



## Augustine stands tall

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At 6-foot-6, Joe Augustine stands out in the offensive huddle.

On Friday night, his play stood above the crowd as the senior wide receiver caught a team-high 5 passes for 137 yards and a pair of touchdowns while lifting Geneva to a 35-14 Class 7A second-round football playoff triumph over St. Charles East before a packed house at Burgess Field.

Big stage, big-time performance.

"It was great to finally throw the ball around," said Augustine, who entered the game as the Vikings' leading receiver with 31 catches for 622 yards and 7 touchdowns. "We had horrible conditions the last two games.

"Tonight, the game plan was to throw the football more and show that we're a balanced team."

While junior tailback Michael Ratay added to his team-leading touchdown totals (18) with 3 more TD runs, Augustine provided his own clutch offensive heroics.

Late in the first quarter, his 10-yard catch on a 4th-and-6 play helped set up Ratay's 9-yard touchdown run that tied the game at 7-7.

Midway through the second quarter, Augustine caught a sideline pass in front

of the Saints' bench from quarterback Michael Mayszak and raced 64 yards for a touchdown that tied the contest at 14-14.

"It was a short pass," said Augustine. "I made kind of a double move and just went down the sideline. I broke one tackle and that's all I had to do."

Perhaps his biggest catch came with 2:58 left in the third quarter when he beat double coverage and hauled in a 43-yard TD toss from Mayszak on a 3rd-and-8 play to extend the Vikings' lead to 28-14.

"It was actually supposed to be a run play," said Augustine. "Mike (Mayszak) audibled into a deep pass and threw it up there perfectly."

His final reception of the game -- a 12-yard catch on 3rd-and-13 -- led to Ratay's 18-yard TD run with 4:50 remaining that sealed the outcome for the unbeaten Vikings (11-0).

Not bad a guy who put on his first pair of shoulder pads two years ago.

"I started playing football my sophomore year (on the sophomore team)," said Augustine. "I played basketball and baseball freshman year and then switched over to football and track."

"We had to work on him," said Mayszak. "At first, he was like, 'I don't know,' and then we said, 'Joe, you've got to come out.'"

"He's got the speed, he's got the height so I've just got to throw it out there and let him run or throw it up and let him go up and get it."

After catching just 1 pass the previous 2 games, Augustine was a go-to guy against the Saints.

"I might be the goofiest guy in the world not getting that guy the ball more often, but it's been a process," said Vikings coach Rob Wicinski. "He's a diamond in the rough. Some people would be very, very fortunate to get him at the next level."

Saints coach Ted Monken concurred.

"A big, tall kid that can run -- he's special," said Monken.