

Geneva 27, Yorkville 24

By Kevin McGavin | Daily Herald Correspondent

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One year after sending three representatives to the state semifinals, the Western Sun Conference has lost none of its luster.

Yorkville came to Geneva on Friday night for the league opener, and what ensued was a free-for-all of special teams gems and blunders, opportunities seized and lost and the Vikings coming through more times than the game Foxes.

When the dust settled and the last of the mosquitoes were shooed away, Geneva escaped with a 27-24 verdict to capture its third win of the season against no defeats.

Yorkville, which came into the game riding back-to-back non-conference shutout victories, fell to 2-1, 0-1.

"It was an awesome game to be a part of," said Geneva coach Rob Wicinski.

After being victimized by a first-quarter blocked punt and muffing the second-half kickoff to give Yorkville its second lead of the game, it was the Vikings' special teams that provided a spark in the third.

With Yorkville leading 17-13 late in the third quarter, Trevor Hyslop tackled the Foxes' punter for a 13-yard loss, paving the way for the Vikings to turn the tide.

Quarterback Michael Mayszak, who connected on 40-yard-plus hookups late in the first quarter to revive the dormant Geneva offense, had back-to-back scrambles, evading twin defenders in the backfield on the second, to give the Vikings first and goal.

"It was a designed play," said Mayszak, who finished with 149 yards' passing and two scores. "It all happened so fast -- bang, bang."

Michael Ratay burst off right guard two plays later to give Geneva the lead for good with 10 seconds remaining before the decisive fourth quarter.

Geneva not only recovered the ensuing fumbled kickoff, but in the opening minutes of the fourth quarter would be the beneficiaries of a blocked punt and interception by Hyslop.

Unfortunately for the Vikings, the Foxes' defense rose to the challenge on every occasion, recovering a fumble to stymie the first possession, a loss of downs on another and a missed field goal on the last.

"That's how you get clipped," said Wicinski, noting the Vikings' consecutive failures to capitalize.

The fourth straight Yorkville miscue would not go unanswered, however.

Six plays after Casey Emanuel victimized the Foxes' backup quarterback for another interception, Ratay rumbled untouched around left end to give Geneva a 27-17 lead with 2:28 to play.

The two-score cushion was needed as Yorkville starter Andrew Rosati returned to engineer a three-play, 58-yard scoring drive in 28 seconds.

But Mayszak had the critical throw of the game, a 29-yard completion to Joe Augustine, to enable the Vikings to run out the clock.

Yorkville led 10-0 after a James Bati second-quarter field goal. But Geneva, limited to a mere first down, went 90 yards, with Ratay accounting for the final 44 on a throw-back screen.

Moments later, a Jake Conforti pick allowed Mayszak and Augustine to hook up for a 42-yard crossing pattern.

"I should have run out the half," said Yorkville coach Jim Still.