


[Print Page](#)

Vikings respond, then gain steam

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SYCAMORE – A week after going scoreless for three quarters at Glenbard South, the consistent Geneva offense expected from Day 1 proved it is alive and well.

Despite falling behind on a first-quarter Sycamore touchdown, Geneva's playmakers were not to be stopped Friday night as they grabbed the lead for good in the second quarter of the Vikings' 37-14 Western Sun Conference win to help Geneva stay perfect on the season.

Sycamore put together a 14-play, 80-yard drive to take a 7-0 lead after Geneva stalled on its first possession and turned the ball over on downs. But the Vikings (5-0 overall, 3-0 WSC) marched right back down with an 80-yard drive of their own to tie the score at 7-all on a 1-yard run by running back Michael Ratay.

"I was just really pleased – they scored first – and I was really pleased how we responded on the next offensive series," Geneva coach Rob Wicinski said.

The drive was kept alive on a key 33-yard pass on third-and-9 from Mike Mayszak to Joe Augustine.

"Those are huge," said Ratay, who rushed for 177 yards on 27 carries. "We've got a lot of players we can go to on third down."

Geneva got the ball back three plays later on the Sycamore 39 after the Vikings' defense forced a fumble from Sycamore quarterback Nick Anderson.

After a holding penalty backed up Geneva to midfield, Ratay broke a 49-yard run on first-and-21, setting up his second of three 1-yard touchdown runs with 5:28 remaining in the second quarter.

"The penalty, I felt like we got set back, and I just wanted to do something to spark us back up," Ratay said. "Offensive line – there was a huge hole there, and I made a couple guys miss."

Protecting a 14-7 lead, the Geneva defense stalled the Spartans attack with a three-and-out on the ensuing possession. An 11-yard punt gave Geneva the ball on the Sycamore 29, which set up a 26-yard touchdown pass from Mayszak to Michael Faught with just more than 3 minutes remaining in the half, which wound up being all the offense the Vikings would need.

After the Spartans' first-quarter scoring drive, the Geneva defense did not allow anything of consequence until the beginning of the fourth quarter, when Sycamore scored its final touchdown to get within two possessions.

"Our first drive, we came and did the things that we had worked on," said Sycamore coach Joe Ryan, whose team falls to 2-3 and 1-2 in the Western Sun. "They stepped it back up then. They're a good team. We have to expect that it wasn't going to be that easy."

Geneva 37, Sycamore 14

Why Geneva won: After stalling on their first drive and falling behind 7-0 at the end of the first quarter, the Vikings took advantage of good field position and put 21 second-quarter points on the board on three straight possessions while the defense held the Spartans scoreless.

Turning point: With the game tied 7-all, Geneva forced its first of two takeaways and got the ball at the Sycamore 39. The offense took advantage, as Michael Ratay gave the Vikings a lead they would never relinquish on a 1-yard touchdown run with 5:28 remaining in the first half.

Player of the game: Ratay ran for 142 first-half yards on 15 carries. His first carry for a loss didn't come until his 21st

of the game, when the Vikings held a secure lead. When it was all over, the junior had 177 yards on 27 carries and three touchdowns.

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