


Vikings subdue bumps, move to 3-0

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 Comments (No comments posted.)

GENEVA – The Geneva football team is experiencing “growing pains,” according to Vikings coach Rob Wicinski.

Geneva came perilously close Friday to experiencing those pains much more acutely than it bargained for, but managed enough defensive pearls to fend off upstart Yorkville, 27-24.

“This is growing pains for us,” Wicinski said. “We just have to go back to work. [Gosh], there’s so much to work on. It’s exciting.”

Wicinski can approach the needed improvement in high spirits thanks to an attacking defense that knocked Yorkville’s starting quarterback out of the game, then harassed his replacement into a pair of fourth-quarter interceptions.

With Geneva leading, 20-17, early in the fourth quarter, Vikings linebacker Brennan Quinn laid a wallop on Foxes quarterback Andrew Rosati that sent Rosati limping to the sidelines, where he remained for most of the rest of the game.

“It didn’t feel that hard, but I went right through him,” Quinn said of the hit. “It felt good.”

Yorkville punted the ball away two plays later, and the Foxes’ next two possessions ended on interceptions thrown by backup quarterback Daniel Swope. Geneva’s Trevor Hyslop had one of the picks, and Casey Emanuel added the other.

Emanuel’s interception gave Geneva the ball at Yorkville’s 22-yard line with 4:24 to go in the game.

Geneva (3-0, 1-0 Western Sun Conference) had repeatedly wasted favorable field position the second half, but not this time. After a fourth-down completion from Mike Mayszak to Jason Holmes kept the drive alive, Michael Ratay scored on an 8-yard touchdown run to put Geneva ahead, 27-17, after the extra point, with 2:28 to go in the game.

That’s when Rosati re-entered the game, and he immediately guided Yorkville on a three-play, 58-yard touchdown drive to draw the Foxes within 27-24 at the 1:54 mark.

But Geneva’s Matt Caliendo flopped on the onside kick, and the Vikings ran out the clock on Yorkville’s upset bid.

Yorkville coach Jim Still’s team drew rave reviews all around Burgess Field after his team backed up the buzz that the Foxes are among the state’s most improved teams. Still said he doubts “anyone in the state” thought his Foxes could put such a fright in Geneva.

“I think you saw a football team that came here on a mission,” Still said.

The mission looked like it might end successfully in the first half. Yorkville led, 10-0, before Geneva scored two touchdowns in the final 2 minutes before halftime.

The first Geneva score came on a 44-yard screen play from Mayszak to Ratay, and after a Jake Conforti interception, the Vikings scored in the final minute when Mayszak and Joe Augustine connected on a crossing route for a 42-yard TD.

“Nothing better,” Mayszak said, referring to translating a play that had looked sharp in practice to success in a game.

Wicinski was unnerved that the Vikings needed such theatrics right before halftime.

“You don’t want to make a living trying to do that,” Wicinski said. “I’d like to have a little more control of the game.”

Neither team made much headway rushing. Yorkville ran for 98 yards, while Geneva settled for 93.

Geneva defended its turf with three straight home wins to open the season, but must play four of its final six on the road.

Why the Vikings won: Yorkville, after playing an excellent first half, broke down late in the game with some poor special teams play and a pair of costly interceptions by backup quarterback Daniel Swope.

Turning point: Geneva linebacker Brennan Quinn knocking quarterback Andrew Rosati out of the game early in the fourth quarter.

Yorkville was within striking distance, but needed Rosati's steady hand to pull this one out.

Outstanding player of the game: Quinn. He anchored a strong defensive showing that included three interceptions for the Vikings.

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