

Canton can't overcome Western roadblock in 41-20 loss

BY ED WRIGHT
STAFF WRITER

Plymouth Canton's resurgent drive down the road to respectability in the Western Lakes Activities Association hit a large blue-and-red speed bump Friday night — Walled Lake Western.

But like most speed bumps, the 41-20 loss to the powerful Warriors will only slow the Chiefs down, not derail them, according to Canton coach Tim Baechler.

"The bottom line is, Walled Lake Western is stronger than us right now and they're faster

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than us," Baechler said. "But we are working hard to close the gap, and I think we are. They beat us 49-7 last year."

"This year, we were only down 12 points midway through the third quarter. We're not quite there yet with the Walled Lake Westerns and the Farmington Harrison, but we're making progress."

The Warriors improved to 6-0 with the win, while Canton dropped to 3-2.

Canton opened the game like a team determined to prove to the large homecoming crowd that its 3-1 record was no fluke. Led by the powerful running of Nick Stonerock and the elusiveness of Jerry Gaines, the Chiefs drove 80 yards on seven plays on their opening drive, which was

capped by Gaines' 28-yard TD run. Oliver Wolcott's extra point upped the lead to 7-0.

Canton's lead was erased six minutes later when, one play after Western defensive back Ethan Farkas recovered a fumble, Warrior quarterback Chris Payton connected with Brian Tomlinna on a 25-yard touchdown pass. Alan Mukhtar's extra point tied the game at 7-7.

Canton's next drive mirrored its previous one when another fumble gave the Warriors the ball in excellent field position at the Canton 28. This time it took the Warriors six plays to turn the turnover into six points when Cody Cargill plunged 1 yard to paydirt, putting Western up 14-7.

"We played excellent the first nine minutes of the game," Baechler said, "but those two fumbles hurt. The turnovers

seemed to take the momentum away from us."

The Chiefs went three plays and out on their next possession and punted away to the Warriors, who, taking advantage of the momentum swing, drove 59 yards in five plays, scoring on a 14-yard run by Cargill. Mukhtar's extra-point attempt was blocked by Canton's Eric Moten. The Warriors led 20-7.

Western closed out the first-half scoring with 14 seconds left when Payton dashed 6 yards for a TD, giving the Warriors a 26-7 halftime lead.

The Chiefs chopped the deficit to 12 early in the third quarter when Gaines scored from 3 yards out and Wolcott kicked the extra point, making it 26-14. The touchdown was set up by Canton defensive tackle Asa Hensley's fumble recovery on the Warrior 12-yard line.

Less than a minute into the fourth quarter, the Warriors extended their lead to 34-14 when Cargill steamrolled 17 yards into the end zone, leaving a trail of fallen Chief defenders in his wake.

Five minutes later, the Warriors put it out of reach — 41-14 — when Payton scored his second TD on a 13-yard run.

Canton's Justin Wojtowicki scooted into the end zone from 3 yards with 17 seconds left to cap the scoring.

Western outgained Canton, 316-213. Payton led the way, hitting 10 of 18 passes for 124 yards and running for 62. Cargill also had a huge night, netting 114 yards on 14 carries.

Gaines was spectacular in a losing cause, rushing for 100 yards on 17 carries. Stonerock also turned in a solid effort, racking up 90 yards on 18 runs.

Unbeaten Shamrocks roll to easy win, 49-0

Detroit Catholic Central, the No. 1-ranked football team in the state, rolled to a 49-0 victory Friday over Pontiac Notre Dame Prep. The Shamrocks are 5-0 overall; the Fighting Irish are 0-5.

CC jumped to a 42-0 halftime lead and reeled the starters early, outgaining the Irish 333-133 in total yards.

Senior tailback John Kava had 103 yards in five carries, scoring on runs of eight and 67 yards.

Junior Matt Gable had 54 yards in 13 carries, scoring his first varsity touchdown on a 16-yard run.

