

# EFL playoff picture coming into focus

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With three weeks left in the Eastern Football League regular season, the playoff picture is coming into focus.

Middleboro, now 6-1, is still locked in a tie for first place with Hyde Park, the only team to defeat the Cobras, while Randolph has slacked off in the past weeks and its record dropped to 4-2. The Oilers, who have lost their last two regular season games and a non-league game against the Marboro Shamrocks, the 1987 EFL championship team that is now playing in the Empire State League, remain in third place.

Middleboro will travel to Charlestown Friday (8 p.m.) for a game against the much improved Townies while Randolph looks to get back on the winning track Sunday (2 p.m.) in Rhode Island against Warren (2-4).

Randolph coach Tom Pileski is not overlooking this week's opponent.

"Mike Steinhoff (the Warren owner and quarterback) caused problems for Middleboro two weeks ago," said Pileski. "The way we've been playing, we play every-one tough. We have to go out and play like we did the first half of the season. Anybody can beat anyone in this league."

Randolph lost 14-7 last weekend to Tri-Town (2-5), and a fourth-quarter penalty on a punt turned out to be a big factor in the game.

"Our coaches didn't take them (Tri-Town) lightly, but I think that some of the players may have," Pileski said.

"We had a very good practice Tuesday. The players were upset. We have to be aggressive. We haven't been aggressive in the last two games. We have to go in and be physical."

The Oilers held Warren scoreless for the first three periods and led, 7-0, after Terry Branch scored on a 32-yard run in the fourth quarter. After that, Warren controlled the tempo of the game.

"The first 4½ games we made very few mental mistakes. Since then, we've made a lot," said Pileski.

The key mistake in last week's game came after the Randolph defense had stopped the Warren offense. Warren punted the ball, but the Oilers had 12 players on the

field and Warren got the ball back, only to score the winning touchdown on its second-chance drive.

The Oilers will not be giving out second chances on Sunday.

"If we play up to our potential, then we can beat anybody in the league," claimed Pileski. "If we don't, then Mike Steinhoff and a couple of his receivers and backs may beat us."

The Cobros have not been beaten since they invaded Hyde Park and came up short, 10-3.

Last week Middleboro walked over the winless Cape Cod Bears, 36-6, but should encounter more difficulty this week in Charlestown.

The Townies, 4-3, have proved that they can put points on the board (143) as well as maintain a

solid defense (85 points against).

Besides boasting a 6-1 mark, the Cobras have scored the most points in the league (191) while allowing the least (29).

"We may have a little difficulty preparing for this game after the Cape Cod game where everyone thought it was a joke," said Middleboro general manager Jeff Mendall. "We're just looking for two good practices and we're going to try to get everybody to play hard (against Charlestown). They're a scrappy, hard hitting team, with a good quarterback, some good running and defensive backs."

So is Middleboro, but with a lot more talent.

## *Sept 20, 88* Oilers back on winning track

WARREN, R.I. — The Randolph Oilers bounced back to defeat the Rhode Island Rhinos of Warren, R.I., 27-7, in an Eastern Football League game Sunday.

The Oilers took advantage of six Warren turnovers, including five interceptions.

Quarterback Bobby Witt scored on a one-yard run and passed 18 yards to Jim Clifford for another score. Terry Branch scored first for the Oilers with a one yard dive and Mike Pittman intercepted a Rhino pass and ran it back 35 yards for the other Oilers touchdown.