

Falcons survive scary finish for 20-14 win

BY ED WRIGHT
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FOOTBALL

The final minute of the Plymouth Salem-Farmington football game Friday should have been preceded by one of those warning signs that greet thrill-seekers just before they buckle up for a breath-taking trip on a 20-story rollercoaster.

It was a wild 60 seconds — not recommended for those who suffer from motion sickness or serious heart conditions. When the ride was over, the Falcons (2-1) had escaped with a 20-14 victory, their second straight at Centennial Educational Park. Farmington cruised past Canton last week on the same field, 27-0.

The loss dropped the hard-luck Rockets to 0-3, but left them with at least a trace of momentum going into this week's game against Livonia Stevenson.

Led by quarterback Grant Weber and an inspired front seven on defense, Farmington

galloped to a seemingly insurmountable 20-7 lead during the first 47 minutes.

But when Salem took over on its own 25-yard line with a minute left, the last thing on quarterback Matt Fair's mind was conceding a victory to Farmington.

Fair, who completed 12 of 25 passes for 176 yards, marched the Rockets swiftly down the field and, with 17 seconds left, was the key player in one of the most remarkable plays that will unfold on a high school football field this season.

On second-and-goal from the Farmington 6-yard line, Fair dropped back and fired a pass intended for wide receiver Jason Furr. However, the pass was batted down by a Falcon defensive lineman — right into the waiting hands of Fair, who caught the ball, rolled to the

other side of the field and lofted a perfect pass to receiver Gabe Coble for a touchdown.

Fair kicked the extra point, and the Rockets trailed by only six. Just when it looked like things couldn't get any more bizarre, they did — on the ensuing kick-off, when Fair's onside attempt bounced on the turf and deflected off a Farmington player's helmet.

Salem's Andy Koccolosi caught the deflection in mid-air and sprinted down the sideline before getting tripped up at the 8-yard-line by Farmington's Mike Addison with 14 seconds on the clock.

However, the officials correctly ruled that an onside kick touched by the receiving team cannot be returned by the kicking team, so Salem took over at the Falcon 46 in the third quarter. Fair's first attempt at a Hall Mary fell incomplete, and the second was intercepted by Weber at the 15-yard line.

"I have never seen a finish quite like that and, to tell you the truth, I don't think I will see one like that again," joked Farmington coach John Bechtel, who resembled a man who had just stepped off the Magnum at Cedar Point. "They executed that onside kick to perfection, but the official made the right call. If it didn't hit our kid, they could have run it in."

Bechtel was just as eager to discuss the game's first 47 minutes as the last minute, when his team built a comfortable lead.

"Our defensive front seven was outstanding tonight," Bechtel said. "They are getting better and better each game. They're hard to move. We didn't contain their quarterback as well as we would have liked, but I was pleased with our overall effort."

Salem coach Tom Moshimer pointed to his team's four turnovers (three interceptions and one fumble) and a botched snap on a punt as the reasons for

his team's downfall.

"We have the type of team that cannot afford to turn the ball over, especially against a team as good as Farmington," Moshimer said. "These kids have played their hearts out all three games this season, but we don't have anything to show for it."

Farmington opened the scoring on its first possession. Three plays after Todd Anthony tackled Salom punter Jason Lukasiuk on the Salom 9 following a low snap, Stephen Wayne booted a 16-yard field to make it 3-0.

Salom took its first and only lead of the game with 8:07 left in the first half when Archie Kinney burst over the goal line from 2 yards to complete an impressive 13-play, 62-yard drive. Fair's extra point made it 7-3 Salom.

The drive was highlighted by a daring, fourth-and-8 run by Koccolosi, who gained 19 yards. Salom's lead was short-lived, thanks to the heroics of Weber,

who kept the ball on an option play on the Falcons' next possession and juiced and sprinted 80 yards to the Salom 12-yard line. Three plays later, Weber snuck over from the 1 and Farmington regained the lead, 10-7.

Farmington closed out the first-half scoring with a 3:56 left on the clock. Weber galloped 29 yards on an option to improve the Falcons' lead to 17-7. The 60-yard drive was preceded by an interception by linebacker Ben Lukas.

Wayno's second field goal — a 22-yarder — made it 20-7 with 5:55 left in the third quarter. Weber finished the game with 195 yards rushing on 18 carries. He also completed four of eight passes for 38 yards.

