

Baker, Jewell start thinking playoffs

By Bill Richardson
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Conference rivals Baker and William Jewell have made it to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Division II football playoffs. Now they're looking for a rematch.

Baker defeated William Jewell 10-0 on Oct. 22 in a Heart of America game.

To get a rematch, Baker and Jewell would have to win their opening playoff games Saturday. Baker, 10-0, will meet Pacific Lutheran, 7-2, in Tacoma, Wash., at 3 p.m. Central time. William Jewell, 8-1-1, will be host to Wilmington of Ohio, 8-1, at 1 p.m. in Liberty.

"The NAIA has a rule that no teams from the same conference can meet in the finals," Jewell Coach Vic Wallace said after the Cardinals qualified for the playoffs a record fourth straight time. "That means we'd have to play each other in the semifinals. I'm happy we've got a chance to play somebody we haven't played this year in the first round. Baker is an awfully good team, and we'd like to play them again. We hope we do because that would mean that we had both won our first games."

In other Division II games Saturday, Westminster (Pa.), 8-1, will play at Findlay (Ohio), 8-1; and St. Thomas (Minn.), 9-1, will play at Northwestern (Iowa), 11-0. The semifinals will be Dec. 3 and the championship game Dec. 10. The pairings and sites for those games will be determined later.

Wallace's elation over the Cardinals' selection to the playoffs and their improved play the last three weeks was tempered by an injury to quarterback Scott Sandridge during a 41-0 victory Saturday night over Tarkio.

"Sandridge got a knee strain on the first series and will be examined by a doctor Monday," Wallace said. "Paul Troth came in and did a good job for us. He'll start against Wilmington if Sandridge can't play."

William Jewell recovered from its loss to Baker with three straight one-sided victories. The Cardinals scored

154 points and had 1,649 yards of total offense.

Although Wilmington came to Liberty and pounded Jewell 31-10 in the 1980 playoffs, Wallace is happy to be playing at home Saturday.

"The home field is a big advantage," Wallace said. "Our school administration was working toward getting the home field for us."

Baker, which has been going places all year in rolling past regional opponents, is happy to be traveling to the Pacific Northwest for a playoff game.

"It'll be a great trip; our kids are all thrilled about it," Baker Coach Charlie Richard said. "We're looking forward to playing somebody different."

Richard said Pacific Lutheran, which lost to Linfield and to NAIA Division I rival Central Washington, appeared to peak in the final month of the regular season.

"They won their last four games by big scores," Richard said. "They run a wing-T with a lot of motion. They have a ball-control type offense with a short passing game. We'll try to do like we have all season — rely on our defense and move the ball the best we can."

Baker's defense has been awesome this season. The Wildcats, who posted six shutouts, were ranked No. 1 last week in both rushing defense and overall defense in Division II statistics. Baker gave up 299 yards rushing in 318 carries for a 0.9 average and had a 130.3 average for total defense. Safeties Roger Mallory and Tracy Bourne each had five interceptions for Baker, which had 22 as a team. Baker had a total of only four interceptions last season.

Quarterback Chuck Rhodes completed 60 of 125 passes for 977 yards and 10 touchdowns. Tight end Joe Boeh was the top Baker receiver with 25 catches for 578 yards, averaging 20.7 yards a catch.

The NAIA Division I playoff field will be determined this Sunday. Thirteenth-ranked Washburn, which stunned sixth-ranked Missouri Southern 24-10 Saturday, is hopeful of gaining a berth. Washburn's chances were enhanced when three higher-ranked teams lost last weekend.