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## Vikings avenge last year's losses, finish undefeated

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 Comments (No comments posted.)

BATAVIA – The Geneva football team did not need a win in Friday's showdown with rival Batavia.

Sure, the program's first undefeated regular season since 1985 was on the line, as was avenging a pair of home losses to the Bulldogs last year, including being shut out in the IHSA Class 6A state semifinals.

But the Vikings already had wrapped up the Western Sun Conference title and a home playoff game in Round 1.

After Geneva's 14-12 win against Batavia, however, the Vikings showed just how important beating their rival truly was.

"We wanted this one," Geneva senior quarterback Mike Mayszak said. "We were hungry from last year. We didn't have much pressure. This was just a pride game. We didn't want to lose."



Geneva's Michael Ratay, right, works his way past Batavia's Cameron Conolty of Batavia during Friday's game at Batavia High School. (Bob Gerrard photo)

A big defensive play from junior Sean Grady and some strong running in the final drive from junior Michael Ratay preserved the win for Geneva (9-0 overall, 7-0 WSC) in front of a mixed, overflow crowd.

Batavia (5-4, 4-3) scored on a 19-yard touchdown pass from Jordan Coffey to Eric Zeddies with 4:16 seconds left in the fourth quarter to cut the Vikings' lead to 14-12. The pass came one play after Coffey lost 12 yards on a Trevor Hyslop sack.

On the two-point conversion attempt, Coffey looked for Ryan Webb on a dig route but Grady came over the top of Webb to deflect the ball and preserve Geneva's lead.

 [Click here to watch highlights of the Viking's win over the Bulldogs.](#)

"We thought if we ran a double move on them with the way their corners were playing we would be able to get a guy open," Coffey said. "I didn't make the greatest pass. I made it too easy a deflection for him. That one is on me completely. I should have thrown it high and away from him because he's a bigger receiver."

Then, Ratay took over. Eight of Geneva's final nine plays were Ratay runs, and the other one was supposed to be, if not for a mishandled snap.

Ratay ground out three first downs, including a 13-yard run on fourth-and-3 on the game's final play, to salt the final minutes away and give Geneva the win.

"He rarely fumbled in his whole career, runs over kids," Mayszak said. "It takes four guys to bring him down. It's great to have him when the time is running down."

Both teams exchanged two turnovers in the first half, but only one led to a score. Coffey threw an interception to Geneva's Casey Emanuel in the first quarter. A 32-yard run from Ratay and an 11-yard scamper from Mayszak led to Ratay's 3-yard touchdown run and a 7-0 lead.

"It was one of those throws that we worked really hard on in practice to get it out of bounds or get it down in the dirt," Batavia coach Mike Gaspari said of the interception.

Batavia cut the lead to one with an electrifying Bai Kabba run. After the Bulldogs forced Geneva to punt, Kabba took the next play 36 yards for a touchdown with 11:02 left in the second quarter.

"He's fast and quick and he can hit the hole and then he's right up the field," Geneva junior linebacker Brennan Quinn said of Kabba, who ran for 167 yards on 24 carries. "You miss one spot, and he's gone."

The point-after attempt was blocked, however, making it 7-6.

"I know they kind of botched it, but we had to be there to make the play," Geneva coach Rob Wicinski said.

Ratay (127 yards on 25 carries) was at it again in the third quarter, scoring the eventual game-winner with 56 seconds left in the quarter from 18 yards out.

Batavia appears to be safely in the playoff field, but will likely have to travel to a 9-0 team in the first round. Geneva, meanwhile, can hardly wait until 8 p.m. tonight, when the IHSA will announce the playoff pairings.

"We have some momentum going into the playoffs," Mayszak said. "It will be a fun trip."

## COMMENTS

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