

SPEARS HITS 1,000-YD MARK

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No matter what route West Aurora's football season has taken this fall, there has been one constant.

That constant has been senior running back Leon Spears. And he capped off his excellent career in Friday's 61-0 season-ending loss at Wheaton Warrenville South by eclipsing the

1,000-yard mark for the season.

Spears got past the mark on a six-yard run in the second quarter and wound up with 36 yards on 11 carries in the game, giving him 1,017 for the season.

"I accomplished a lot this year," Spears said. "Last year I had like 600. I came back stronger and faster and got over 1,000. It's a big accomplishment for me. Wins and losses, it's kind of sad, but just proud of myself and proud of my teammates to help me reach that."

That was about the only highlight for West (3-6 overall, 1-6 DuPage Valley Conference) as the Blackhawks were steamrolled by a Wheaton Warrenville South (8-1, 7-0) team that was putting the finishing touches on its DVC championship campaign.

Playing with a short field the entire game, the Tigers scored touchdowns on their first nine possessions. In the first half, the Tigers had seven of those as they carried a 48-0 lead into the break, six rushing. Matt Rogers (133 yards on nine carries) had three of the runs, Mack Tracey had two and Tom Olp had the other while Riley O'Toole connected with Dan Hohenstein for the other.

"That's probably a future state champ team," Spears said. "It was good to play them. I just got the yardage I could."

Wheaton Warrenville South coach Ron Muhitch has never been in a position like West was Friday, playing out the final game of the season with no chance at reaching the playoffs, but he commended the Blackhawks' fight and resolve after the game.

"Spears is a great football player," Muhitch said. "I really like him a lot. He needs a supporting cast. The quarterback (Malcolm Wood) plays tough, too. I know at the end of the year, they're banged up, like a lot of teams are. And it's tough to come play in that last game in your senior year when you've got nothing to look forward to with the season ending."

It was the final game for West's seniors, who were the first class that coach Buck Drach welcomed when he took over the program four years ago.

"Coach Drach is a great coach," Spears said. "He's going to turn this program around soon, maybe next year. It was the best four years of my career, no doubt about that."