Kick-off ignites Knight victory over Barons

By Marty Budner
staff writer

Bloomfield Hills Lahser coach Bob Kefgen didn't even see the key play of his team's amazing 21-17 come-from-behind victory over district rival Bloomfield Hills Andover Friday at the Pontiac Silverdome.

The Knights had just scored a touchdown with four minutes left in the game, but still trailed the Barons 17-14. On the ensuing kick off the Barons were packed around midfield expecting an on-side kick.

The on-side kick never occurred.

Lahser kicked away and the ball looped over the surprised Andover players, bounced crazily around the 25-yard line and actually rebounded towards the on-rushing Knights. Lahser took possession when senior Matt Koepp recovered the ball at the Barons' 32-yard line.

It took the Knights just six plays — culminated by Roy Smith's 4-yard straight dive over left end — to reach the end zone. The extra point was good and the Knights held on to slay the Barons in the annual season-ending game for the 'Sword,' which signifies the mythical city champion of Bloomfield Hills.

Lahser, which now has won three straight and six of the last nine games over Andover, finished its season with a 5-4 record. But it didn't come easy.

THE KNIGHTS fell behind early, trailed by 11 points halfway through the fourth quarter and, even when they scored to make it close with four minutes left, victory appeared unlikely. But the unintentional on-side kick was the difference between a winning and losing season.

"To tell you the truth, I didn't see the kick-off," said Kefgen, who watched the game from the Silverdome press box and was stuck in an elevator heading towards the playing field when Lahser got its big break.

"When (Andover) scored I thought it was all over for us. But it was a great thrill the way we came back," he said. "To come back from two touchdowns with something like five minutes left was really something."

football

For Andover, it was merely another disappointing loss in a season where the Barons hoped to log a winning record for the first time since 1985. It didn't happen. Andover finished with a 4-5 overall mark.

"It seems like we're always on the wrong end of a losing score a lot," said second-year Andover coach John Brooks. "We made some crucial turnovers that hurt us. We have to stop making those kinds of mistakes at some point in our program if we intend on winning some games.

"It's just very frustrating to lose games like this," he said.

Brooks agreed Lahser's kick-off recovery was the game's turning point.

"That kick-off killed us. We were watching for an on-side kick," he said. "That was probably a bad decision on our part. But Lahser has a great team and it was a great win for them."

Lahser took the game's opening kick off and held the ball nearly eight minutes. The Knights drove all the way down to the Andover 7-yard line, but came up empty when Andover's Chris Pero intercepted a pass in the end zone.

The Barons then took over and drove 80 yards to open the scoring. The touchdown came in the second quarter when Pero threw a 22-yard pass to Jason Blum. Todd Lansky booted the extra point for a 7-0 lead, and that's the way the first half ended.

It was not a good half for Lahser, which suffered three interceptions, five penalties and a touchdown that was called back.

"It was the first time in three years that I really reamed (the players) out at halftime," said Kefgen. "Normally I'm a positive person. But we did not have a good half. We moved the ball on that first drive and didn't score.

"We just seemed to self-destruct so I gave them the classic ream-em-out speech," said Kefgen. "It was emotional and that's what we needed."

THE HALFTIME speech didn't take quick effect.

In fact, the Barons scored next when Lansky kicked a 25-yard field goal late in the third quarter. The Knights finally scored on the last play of the third quarter when Smith rambled in from 13 yards out. They missed the two-point extra-point conversion.

ANDOVER SCORED, however, on its next possession.

Jason Wilson returned a kick off 32 yards into Lahser territory and the Barons needed just four plays to score. Pero threw a 33-yard touchdown pass to Wilson with just under 10 minutes left, and when Lansky kicked the extra point for a 17-6 lead, things looked dim for Lahser.

But the Dome quickly brightened with excitement.

The Knights scored with 4:18 remaining on an 18-yard touchdown run by Brett Roberts. Quarterback Mark Morgan ran in the two-point conversion to make it 17-14.

Lahser unexpectedly got the ball back on the ensuing kick off, then won the game three minutes later on Smith's touchdown run. The Barons got to run a few plays but did not complete a pass. Andover's possession actually ended with an interception by Lahser's Fred Pape.

The Knights got their option game going in the second half and finished with 202 of their total 288 yards in the final two quarters. Morgan completed 14 of 26 passes for 176 yards. Pape caught five passes for 101 yards while Leo Bowman caught four passes for 48 yards. Smith rushed for 60 yards.

Pero completed 10 of 25 passes for 125 yards. The Barons had 211 total yards, including 86 rushing.

