

### **St. Mary's downs LaSalle 28-6 for homecoming**

**NATCHITOCHES, La.** – Junior running back JP Thibodaux rushed for 184 yards and two touchdowns as the St. Mary's Tigers defeated the LaSalle Tigers, 28-6, Friday night for SMS's homecoming in district 3-1A action at Turpin Stadium.

SMS (3-5, 2-1 in 3-1A) struck quickly as AJ Johnson connected with Haiden Nelson for 38 yards inside the LaSalle 20 yard-line. Moments later, Johnson found Chalin Gandy for an 18-yard touchdown reception (Carter Hogg kicked the point after attempt) giving SMS a 7-0 lead with 10:29 to go in the opening quarter.

The St. Mary's defense forced LaSalle into a punt and a turnover on downs in the first quarter as SMS led 7-0 after the opening period.

St. Mary's had its chance to add to the lead but threw an interception on fourth and goal allowing LaSalle to return the interception to their own 14-yard line.

LaSalle (6-2, 2-1 in 3-1A) scored on a three-yard touchdown run but missed the two-point conversion to make it 7-6 SMS with 2:07 to go until halftime.

St. Mary's responded as Johnson connected with Gandy for 23 yards to the 1-yard line. The Tigers scored on the next play as Dennison Morgan scored on a 1-yard 'tush push' touchdown run making it 14-6 (Hogg PAT is good) with 51 seconds left in the half.

During halftime, St. Mary's senior Jenna Sklar was crowned the 2025 SMS homecoming queen.

When the game resumed, SMS forced LaSalle to punt on the opening drive of the third quarter. On the first play of the next drive, Thibodaux found a crease and exploded for 63 yards and a touchdown to make it 21-6 (Hogg PAT good) with 7:54 left in the third.

"The blocking was really good tonight," said Thibodaux. "We all did a lot of good things out there but tonight was a good momentum building game, so I was glad to do my part."

LaSalle went for it on fourth down from their own 37-yard line. However, SMS's LaTravion Jefferson flew through the line for the tackle and no gain on the play. St. Mary's took over at the LaSalle 36-yard line with 5:25 left in the third quarter.

After the SMS offense stalled again, their defense stepped up big again. Junior Brady Childress intercepted a pass inside the SMS 15-yard line to turn away LaSalle's scoring opportunity with 7 seconds left in the third quarter.

Thibodaux put the nail in the coffin as he scored on a 17-yard touchdown run to capitalize off the interception by Childress as SMS led 28-6 with 7:17 left in the game. The Tigers, again, would get a turnover on the following possession as Michael French intercepted a pass near the SMS goal line with 2:27 to go allowing St. Mary's to run the clock out.

“The goal was to win,” said SMS head coach Kedrin Seastrunk. “Simple as that. We knew LaSalle was coming in with some momentum and the key was to come out here and take care of business and I thought we did that tonight.”

Next up, St, Mary’s will host Northwood-Lena next Friday night in the home finale for SMS.