for the game with a seven-yard run, giving the Wolves the final 62-14 lead.

"Sometimes in those running clock situations things get a bit raggedy, but overall we were pleased with the effort and the win," Reid said.

Friday's win marked number 47 for Reid as the Rome coach, moving him past former Rome coach Sid Fritts on the all-time victory list. When he learned about the achievement, he kind of shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll just be happy if I can be the wining coach again next week," he said.

The Wolves win moves them into the second round of the playoffs next Friday, where they will face Cedar Shoals, who knocked off Lithonia 41-0. The game will again be at Barron Stadium.

"I've told the kids that every game in the playoffs is going to be tough," Reid said. "We beat Cedar Shoals last year. We need to make sure the players don't look past them, because they are a good football team."

And speaking of good football teams, Friday's win allowed the Wolves to one-up West Rome's streak of 37 consecutive victories from the mid 1980s. Something the coaches and players weren't focused on, heading into the game.

"It's kind of incredible when you think about it, but we didn't say a thing about it to the team. In fact, I didn't even know it," Reid said. "Maybe that's a little bit silly of me. We work so hard on the moment, that we're more worried about getting the next win and our next opponent."

Reid paused a second after saying the words and added an extra thought.

"I guess some day we'll take a second or two to look back on it, and it will mean a lot to all of us," he said. "But we are more worried with getting a win next week."

And with that, Rome High's leader in wins walked over to talk to his players, who now own the Rome City School record for consecutive victories. Like Reid said, some day there will be time to bask in the glory of what this team has accomplished, but for now their focus moves to Cedar Shoals and getting one step closer to a third-straight state title.