Groves kickers blank Lathrup

Rick Brown scored both goals Wednesday as Birmingham Groves defeated visiting Southfield-Lathrup, 2-0, in a Class A second-round district game.

The win evened Groves' overall record at 8-8. Brown, a junior center-forward, now has scored nine goals on the year. Sophomore right winger Mike Fluegal picked up an assist on both goals.

Goalkeeper Dan Gross earned his fifth shutout, recording six saves.

COUNTRY DAY 9, ROEPER 0: Chris Sjoholm scored three goals and Tim Webb notched his 12th shutout, leading Detroit Country Day to a lopsided win Wednesday in the second-round of a Class B-C-D district

The Yellow Jackets, 16-4-0 overall, led 7-0 at halftime. Bloomfield Hills Roeper finished its season at 13-5-1 overall.

Chris Castillo, Andrus McDonald, Pat Quint, Scooter Place, Dave Williams and Brett Levine scored one goal each for the winning team.

AVONDALE 3, CRANBROOK 1: In a battle of state-ranked teams, Auburn Hills Avondale outlasted Bloomfield Hills Cranbrook, 3-1 Wednesday in a Class B second-round district game.

Hoc Dinh gave Avondale a 1-0 halftime lead and he added a score on a penalty kick in the second half that proved to be the game winner. After Cranbrook's Mike Okumura made the score 2-1, Jason Sloan added an insurance goal for Avondale.

The win improved the Yellowjackets to 13-3-2 overall and Cranbrook fell to 11-4-3

Matt Swigart was the winning goalkeeper and had a tremendous first half, according to Avondale coach Kip Pichel.

"It was a pretty good game all around," Pichel said. "A typical state-tourney game. They outshot us 14-8 but I thought it was a pretty evenly-played game."

Cranbrook won an earlier meeting between the two teams and the other game ended in a tie.

"We knew we could play with them," Pichel said. "But we knew they were a good team."

BROTHER RICE 2, SEAHOLM 1: Birmingham Brother Rice took a 2-0 lead and hung on to win a second-round Class A district game, 3-1, Wednesday over Birmingham Seaholm.

Pete Duggan scored the first two goals for Rice and Rob Ferguson added the third goal for the Warriors. Aaron Sawicky had two assists and Matt Sullivan picked up one assist.

John Boudreau earned the win in net for Rice, stopping six shots. Seaholm's only goal came on a penalty kick. Rice had 11 shots on goal.

W. BLOOMFIELD 4, ANDOVER 1: Andy Korcek gave Bloomfield Hills a 1-0 lead in the first half but it didn't last long as West Bloomfield rallied for a 4-1 win in a second-round Class A encounter at home

Chuck Selinger scored three goals for West Bloomfield and Mike Sloan added a fourth. Matt Andreae assisted on three West Bloomfield goals

Goalkeeper Tom Sepanske, making his first appearance of the year, regrouped after the shaky start for West Bloomfield and finished the game with eight saves

Sepanske broke his thumb last spring

"It's good to have him back," West Bloomfield coach Tim Holfretter said. "They took the cast off a couple weeks ago. He said he felt good enough and played real well. It gave the kids a big lift. We played real well together. We basically showed how good we can be."

Andover swimmers streak by Troy

In its last dual meet before league and state championships, the Bloomfield Hills Andover girls swimming team defeated Troy, 99-53.

Andover, members of the Southeastern Michigan Association, won both relays and the Barons had five individual champions.

Winning the 200 medley relay in a time of 2:10.32 were Rachel Zobel, Laura Bihlmeyer, Kelly Findlay and Michele Hitchuk. The 400 free relay team of Allison Batdorff, Natalie Hichuk, Michele Hitchuk and Christy Wieke placed first in 4:22.93.

Jodie Shapiro was a double winner, as she conquered the 100 fly (1:06.8) and 100 breast (1:18.80). Christy Wieke won the 200 free (2:07.52), while Bihlmeyer took the 200 IM (2:29.67) and Zobel finished first in the 100 back (1:12.02).

Freshman Laura Mihalloff won the diving competition with a personal best of 193.Guiding the Barons this fall are first-year head coach Bill Rea and assistant George O'Brien. Lori Wettlaufer is the diving coach.

W. BLOOMFIELD 88, LAHSER 84: West Bloomfield warmed up for Wednesday's Metro Suburban Activities Association (MSAA) meet with a narrow, 88-84 win Thursday over host Bloomfield Hills Lahser.

