

Friday night began with a punch in the mouth dealt by the Great Crossing Warhawks. A first drive ending in a field goal and a recovered onside kick made Senior Night look bleak until a trick play slingshot the Pioneers right back into the lead. A backwards pass from Sophomore QB Grant Webb to Senior WR Grayson Harris found Sophomore WR Forest Hughes all alone, as Harris tossed a perfect spiral in stride to Hughes for six. From that point on, the Pioneers were able to build off their first drive momentum to a 35-16 victory.

After retaking the lead at 7-6, it was the defense that truly shined. Three defensive takeaways truly made the difference for the Pioneers, setting up the offense with great field position and even an interception returned for a touchdown by Senior RB/WR/S Jordan Pendleton. Pendleton, a transfer, has proven to be a boost on both sides of the ball, and even more so as a holder on special teams. Speaking with Pendleton postgame, he was clearly grateful for the support of his team and their belief in one another.

“It feels great to be 1-0 in district play, and to just go out and get a great win with my boys. [...] We’re not the team that people think we are, and the record doesn’t show what we can really do.”

Friday’s win was meaningful in many areas, one of which being Grant Webb’s solid performance with two rushing touchdowns. Despite two interceptions, Webb showed signs of aggression and a will to roll out of the pocket that has rarely been seen so far this season. Showing increased pocket presence and awareness, he was able to take what the Warhawk defense gave him and turn it into positive yardage. For the Sophomore, this looks to be a confidence and momentum-building win.

Adding onto the defensive highlights, Senior S Eli Mullins pulled down an interception, as well as a fumble recovery by Junior LB Kyle King. The Pioneer defense reloaded Friday with the additions of Senior LB Brayden Schoborg and Junior CB Jaxon Davis back into the lineup. Injuries have certainly hurt Simon Kenton this year, with key pieces going down early. Stepping into district play, having a full-strength roster could prove to be essential. In his first game as a Pioneer, transferring from Beechwood and missing the first half of the season due to injury, Davis had an interception near midfield that set up a rushing touchdown by Senior RB Landon Brown that truly put any hope of a late Great Crossing comeback to bed. Postgame, I spoke with Davis on his first game as a Pioneer.

“It’s amazing to be back with my brothers, and [...] I just love this team.”

Beginning district play with a win, the Pioneers look ahead to next week’s matchup at home against Campbell County, a team that the Pioneers have had plenty of recent success against, most notably the 2023 Homecoming game that the Pioneers won thanks to a Hail Mary as time expired. Having the season Simon Kenton has had, extending their record in district play to 2-0 would set up a district title game against heavyweight Ryle on October 24th. As the Pioneers hope to have found their identity as a team, they will aim to continue their dominance over Campbell County and head into postseason play with serious momentum.