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## Wrap job

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By **RICK ARMSTRONG** STAFF WRITER

GENEVA -- They didn't exactly FedEx it, but the Geneva offense finally delivered Saturday as the Vikings moved on in the IHSA Class 6A playoffs with a 21-13 win over Chicago Hubbard.

What can Shaun Ratay do for you, Rob Wicinski?

"I survived another day with the gunslinger," the Geneva coach said with a wry smile.

He was referring to his lanky 6-foot-7 quarterback, who passed for 177 yards and two touchdowns and posted another score on a 12-yard run by lowering his shoulder and plowing through a would-be tackler to get into the end zone.

Meanwhile, the Viking defense was hardly snail-mail, coming up with a key first-half, goal-line stand then shutting down the Greyhounds in the second half to seal the win that sends to Vikings to a Friday quarterfinal date at Oswego at 7 p.m.

Hubbard, led by highly touted running back Robert Hughes and said to feature as many as seven Division 1-A recruits, reached the state semifinals last year and the Public League power looked to be on course again after winning the first half.

Geneva had taken advantage of good field position to march 51 yards on its first possession to take a 7-0 lead on Ratay's 4-yard scoring toss to fullback Pat Schiller, but the visitors' defense then stepped up.

The Vikings gained a mere 34 yards the remainder of the half.

"We kind of lost field position," explained Wicinski. "We had some things we thought were working and were still there, we just didn't execute."

Hubbard, which claimed a 172-85 edge in total yards in the first half, answered with a 15-play, 80-yard drive. It was capped by an 11-yard Hughes scoring run. The 6-foot-1, 230-pounder who has drawn interest from the likes of Notre Dame, rushed 23 times for 111 yards but earned them.

Six of his carries were for zero or negative yardage as the Vikings linebacker corps of Schiller, Alex Springhorn, Brennan Quinn and Josh Brennan keyed on him and quarterback Sean Cattouse, who is drawing interest from big-time programs as a receiver recruit.

"That 33 (Hughes) and 6 (Cattouse), we kept harping on that this week," said Wicinski. "These are the best players, speed-wise, skill-wise, character-wise and athletically that you're gonna play, so you need to really bring your A game. We'll have to see some film, but it looks like they pretty much did."

The linebackers were free to fly to the ball carrier because Wicinski's defensive line of Karl Sandman, Colton Potts, Matt Caliendo and Maxx Parcell were doing a good job of occupying Hubbard's big offensive line. The Greyhounds' roster featured four players topping 300 pounds and 10 more who were 230 or more.

"He was trucking," Schiller said of Hughes. "Robert is a very good, hardnosed runner. At 230 pounds, it's like trying to tackle a lineman."

Hubbard took advantage of good field position to drive 42 yards for a second score in the final minute of the half on a 25-yard option pass from Hughes to wide receiver Dana Purcell.

It could have been a bigger margin, but the Viking defense stopped the visitors at the 1-yard line earlier in the second quarter.

"When you get down on the 1 and can't score," Hubbard coach Elton Harris said with a shake of his head. "They outplayed us."

Ratay spoke of his relationship with his coach and said, "I think we're on the same wavelength. But at times, I get carried away and he'll be like, 'Take a deep breath.'"

That was apparently true three plays after that goal-line stand. On third-and-5 from his own 6, Ratay launched a long pass that overshot his well-covered, intended receiver.

"It was an awesome job by the defense down there to get us the ball back," said Wicinski.

"Then we threw play action there and the primary receiver was open, but I got a gunslinger on my hands. And he wanted to go for it all. You live and die by it."

Like he said. This day he survived.

That's because Ratay and the offense won the second half, piling up 190 total yards while the Viking defense was holding Hubbard to 59. For the game, Geneva held a 275-231 edge.

Ratay gave his team the lead when he rolled left, pump faked, waited a moment, then fired a 23-yard TD pass to Michael Mayszek with 11:23 left in the fourth quarter. It gave the Vikings a 14-13 lead after Brian Maurovich's second of three PAT kicks.

"They'd been giving us the hitch (route) all game," said Ratay. "I felt (the cornerback) would bite and he did. I wasn't real happy with the throw I made (into the wind). I got it up in the air and it was a little short. I needed to get more on it but Mayszak did a nice job to come back and get it."

His scoring run capped a 14-yard drive after the defense did it again, stopping the Greyhounds on downs at the Viking 15.

"It's my senior season and maybe my last game," said Ratay. "You can't hold back."

Said Wicinski, "I don't design a whole lot of plays for him to run. He kind of does a lot of that on his own. I'm glad he did."