

Randolph falls to Marlboro in EFL opener, 21-9

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BROCKTON — Randolph Oiler coach Bob Turner saw it in his team's eyes two weeks ago. The fire that led the Oilers to a clean sweep of the Eastern Football League schedule in 1990, that fire that led the Oilers to their first ever EFL championship, was missing.

It was quite evident that fire was indeed missing in the season opener on Friday night.

The Marlboro Shamrocks, showing the anger over three losses to the Oilers in 1990, gained sweet revenge as quarterback Bill Polymeros fired three touchdown passes to lead the Shamrocks to a 21-9 victory over the Oilers at Memorial Field.

"We knew overconfidence was going to be a problem coming in," said Turner, "We had an easy exhibition game (a 39-6 win over Maine) and that really didn't do us much good. But Marlboro is a much better team (than Maine) and we knew they didn't want to lose four in a row (to Randolph)."

Polymeros made the most of his EFL debut as the former Worcester State star threw for over 160 yards and had 65 yards rushing. The Randolph offense that instilled fear in the hearts of everyone in 1990 could not get started on this night.

"(Marlboro) have been waiting for this since last October," said first-year Shamrock coach Bob Brennan, "Randolph was our only stumbling block last year so it was a big payback for us."

The game was never in doubt. The Shamrocks used the quick strike approach twice in the first half to take the early lead. Steve Carvallo's 33-yard interception return put Marlboro within striking distance. Polymeros wasted little time.

On the next play, Polymeros hit Mike Kelly in stride. Kelly made no fancy moves but just put it into overdrive for a 37-yard touchdown reception down the right sideline.

Former Boston College kicker Brian Waldron nailed the first of three extra points, making it 7-0.

Randolph mustered little offense in the first quarter but in the second quarter Bobby Witt combined with brother Ricky for a 40-yard reception to give the Randolph its first sign of life.

But Randolph could not advance much further and the Oilers settled for a Ray Almeida 32-yard field goal.

The tide changed on the ensuing kickoff. Marlboro's Greg Moore returned the kickoff to midfield before Polymeros went deep again. This time the target was Rich Flecca who caught the ball at the 10 and stumbled into the end zone, and it was 14-3.

The Randolph defense spent a great deal of time on the field and it eventually took its toll. Defensive lineman Nick Oleson and Chuck Jones are welcome additions to the Oiler defensive front and Mike Tosane added two sacks but the Oiler offense could not respond.

Polymeros displayed excellent scrambling ability in setting up Marlboro's third touchdown. He gained 37 yards rushing in the Shamrocks' 60-yard scoring drive. He completed that drive by hitting Kelly over the middle. Kelly caught the ball at the 2, avoided a hit and rolled over for his second touchdown, and the Oilers were down, 21-3.

The Oilers did score with six minutes late when a scrambling Bobby Witt drew the defensive secondary towards him. That left Mark Harding by himself. He gathered in the 60-yard scoring strike but it would not be enough.

Turner hopes that this seasons opening loss will serve as a motivating force for the rest of the season.

"We'll see the type of team we have next week," said Turner, "I have no doubt we will be in the (EFL title) hunt. But how we respond (to the loss) will tell us a great deal."