

Vikings keep marching on

Geneva 21, Rochelle 6

Why Geneva won: The Vikings' Shaun Ratay passed for 111 yards on eight completions while Hubs QB Alex Prough struggled to an 0-for-3 finish. Geneva spent 16 total minutes of possession and scored three touchdowns while the Hubs held the ball for 31 minutes, but could only score on their first drive of the game.

Turning point: A pitch to Geneva senior Chris Modjeski late in the third quarter yielded a 63-yard touchdown run to give Geneva a 14-6 lead.

Player of the game: Modjeski scored two of the Vikings' three touchdowns and rushed for 126 yards on 15 carries.

By MAUREEN LYNCH

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ROCHELLE – Geneva hadn't played on Rochelle's football field since 1975, when the two teams met in the quarterfinals of the IHSA Class 3A state tournament in the first year of the Hubs' stadium.

In that one, the Vikings won, 21-14, to advance to the state semifinals.

Friday night, 31 years later, the Vikings scored another 21 points during their second outing on the Hubs' turf in a season shaping up to be just as special.

The Vikings defeated Western Sun Conference foe Rochelle, 21-6, to stay unbeaten.

Geneva coach Rob Wicinski's eyes widened when he realized how long it had been since the Vikings (7-0, 5-0) had made the hour-long pilgrimage to Rochelle.

"I wasn't even born yet," he joked.

If the Vikings can finish as high as second in the state this year like they did in 1975, they'd have to do it at the higher Class 6A level. Geneva came into Friday's game ranked third overall in 6A.

"We have just been trying to take it one game at a time," Wicinski said. "We have put a lot of emphasis on our long-term goals, which is to win the conference. After that, we'll re-evaluate everything, but we're trying to just stay level-headed and work on our own business."

Wicinski neatly divided Geneva's season into thirds. The Vikings' matchup with Rochelle marked the beginning of the final third of the season.

So far, so good.

Rochelle (3-4, 2-3) kept possession of the ball for a full 8 minutes to begin the game, scoring on its first trip downfield, a 78-yard drive. John Gonzalez punched in the Hubs' lone touchdown on a 13-yard run for a brief 6-0 lead.

It took Geneva less than 2 minutes to retaliate. Pat Schiller ran in a 1-yard touchdown for a 7-6 Geneva lead that the Vikings carried into halftime.

"They will hold that ball for a good 6 or 7 minutes, and that can be tough," Wicinski said. "They're a really good

rushing team."

Geneva quarterback Shaun Ratay flexed his passing muscle against a rushing-exclusive Hubs squad. Ratay went 8-for-13 to finish with 111 yards while Hubs QB Alex Prough was 0-for-3.

On a screen play late in the third quarter, Ratay connected with Chris Modjeski for a 63-yard touchdown and a 14-6 lead.

"I called out right and I knew [the Hubs' defense was] going to go right," Ratay said. "I just dropped back and was able to see everything. I held onto it until I could make sure and get it off."

Modjeski's 16-yard touchdown run late in the fourth quarter put the game out of reach.

Geneva will face fellow undefeated conference squad Kaneland next Friday.

"I don't even want to think about it," Wicinski said.

Geneva will not have another chance to play on the Hubs' current field. The stadium will close its gates this year, and a new field will be built less than a mile away.