

Oilers edge Tigers in 17-16 nailbiter

It was more than a win, more than a thrilling one-point win for the Randolph Oilers. "It was the most emotional we've been all year," said general manager Peter O'Kane. "There was emotion on the field and in the stands. It was like last year."

Jay McGee made a sensational 34-yard run midway through the fourth period to tie the score and Ray Almeida kicked the decisive extra point as the Oilers edged the Worcester County Tigers, 17-16, before a crowd of 480 at the high school field Friday night.

The win, the third straight for the Oilers, lifts the defending Eastern Football League champs to 4-2 on the season. "It was very satisfying," said O'Kane. "They're a powerful offensive team and they are huge. It took everything we had to stop them."

Worcester held a 16-10 lead with 5:40 left in the game. McGee climaxed a 60-yard drive with a 34-yard scoring run on which he appeared stopped at least twice. "They had him twice, but he ran very hard and broke away from the pack," said O'Kane.

Almeida, who earlier kicked a 34-yard field goal, nailed the extra point for the final margin of victory. Almeida is 17-17 on extra points and 2-2 on field goals for the season.

"He really delivered under pressure," said O'Kane. "With the size on the field, with guys 6'6" and 6'7", you have to get the kicks up quickly and that's what Ray did."

The Tigers had a late threat, but Tom McLaughlin intercepted a pass on the Randolph 20 with 1:18 left to halt the drive.

The key to the game was the Randolph defense. Worcester entered the contest with the top offense in the league, averaging over 400 yards. They were led by quarterback Tracy Kohler, the top passer in the EFL who had 908 yards through the air in his first five games.

The Oilers, who previously held Bob Jean of Ocean State to four completions, held Kohler to 61 net yards through the air and Worcester to 254 yards total offense.

"Mike Tosone is only like 178 pounds, but he played a good game at defensive tackle. Tracy Manter and Sean Frazier played well in the secondary," said O'Kane.

Offensively, the Oilers relied on their ground game. McGee had 96 yards in 13 carries and Michael Waithe had 60 yards in 14 tries. Bob Burr, who was shifted from defensive to offensive tackle, did a great job clearing the way for the backs.

"Our fullbacks, Sean Crowley and Brian Heffernan, also blocked very well,"

said O'Kane. The Oilers gained 162 yards on the ground.

An interception and a fumble halted two early Randolph drives. The Tigers went up 7-0 on a 13-yard run by Gabriel Stovall. Kohler had a 23-yard completion to Mike Jenkins to set up the score.

The defense drew the Oilers even when Nick Oleson intercepted a deflected pass on the Worcester 19 and ran it in for the score. Almeida's 34-yard field goal made it 10-7 in the second period.

The Tigers tied it on a field goal by Kyle White before the half and it stayed on 10-10 until Chris Matosic went 26 yards for a Worcester TD on an end-around play in the opening minute of the fourth period.

This put the Tigers up 16-10, but defensive tackle Pat Harte made a big play for the Oilers, crashing through to block the extra point.

McGee's run and Almeida's kick then won it for Randolph.

The Oilers meet the Hockomock Colts in Mansfield Saturday night at 7 p.m.