Clearing the path for running back Alec Schmelebeck are (from left) Wykons Andy Ridolphi, Gabe Golfis and Joe Pisoni during third quarter play in West Iron's 26-0 Homecoming win over Houghton Sept. 22.

IRON RIVER—Two early scoring drives got West Iron on the right track before the Homecoming crowd Sept. 22, and the Wykons kept going from there, shutting out Houghton 26-0.

The win boosts WIC's season record to 3-2 overall and 2-1 in the West Pac.

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"We took care of business early on by running the ball," Coach Mike Berutti said later. "We had 160 yards rushing in the first quarter.

"I was happy with that. We protected the ball, and the kids did a real good job coming out right from the start."

Away we go: Wykons fans old and young had to love the opening drive, which covered 80 yards in 13 plays, including Alec Schmelebeck's 15-yard run and QB Andrew Peterson's 10-yard pass to Chasz Jonet. On 3rd and 5, Jonet gained 13 to the 10, and Adam Newby scored around the left side from the 12. Ryan Rogers' kick put WIC ahead 7-0.

WIC's second drive went a lot faster: 70 yards in four plays, as Newby ran for 12 and 17 yards back-to-back. Schmelebeck broke through the right side for the last 39 yards and six points. WIC led 14-0.

Late in the first, the Wykons went for it on 4th and 1 at their own 36--and came up short. Uh-ohh! But West iron's defense made the stop, and Blue and White started its third scoring drive with a 31-yard pass to Jonet. Momentum bogged down in the red zone, but Schmelebeck scored from the 3 on fourth down. Wykons 20-0 with five minutes left till halftime.

Big stop: Let's fast forward past the punts, the penalties, the floats and Homecoming coronation. Midway through the third quarter, Houghton got moving with two first downs and QB Benjamin Collaer's 22-yard pass to Ryan LaBerge to the Wykon 26.

But WIC's pass rush came on strong. On second down, Collaer was sacked by Zac Lincoln and Peterson. Two plays later, Peterson and Bryson Heimerl crashed the party,

Wykon ball at their 38. One play and two penalties later, the double handoff play arrived --Peterson to Schmelebeck to Newby, who zipped around left end and down the far sideline 49 yards before being hauled down at the Houghton 2--Newby left the game after a tackler landed on his neck. Peterson scored from the 1 on a keeper, and West Iron led 26-0.

That's how it ended. Houghton made one last concerted effort to score in the final minutes, driving to the Wykon 25, but Joe Pisoni's interception near the goal line preserved the shutout.

Adjustments: Houghton used one formation that gave WIC some problems. That was corrected at halftime, but a series of Wykon penalties kept Gremlin drives alive in the second half.

The long halftime program, the coach noted, seemed to dull the Wykons' edge in the second

half. After they scored their fourth touchdown, “Then it was finishing out the game, running a lot of kids on and off the field.”

Coaches had to do a lot of running to fill positions due to several injuries. Some Wykons had to play out of position, and some were assigned brand new roles—WIC ran out of defensive backs in the second half.

“The kids who came in played sound,” Berutti said. “A few struggles, but you’ve got to expect that. You can’t teach a kid all 11 positions during the week.

“It was a good performance by us,” he added. “Houghton’s defense is pretty decent—they’ve held teams defensively. Offensively, I don’t think they have much of an identity. With their third coach in three years, that’s to be expected.”

Injuries: The Wykons played without Tyler Stafford and Zach Marcell, hurt in the Ironwood game, and lost Rogers, Cody Desjardins and Tyler Capadagli during the afternoon. As of Sunday mor ning, Berutti expected all five to be ready for Friday night.

Numbers: Offense: WIC, 358 (46-316r, 4-11-42p), Htn 193 (34-130r, 5-16-63p). First downs: WIC 14, Htn 11.

Rushing: Adam Newby, 9-118; Alec Schmelebeck, 18-116; Chasz Jonet, 6-37; Ron Varney, 3-18. Receiving: Jonet, 3-42; Schmelebeck, 1-0. Passing: Andrew Peterson, 4-11-42, 2 int.

Defense: Tackles: Jonet, 8t-3a; Schmelebeck, 7t-2a; Varney, 5t-3a. Sacks: Bryson Heimerl, Peterson, Brandon Clifford. Fumble recovery: Andy Ridolphi. Interception: Joe Pisoni.

Coming up: The Wykons visit Calumet on Sept. 28. True, the Copper Kings (2-3) lost their first three games this season, but they were to Northland Pines, Negaunee and Ishpeming—all three are 5-0 entering this week. Calumet beat Hancock 47-20 on Sept. 21.

“It’s a good size school—480 kids,” Berutti noted. “They’re always big, and they’re always tough.”

Gremlins 0 0 0 0 -- 0
Wykons 14 6 6 0 -- 26