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Schwab: Perfection well within Vikes' reach



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GENEVA – Partially because of a comfy early schedule and partially because of the workmanlike way Geneva wins football games, the hype for the undefeated Vikings has been relatively tame.

Has, as in past tense.

With Friday's 24-15 win against second-place Rochelle, Geneva surged to 7-0, clinched its fourth straight conference title and officially ushered in open season for Vikings fans to start talking crazy.

It's OK to think big with this group. The Vikings might not be a team that makes college scouts drool, but they have too much in their favor to short-sell their ambitions.

Consider this: if Geneva can avoid the upset bug against Kaneland and Batavia the next two weeks, the Vikings will have run the table in the regular season for the first time in 22 years.

Some mighty Vikings teams have come and gone during that time span, several under the tutelage of coach Rob Wicinski.

This team appears on the verge of rocketing to rarified air in the program's history.

After the game, Wicinski initially seemed ambivalent about the prospect of a perfect regular season, saying he wasn't aware how long it has been since Geneva has turned the trick. Told it's been more than two decades, the coach's tone shifted.

"That's kind of cool," Wicinski allowed, apparently warming to the goal.

The way Wicinski talks, he wouldn't be shocked if his team was 0-7 instead of 7-0. Quite accurately, he points out that his Vikings seldom come out and pound a team into submission.

"It's not like we've been overwhelming in any game," Wicinski said.

They weren't against the Hubs, who had possession down by only one score with almost 4 minutes to work with in the fourth quarter.

But the defense – the chief strongsuit on a well-balanced Geneva team – kept the Hubs' Wing-T parked 80 yards from the end zone, and Geneva put Rochelle away with a last-minute field goal.

Other than a few memorable plays – most notably, Drew Fagot's 63-yard touchdown run and a 38-yard touchdown pass from Mike Mayszak to Joe Augustine – it was another night when Geneva triumphed simply from being more solid at more positions than the opponent.

Let's not sell Geneva's personnel short. While Geneva might not have any great players, there are plenty of very good ones.

Veteran Rochelle coach Kevin Crandall bristled when it was suggested that the Vikings – for a 7-0 team – win in

unspectacular fashion.

"They've got an awful lot of talent," Crandall said. "I'd like to have a little bit of it."

Even better, Geneva has no obvious holes.

The defensive line has size and grit, as evidenced by a clutch goal-line stand early in the fourth quarter. If the D-line falters, linebacker Brennan Quinn usually is there to put an end to the offense's fun. The secondary rarely is caught looking foolish, more than most high school teams can say.

And on offense, Wicinski is delighted by improvement from both the line and a growing pack of reliable backs. Michael Ratay continued to show Friday he might be the area's best second-effort runner, and Sean Grady and Fagot ripped off crucial TD runs.

Throw in Augustine, a legitimate field-stretcher at receiver, and you have a multi-dimensional offense.

Geneva does too many things well for teams to counter.

That's why perfection is well within their grasp.

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