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Vikings' Ratay finds groove in 2nd half

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GLEN ELLYN – After a scoreless first half in which Glenbard South contained Michael Ratay and the Geneva running game, the Vikings' game plan didn't waver.

Still scoreless after three quarters, Geneva kept pounding it on the ground. Eventually, the levees broke, and the Vikings prevailed on Friday, 17-0.

Geneva finally put a 22-yard field goal on the board from Sean Grady in the first minute of the fourth quarter on a drive that began with nine consecutive running plays.

"We thought if we get our fullback operating a little bit inside, we'd be able to kick out to the tailback to the outside, so an inside-out type of a deal," Geneva coach Rob Wicinski said. "We were just waiting. We were just buying our time and just trying to move the chains a little bit, eat some time and get our young offensive line some focus."

On the ensuing possession, Glenbard South turned the ball over to set up the first of Ratay's two fourth-quarter touchdowns.

"First half, I wasn't really focused," said Ratay, who rushed for 108 of his 140 yards in the second half. "I just couldn't get anything going."

"In the second half, the offense stepped up a lot more. The offensive line started firing more. The holes were opening up. There was a lot more there. As long as we got some points on the board, we knew we were going to win."

Though Geneva's offense struggled early, the defense kept the game scoreless as the Vikings improved to 4-0 overall, 2-0 in the Western Sun Conference.

With Glenbard South (2-2, 0-2) threatening at the Geneva 15-yard line, linebacker Brennan Quinn intercepted a Kevin Marshall pass inside the 10 on the first play of the second quarter to keep the Raiders off the board.

"I think it falls on our defense. Our defense really came through," Wicinski said. "To pitch a shutout – I think they have potential to be a very explosive team – I'm really proud of the defense."

Wicinski's defense held Glenbard South to 72 yards on the ground, while its four takeaways did in any opportunities Glenbard South had offensively.

"We have to put points on the board when we have opportunities against a good program like Geneva," Raiders coach Dan Starkey said. "We had our chances."

Why Geneva won: While the Geneva defense struggled through three quarters, the Vikings' defense didn't budge. Geneva held Glenbard South quarterback Kevin Marshall and running back Mike Oratowski to a combined 50 yards on the ground a week after they managed 163 against Batavia.

Turning point: Brennan Quinn's second-quarter interception inside the Geneva 10 yard line put an end to the Raiders' most promising offensive threat and kept the game scoreless.

Player of the game: Michael Ratay labored through 10 carries for 32 first-half yards, but got it together with 108 second-half yards on 18 carries. His two fourth-quarter touchdowns sealed the win for the Vikings.

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