

Canavan's late field goal lifts Randolph Oilers to victory



Kicker Dave Canavan is mobbed by teammates after kicking the winning field goal

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Randolph Herald**

Posted Aug 25, 2009 @ 11:28 AM

Randolph —

It is a good thing that Randolph Oilers kicker Dave Canavan has thick skin.

In the first half, Canavan had to climb the ladder to field a bad snap on a punt attempt, and in the fourth quarter, he had a point-after attempt blocked.

But when Randolph needed him the most, the 42-year-old Canavan came through on Friday night.

Canavan kicked a 29-yard field goal as time ran out to give the Oilers a thrilling come-from-behind 16-14 win over the Bridgewater Gladiators in the Eastern Football League.

"I've been kicking for 17 years," said Canavan. "I just settled down and focused. Ryan Myers, my holder, got the ball down and the (offensive) line did its job.

"I don't hear anything. They can jump up and down. It's not going to bother me."

The Oilers staged an incredible comeback after falling behind 14-0 with 13:47 left to play.

On three successive possessions, Randolph scored to pull out the dramatic win.

Myers threw touchdown passes on two of those possessions to Matt Boutin covering 24 and 15 yards, bringing the Oilers within one, 14-13, with 2:57 left.

Canavan's extra point bid to tie the game was blocked by Bridgewater's Joe Kearney, and it looked like the Gladiators would hang on.

But Bridgewater could not move the ball from deep in its own territory and punted to Randolph (4-2) with less than two minutes left.

The Oilers took over at the Gladiators 39. A Myers' 20-yard pass to Will Price brought the ball to the five in the final 40 seconds.

Randolph tried to run the ball in, but was unable to, setting up the Canavan field goal.

Bridgewater (4-2) opened a 14-0 lead midway through the third quarter as the passing of Matt Letourneau and the running of Mike Massey got the Gladiators moving.

Massey scored on a 3-ayrd run and Rick Witt kicked the extra point.

Most of the first half was spent in Randolph territory with the Gladiators opening a 7-0 lead.

Both teams had two chances to score in the first half, but it was only Bridgewater that was able to find the end zone.

After Canavan missed a 30-yard field goal attempt, the Gladiators went 80 yards, mostly on the ground, to get the lone touchdown of the half.

Massey recorded the score on a third-and-long play when he went 14 yards on a draw play and Witt added the point after for the 7-0 edge with 1:47 remaining in the second quarter.

It appeared that the Oilers would come right back with a TD of their own as Myers connected with Brian Gallo on a 40-yard pass, bringing the ball to the Bridgewater 21.

Three running plays by Brooke Payne got the ball to the one with 11 seconds to go, but the Oilers had no timeouts remaining.

Randolph attempted a quarterback sneak by Myers, but he was stopped just short of the goal line by Rahim Bowman to end the half.

Bridgewater had the first scoring opportunity of the game after a short Randolph punt gave the Gladiators the ball at the Oilers' 40.

Bridgewater moved to the Randolph 14, but a fumble recovery by Colby Gallagher stopped the drive.

Randolph began at the 12-yard line and Payne's slashing running help move the Oilers into Gladiators' territory.

Myers threw a 39-yard pass to a leaping Price to get to the Bridgewater 11, but a field goal attempt went wide left.