Fullback Dave Peterson complemented Weber's effort with 46 yards on 12 carries. The Falcons amassed 313 yards in total offense to Salem's 285 yards.

Koccolosi gained 44 yards on six carries; Fair ran for 34 yards.

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the second quarter for a 35-6 halftime score.

Following a fourth TD by Woods, sophomore Agim Shabbaj ran 20 yards on a quarterback keeper in the third quarter, and junior Krishna Reid added a 5-yard TD run early in the fourth quarter.

Junior tailback Chris Roberson contributed 68 yards on just six rushing attempts, but he also had TD runs of 45 and 19 yards called back because of penalties. Harrison had 292 yards on the ground and 47 through the air. Senior quarterback Brad Tucker completed two of five passes for 39 yards, and Hadley completed his only attempt.

Wilson had eight carries for 28 of Churchill's 57 rushing yards. Churchill quarterback John Bennett was 3-of-10 passing for 33 yards.

Sophomore noseguard Marcus Menocott had eight tackles to lead the Harrison defense. Senior Ryan Lukas, senior Ryan Coyle and Reid, who had a sack and forced a fumble, had seven tackles each.

Sophomore Aaron Kennedy and junior Will Pynnt recovered

fumbles, and senior Nick Hall blocked two Churchill punts.

CLARENCEVILLE 22, HAMTRAMCK 8: The Tim Shaw train is going to chug Livonia Clarenceville right into the playoffs. Shaw ran for 374 yards on 14 carries, including an 81-yard run for a touchdown, Friday to lead unbeaten Clarenceville to a win at Hamtramck.

Shaw now is easily past 500 yards rushing in Clarenceville's three games. He also had an interception on defense. The Trojans dominated the Cosmos and held 2,000-yard rusher Aaron Brock to just 69 yards on 20 carries. He was held scoreless.

Linebacker Kalen McPherson scooped up a fumble and returned it more than 50 yards for a touchdown to help Clarenceville take a 26-8 halftime lead.

Wingback Scott Wilson opened the scoring with a 1-yard run and quarterback Tim Riedl squatted through on an option for another 50-yard-plus touchdown in the second quarter.

Roy Gutierrez made an interception to stop Hamtramck's first possession, and Latorio Helen picks off another pass to end the game.

The Cosmos got their only score on a long pass play after a Trojan turnover. Clarenceville snuffed out Hamtramck's hopes of winning the Metro Conference game when it started the third quarter by holding the ball for nine minutes. Even though it didn't score, nei-

ther did the host team.

Shaw and McPherson stood out at linebacker while free safety Robert Simpson made several big stops of Brock on screen passes.

JOHN GLENN 32, N. FARMINGTON 14: Westland John Glenn (3-0, 1-0) made a 28-0 halftime lead stand up in Thursday's WLA-Lakes Division triumph over host North Farmington (1-2, 0-1).

"The first half we were pretty sharp, but in the second half we had some penalties and mistakes we shouldn't be making at this time of the year," Glenn coach Chuck Gordon said.

Glenn had 227 yards in total offense, all on the ground. The Rockets did not complete a pass in seven attempts.

Senior tailback Eric Jones rushed for 120 yards in 17 carries, while Nick Padock added 57 yards in six attempts.

Jake Thup scored on a 3-yard TD run in the opening quarter followed by short second-quarter touchdowns runs by Jones, Randy Sinnott and Ryan Rattray.

Jeremy Caterino, who was four-for-four on extra points, booted a 45-yard field goal in the third quarter to make it 31-0.

North averted the shutout when Ryan Lewis caught an 8-yard TD pass from Blair Wells, who then connected with Brian Lafer on a 55-yard scoring pass with 3:13 left in the game.

North had 117 yards rushing and 92 passing as Wells was 6-of-12. He was intercepted twice, one each by Padock and Dan Smitherman.



Off to the races: Harrison senior Kevin Woods had a third straight 100-yard-plus rushing game Friday as the Hawks demolished the visiting Chargers, 56-6.



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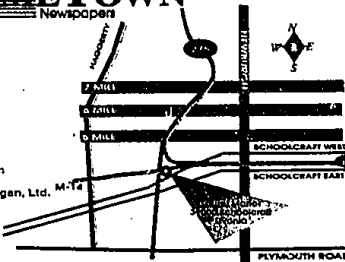
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