

NFHS to be big test

G. C. East air attack dumps Thurston

By ANITA CRONE

Wet weather is good for flowers, grass, trees and ducks.

Wet weather is not particularly appreciated by Panthers — and the Garden City East varsity football squad is no exception.

Wet weather makes the football slippery and wrecks havoc with a strong passing game — a forte of the Panthers.

A downpour which started with the opening kickoff held a Coach

Gary Humphrey's gridders to only 14 yards in the air during the first quarter.

But the rain was not enough to keep East from coming on with an aerial attack, and up its record to 3-0. The Panthers handed a young Thurston team its third loss, 27-12.

After an exchange of punts, Thurston committed error No. 1.

Eagle co-captain Tom Szpond fumbled the ball on his own 26 yard line, and Panther defensive

end John Sullivan scooped up the loose ball.

With 7:15 remaining on the clock, the Panthers found themselves on the Eagle 26-yard line.

Eight plays later, Panther quarterback Britt Ponte sneaked in from one yard out.

The extra point attempt by John Barnstable failed and the score stood at 6-0.

The second error by the Eagles was a heart breaker for the Thurston fans. A 67-yard touchdown run by Eagle halfback Gary Abundis was called back because of an offsides call. The first quarter ended with the Panthers holding on to a slippery six-point lead.

In the second half the Panthers put it together, with quarterback Ponte hitting his fullback Joe Becszelko who caught the first of his three touchdowns passes for the Panthers — a 66 yarder.

Becszelko seemed to have no trouble hanging on to the passes and scored late in the third quarter on a 53 yard pass play and again on a 10 yard pass in the fourth quarter.

An East fumble put the Eagles in scoring position with less than two minutes left in the half.

Szpond, who had his troubles hanging onto the football, fumbled, and put the Eagles on the Panther 32.

Six plays later, senior quarterback Jerry Janssens bounded into the end zone from the one-yard

line to put the Eagles on the board for the first time.

An attempt for two points failed, and the half ended with the edge going to Garden City, 13-6.

Barely into the second half, Thurston came up with its final score of the game, using up eight plays to score.

Abundis was the offensive leader as he picked up three key yards rushing and passed for 20 yards to tight end Brian Garber for a score.

The two-point conversion failed, and with it any hope of stopping Garden City.

The second half of the game belonged to Becszelko and the Panthers. The football was dry enough to allow Garden City to open up its passing game, and Becszelko caught and ran in for two touchdowns.

"We were fortunate to win the game," said Coach Humphrey. "The rain really hurt us. We like to throw and run the option, and a slippery field cuts down on our maneuverability."

Despite the rain, the Panthers held the ball in the air for a total of 193 yards, and Ponte had seven completions in 15 attempts.

Using two quarterbacks, Thurston managed only 26 yards in the air, while picking up 139 yards on the ground.

"They killed us in the air," said Eagle coach Don Riehl. "You can't give up four touchdown passes and expect to win," the Coach added.

"But we didn't give up, and we are not going to give up. We played a much more solid game than the score indicated. As long as the boys don't give up, we're going to come through. We have quality

ball players, and a quality team," Riehl concluded.

Thurston will meet Oak Park at Oak Park Friday afternoon, while East will travel to North Farmington Saturday afternoon.

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Orchard Lake

1st league win

Canton rolls

Plymouth Canton finally put it all together with the end result — their first grid victory in the Western Six.

With everyone back off a "junior team" that went 0-5 in the loop last year, Jim Munelo's crew went down to defeat in the first two of '74.

After taking an 8-7 lead at the half, Canton scored twice in the third quarter and added one in the fourth to take home the "first" in 27-15 fashion.

"Our kids finally executed," commented Munelo whose Chiefs meet a 3-1 Northville club at home this Friday.

"I really believe that we can make a run at the Western Six now. I wasn't that surprised of Churchill beating Mott."

The first offensive play of the game against the Walled Lake club had to give Munelo visions of No. 3 into the loss column.

Mark Shurmur spurted 60 yards around end for six points and the senior fullback kicked the conversion to put the Chiefs down, 7-0.

Canton woke up in the second quarter against the then 1-1 Western squad. On a drive started on its own 22, play No. 12 saw Mike Ogden score his first of three touchdowns on a 12 yard dash.

Ogden also made good a two-point run and Canton had an 8-7 margin at the half.

The opening drive of the third stanza put Canton back on the board. A 13 yard screen pass from QB Tom Close to Ogden struck for six and Risti Mihalovich added the point-after to put the Chief margin to 15-7.

A 76 yard punt off the foot of Canton's Brian Stemberger set up the next Chief score. Western found itself down on its one and forced to kick from its end zone after failing to move the ball.

Canton took over on the Western 30 and Ogden made good the short drive with an 11 yard burst. The conversion was wide but the Canton margin wider at 21-7.

A three TD sweep by Scott Dunagan capped Canton's next 50 yard march to complete the winning assault.

With 2:15 remaining, Western eased the pain of defeat with Shurmur scoring from one-yard out to finish off a 60-yard drive. Shurmur

did his thing on the two-point play and the end saw Canton a 12-point victor.



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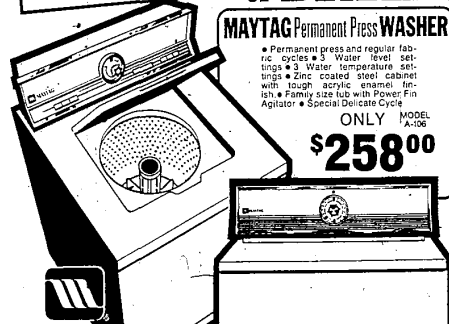


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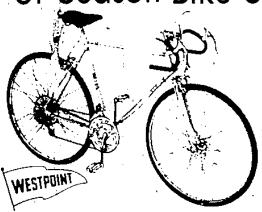
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