Chris Davis scored on a nine-yard run and quarterback John Hill, who 7-of-10 through the air, threw touchdown passes to Matt Lorde and Steve Ivey, covering 19 and six yards, respectively.

The Shamrocks didn't score an offensive touchdown in the second half. They finished the scoring with a 74-yard interception return by Kevin Enteminger in the fourth quarter.

Placekicker Mike Sgroi converted six of six extra-point attempts. Junior Mark Willoughby also kicked a point after touchdown.

CLARENCEVILLE 41, LUTHER WESTLAND 14: Tailback Tim Shaw rushed for 157 yards and two touchdowns on six carries Friday to lead unbeaten Clarenceville to its victory over winless Lutheran Westland.

Shaw, who has nearly 900 yards in little more than half the regular season, scored on runs of 38 and 91 yards in the first quarter.

Quarterback Tim Riedl scored Clarenceville's first touchdown on a 73-yard run. Trevor Tipton kicked three extra points — he was 5-of-6 overall — to give the Trojans a 21-0 lead at the end of the first quarter.

Riedl connected with Scott Wion for an 82-yard passing touchdown in the second quarter, and Rob Fillingier returned an interception 60 yards for another score.

Clarenceville, 4-0 in the Metro Conference and 5-0 overall, led 34-0 at halftime.

Lutheran Westland (0-5, 0-4) scored twice in the third quarter.

Ray Gutierrez finished the scoring for Clarenceville with a 15-yard run in the final quarter.

Riedl carried twice for 79 yards and completed two of four passes for 87 yards.

James Peterson added 60 yards on three rushing attempts. The Trojans had 324 yards on the ground.

Kalen McPherson, Steve Rotenheiser and Shane Lakner had defensive sacks.

"Our kids played well; the Westland kids played hard," Clarenceville coach Greg Hudkins said. "We talked about learning to play as a favorite, how to prepare as a favorite, and the guys did a good job this week."

"I use the way we prepared. It was a lot better than the Burgess game. The assistant coaches did a great job this week, too."

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The Falcons tried a 41-yard field goal with 3:38 left in the half but came up short.

"At halftime we told our kids to keep their poise and realize it was a 48-minute game," Gordon said. "We knew it would go four quarters and we would have to play hard. They'd have to be tough, physically and mentally. It would take a great team effort."

Two costly penalties stymied Glenn's drive to start the third quarter, and Farmington responded as quarterback Grant

Weber directed a 12-play, 82-yard drive that ended with his 1-yard TD sneak. Stephen Wayne's extra point cut the deficit to 10-7 in the third period.

But the Falcons made only one first down the rest of the way. Weber, the object of Glenn's defensive scheme, was 6-of-13 passing for 70 yards. He was the Falcons' top rusher with 65 yards on 14 carries. Three other combined for just 35 yards in 12 attempts.

"We had to be patient and run the ball to keep it away from Weber, because we have a lot of respect for the guy," Gordon said. "We just had to stay with the plan."

"And our defenders better be where they were supposed to be. Just stay where you belong, because (Weber) can create creases with his fakes."

Bechtel said time of possession was pivotal in the matchup.

"We were confident we could drive the ball, but we didn't get the ball enough to get things going," Bechtel said. "They did a nice job of containing, especially No. 25 (Nick Padgett). He's a heckuva player for them."

But it was Jones' long TD which broke the Falcons' back.

"Their game plan was to hit us to the short side; they've done it in the past," Bechtel said. "You just don't make mistakes. We did and Glenn didn't. That's coaching; that's the program. We've made some headway, but we're not there yet. I'm proud of our kids and our coaches."

With one more victory, Glenn will earn its 11th playoff appearance under Gordon since 1985. But it won't be easy as the Rockets face another stern test Friday at Livonia Stevenson.

"Each of these teams present problems of their own. We just have to improve each time out," Gordon said.

Meanwhile, Farmington, still very much alive in the playoff race, hosts Walled Lake Central on Friday.

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