

# Randolph, Middleboro cross powerful paths

By Dick Roche  
ENTERPRISE CORRESPONDENT

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## EFL

MIDDLEBORO — Everybody likes a good showdown in sports, and that's just what is going to happen Friday night at Battis Field at 8:30.

The first-place and undefeated Randolph Oilers face the Middleboro Cobras in the sixth week of the Eastern Football League season.

Randolph goes into the game at 4-0 in the league (4-1 overall) while Middleboro is one game behind the Oilers at 3-1 in league play.

"I expect a great game," said Oilers coach Tom Pileski. "These are two of the better teams in the league at this point. We play each other again later in the season (Sept. 30 in Randolph), so it's not the end if we lose. If we can go two games up (with a win), then we're obviously in pretty good shape."

The game matches up as the Randolph offense against the Middleboro defense. Randolph is the top scoring team in the league with 117 points in four games while Middleboro allowed its first points of the season in a 10-3 loss to Hyde Park last week. "In this

league, if you score 17 points or more, it means you're controlling the ball," said Pileski. "So I feel we have to score three times to be successful. That's not as easy as it sounds. Middleboro has a good defense. We have to dictate when to run and when to throw the ball."

The Cobras defense is the best by far against the run, allowing only 145 yards on the ground in the first four games.

"We can't let them force us into long second and third down plays," Pileski said. "They are quick and tough on defense. We're going to have to cut off their pursuit every snap."

The Oilers will counter with a ground game that is led by Mike Waithe, who has rushed for 276 yards (8.1 average) and Jay McGee, who has 155 yards (5.0 average) on the ground.

The Oilers have the best balanced attack in the league. They've rushed for 740 yards overall and passed for another 543. In the four league games they've only had seven turnovers while

Middleboro is second in the league in forcing turnovers with 11, eight coming on fumble recoveries. Dave Arruda has three of those recoveries along with being one of the leading tacklers on the team from his defensive line position.

The Randolph passing game is an explosive one. Mark Harding has only five catches, but for a 44.2-yard average. Ricky Witt has four receptions for a 38.2-yard average. Bobby Witt leads the league in passing percentage with a .520 completion mark.

"We have good balance," said Pileski. "I feel we're a better offensive team than last year because of our passing game."

The Cobras defensive backfield, led by Bill Jones with three interceptions, has had considerable help from the defensive line. They have come up with a league-leading 13 quarterback sacks, led by George Feroli's three.

Though the Cobras are noted for their defense, they also sport one of the best ground games in the league. Carl Fisher (255 yards, 8.5 average, four touchdowns), Craig Ross (255 yards, 10.2 average, four TD's) and Kelly

Brooks (166 yards, 7.2 average) are in the top five in rushing.

"They have the potential to go the distance on any play in the game," said Pileski of the trio. "We feel defensively we have to stop the option. They have good speed to the outside. We want to limit them, take away their big play."

The Cobras haven't had to throw the ball much this season, but when they do John Montalbano is one of the best receivers in the league. Quarterback Bob Barrett found him three times in last week's loss for 48 yards.

Randolph defensively will hope for a big game from lineman Bill Turner along with linebackers Jim Brodie and Tom Kirlis.

If the game comes down to the final seconds, both teams have strong kickers. Mike Gonsalves of Middleboro kicked a 38-yard field goal to tie the game against Hyde Park and has hit on all eight extra point attempts.

Ray Almeida is another accurate kicker as he has hit on 11 of 13 extra point attempts. He hasn't had to try a field goal this season.