



Staff photo by Craig Ambros

Granite State's Eddie Griggs can't hold on to this pass as Randolph's Anthony Come defends during Friday night's game at Holman Stadium.

► EASTERN FOOTBALL LEAGUE/Granite State 19, Randolph 10

Warriors' defense key to victory

By BOB MACKINTOSH
Telegraph Sports Correspondent

NASHUA – Granite State Warriors general manager Jim Zimolka's prediction didn't quite come true.

He predicted Friday night's Eastern Football League semi-professional match-up between the Warriors and the Randolph (Mass.) Oilers would be a high-scoring affair. It wasn't, as the 19-10 final score showed, but the Warriors did win the regular season opener before about 1,000 fans at Holman Stadium.

The Warriors' offense accounted for 12 points, but this game was won by the defense – in the last five minutes of the game.

The Oilers, down 12-10, were marching toward the end zone, when Mike Outten stepped in front of a Chris Noble pass at the Warriors 7-yard line and ran it back to the 40-yard line. The Warriors turned the ball over on downs with just over a minute remaining, giving Randolph the ball at their own 22. Two plays later, defensive back Omar Turner intercepted another Noble pass ran it back from the Oilers' 40 all the way into the end zone. The extra point was good and the Warriors had the win 19-10.

The Warriors came out running. John Lewis found himself carrying much of the offensive load, carrying the ball 16 times for 84 yards.

The Oilers scored on the first series of the game. After a 60-yard kickoff return, Randolph started out at the 26-yard line of the Warriors. The defense hung tough, giving up a 25-yard field goal.

On the ensuing kickoff, the Warriors started out at

their own 38 and marched down the field, scoring on a 8-yard touchdown pass from Erik White to wideout Ramier Martin (seven receptions, 60 yards). The extra point was blocked.

The rest of the half was played between the 30-yard lines, until the Oilers put together a drive with 3:2 remaining in the half.

The Oilers started at the Warriors' 36 after recovering a fumble by White. From the 14-yard line Noble lofted a pass to Dan Grew in the corner of the end zone. After the extra point, the Oilers led 10-6 at halftime.

At the break, the Warriors had 60 rushing yards, while the visitors had 72. White threw for 42 yards, while his counterpart from Randolph connected for 26.

With just over a minute remaining in the third quarter, the Warriors put together a drive that lasted six minutes and covered 69 yards. White hit on 4-of-6 passes for 27 yards, and Lewis carried the ball up the middle for 22 yards and the go-ahead score. The two-point conversion was no good.

On the ensuing kickoff, the Oilers' Dan Foreman ran the ball back 30 yards to the Warriors' 49-yard line. Two plays later, Wesley Pugh rumbled for 18 and the Oilers had the ball on the 31. Three plays later, it was first and-10 on the 18. Then it was time for Outten's heroic interception.

Zimolka said he was "extremely happy" with last night's turnout.

"It shows we have the support of the community. That is great."

The Warriors play next Friday at Holman again at the Leominster (Mass.) Lions. Kickoff is 8 p.m.