

Defense propels Oilers past Hyde Park, 27-21

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Randolph —

With the efficiency of quarterback Ryan Myers and a tenacious defensive line, the season of the Randolph Oilers lives another day.

Myers completed 10 of 18 passes for 148 yards and three touchdowns as the Oilers pulled away in a 28-16 victory over the Hyde Park Seminoles in Sunday night's Eastern Football League match-up at Randolph High School.

The third-seeded Oilers, who improved to 8-3 overall, will now travel to Clinton where they'll face the second ranked Clinton Irish Blizzard on Saturday afternoon in the semi-final round. Kick-off is slated for a 2 p.m.

Originally scheduled for Friday, the contest was postponed until Sunday night due to rain.

Defensively, Jermaine Woods emerged as the top performer in the win, recovering three fumbles while Colby Gallagher contributed with one forced fumble and a recovery along with Andy Goodwin, who also pounced on loose ball.

"Our defense was very solid all around," said General Manager Peter O'Kane. "We forced (five) turnovers and that was one of the big differences in the game. We didn't turn the ball over, and we were able to get a couple of great drives going."

Off a fumble recovery by Gallagher in the game's opening minutes, the Oilers capitalized, establishing on a nine-play 40-yard drive. After a series of short rushes and screen plays, the Oilers grabbed the early 7-0 lead with 5:30 remaining. At the Seminole nine-yard line, Myers rolled to his right and fired a pass to a wide-open Brooke Payne in the end zone.

"(Myers) managed the game very well," said O'Kane. "He was able to find the open man in the flat and in the slot. He didn't make many mistakes out there and put us in position to win the game."

Minutes later, the Seminoles led a counterattack. Driving to the Oilers' three, quarterback Sal Texiera spotted wide receiver Joe Tarion in the end zone with 13:30 remaining in the second quarter. A successful two-point conversion handed the Seminoles a short-lived 8-7 lead.

After both teams traded possessions, the Oilers executed an impressive 10-play drive that spanned 96-yards and over six minutes of clock. During the drive, Myers fired a 22-yard strike to Will Price and also benefitted from a 21-yard pass interference penalty.

On a second and long at the Seminoles 16, Myers shot off a pass to Dan Callow in the flat. Callow dodged several defenders and rolled into the end zone with just 58 seconds remaining in the first half putting the Oilers on top with a 13-8 lead.

Throughout the third quarter, both teams established scoring opportunities, but the Oilers' defense held strong, stopping a pair of key third down situations.

On a five play, 51-yard drive, the Oilers increased the lead to 21-8 early in the fourth quarter. Fullback Charles Thomas, who recorded 51 yards on 12 carries, broke through on a 12-yard dash into the end zone with 12:45 remaining. A successful two-point conversion a pass from Myers to Callow handed the Oilers a two touchdown lead.

After a 47-yard kickoff return, the Seminoles struck back quickly and trimmed the gap to 21-16 as Amos Thomas dove in on a three yard plunge into the end zone with 10:00 remaining.

Capitalizing on a turnover, the Oilers secured the win as Myers guided an 11-play, 56-yard drive in the game's final minutes. At the nine-yard line, Myers rolled to his right and spotted wide receiver Matt Boutin in the end zone with just 1:43 remaining for the 28-16 lead.

"The fumbles were huge, and we were able to capitalize on them and turn them into points," said O'Kane. "They (Hyde Park) were driving the ball, but our defense came through with some timely turnovers."

On the ground, Thomas led all rushers with 51 yards while Frank Gaudette added 37 yards on eight carries followed by Payne (10 carries, 22 yards).

Defensively, the unit of John O'Brien, Callow along with Goodwyn, Al Casey all helped manage to keep the Seminole offense in check.

"The defense did a great job forcing the fumbles," said O'Kane. "We played a lot better against them, than we did a couple of weeks ago when we faced them in the regular season."

As for the next round, the Oilers certainly have their work cut out for them when they'll battle the Irish Blizzard on Saturday. In a regular season match-up the Irish Blizzard pulled away in a 27-21 win.

"They (Clinton) have some huge guys up front, and they have a lot of speed," said O'Kane. "Their defense is very strong, and they've posed problems for us in the past. We're hoping we can overcome them, play some great defense and manage the game on offense."