The win clinched third place for West Bloomfield in the MSAA at 5-2, one meet ahead of fourth place Lahser. The Lakers are 10-3 overall and take a positive outlook into this week's league meet.

Birmingham Groves, undefeated in seven MSAA meets, is the favorite.

"We have an outside chance for first," West Bloomfield coach Bob Crosby said. "But if Groves and Rochester Adams swim like they're capable of, I don't think we have any chance. It'll be a tremendous battle between Groves and Rochester Adams. It will probably be a battle between us and Lahser for third."

West Bloomfield won the 200 medley relay as Anita Grinberga, Kristen Barnes, Betsy Sergeant and Lisa Karchnak combined for a 2:04.23 time.

Linda Goldstein was the individual star, winning both the 200 free (2:00.72) and 100 free (55.71). Sergeant and Barnes were the other individual champions, winning the 100 fly (1:06.31) and 100 breast (1:16.12), respectively.

Lahser, which trailed the entire meet, closed the gap in the final race by winning the 400 free relay (3:51.70) behind the swimming of Ashley Mosher, Stacey Lomer, Jill Jennings and Charnele Kennedy.

Lomer was a double winner, claiming the 200 IM (2:23.97) and 500 free (5:24.83). Other winners included Mosher, 50 free (25.15), Jenny Dixon, diving (270.6 points), and Jennings, 100 back (1:07.53).

On Tuesday, Groves remained undefeated in the MSAA with a convincing, 103-69 win over West Bloomfield

The Falcons won both relays and took six of the eight individual events to win their last home meet of the season.

Jill Conners and Liz Huckabay each won two events. Conners took the 200 free (2:03.80), and she recorded a state-qualifying time in the 500 free (5:21.67). Huckabay's wins came in the 50 free (26.13) and 100 free (56.70).

Other winners included Jacki Vail and Kristi Rowan, who won the 100 back (1:06.91) and 100 breast (1:18.16), respectively.

The Groves 200 medley relay team of Vail, Rowan, Julie Eusebio and Amy Smith placed first (2:00.94) and the 400 free relay team of Conners, Dena Bernstein, Vail and Huckabay also took first place.

Kim Heeney was second place in diving with 167.05 points

AUBURN HILLS AVONDALE won its own swimming and diving invitational Thursday, scoring 304 points. Pontiac Central came in second place with 300, followed by Clarkston 249, Bloomfield Hills Kingswood, 204 and Pontiac Northern, 27

Sue Strate won two events — the 200 IM (2:26.6) and the 100 breast (1:14.02)

Avondale also won the 200 medley relay, as Amy Chandler, Strate, Pam Edwards and Ebony McCauley combined to win in 2:13.89

basketball

Colts bomb Jays

Junior guard Pam Stoffel scored 13 points and Troy High held off Southfield, 37-26 Thursday in a girls basketball game played at Southfield.

Troy is 12-5 overall.

Dana Hill paced Southfield, 2-14 overall and 1-12 in the SMA, with 11 points.

ATHENS 43, LATHRUP 21: Troy Athens more than doubled its opponent's total Thursday, and the Red Hawks improved their overall record to 10-6 in the process.

Julie Sperley, a senior forward, led Athens with 11 points and senior forward Barb Saputo scored nine points and grabbed nine rebounds.

Host Southfield-Lathrup was led by senior forward Gena Wright, who poured in nine points and hauled down nine rebounds.

Athens led 24-9 at halftime.

COUNTRY DAY 74, MT. CLEMENS 49: Peggy Evans scored 33 points and grabbed 21 rebounds to lead Detroit Country Day past host Mount Clemens Thursday.

The Yellow Jackets, 14-1 overall and ranked No. 1 in Class C, also got 18 points from guard Natalie Neaton. Kelley Mires scored nine points for DCD and grabbed 15 rebounds.

Mount Clemens trailed 37-22 at halftime, but sophomore guard Tanisha Stevens refused to give up, leading her team with 30 points. Mount Clemens is 10-5 overall.

DCD hosts Oak Park Tuesday.

MARIAN 96, CABRINI 48: Birmingham Marian led 26-7 after one quarter and coasted to the win Thursday in the first-round of the Catholic League playoffs played at Allen Park Cabrini.

Hazel Olden scored 14 of her game-high 27 points in the first quarter and Jaimie Racine added 12 points for Marian, now 12-5 overall.

Cabrini was led by Theresa Marquette, who finished with 14 points.

Marian had 27 steals and 14 Mustangs players scored. Marian meets Livonia Ladywood in the next round at University of Detroit's Calihan Hall.

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