



Geneva, Ratay run over DeKalb

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Published: 10/4/2008 1:51 AM

Offensive linemen on the Geneva football team may have a free meal coming their way from an appreciative running back.

"They've been so great for me, I probably should buy them something," Viking halfback Michael Ratay said after eclipsing 1,000 yards for the season by rushing for 246 yards and scoring five touchdowns to help his team rout host DeKalb 48-6 Friday night.

Geneva (6-0, 4-0) was hoping to make quick work of DeKalb (1-3, 1-5) in this Western Sun Conference clash, but a slow start, and a slew of penalties and injuries resulted in the game lasting nearly three hours.

"Some of the calls and some of the penalties were kind of wild," Geneva coach Rob Wicinski said of a game that seemed stuck in quicksand much of the time.

Wicinski's team was also a little wild, especially in the first half when quarterback Brandon Beitzel was picked off four times.

"We have to do a better job of protecting the ball," Wicinski added. "But DeKalb puts on its pads like everyone else and they're not practicing to lose or not score points; they have some very skilled players."

But the skilled player who was most dangerous again proved to be Ratay, who pushed his impressive season totals to 22 touchdowns and 1,200 yards rushing.

"He should be buying those linemen some steaks, or at least some hot dogs," Wicinski said of Ratay's next food purchase.

After DeKalb let Geneva off the hook in a scoreless first quarter by having a touchdown pass called back because of a penalty, the Vikings seized the momentum with a Joshua Brown interception early in the second quarter.

Ratay then broke loose, helping the Vikings enjoy a 20-0 halftime lead by blasting past the Barbs on touchdown runs of 32, 39 and 11 yards.

Beitzel (8 of 20 for 81 yards) tossed a 25-yard touchdown pass to Ratay to cap off a 51-yard scoring drive to open the third quarter. The junior quarterback followed it up three minutes later with his own 10-yard touchdown run.

Ratay and Jay Graffagna finished off Geneva's scoring with 2-yard touchdown runs in the fourth quarter.

Geneva's defense was solid all night, especially against the run. If DeKalb's Damian Nelson hadn't taken off for a 71-yard touchdown run in the game's waning seconds, the Vikings might have held DeKalb to less than 10 yards rushing for the night as the Barbs mustered only 79 total yards on the ground to go along with 83 through the air. Geneva, meanwhile, compiled 427 yards of total offense.

In addition to Brown's interception, Alexander Olenek picked off a Barb pass. But on a night when interceptions were king, DeKalb had bragging rights as Dylan Donnelly had two, and Jake Willrett and Steve Karasewski each had one. Ratay defended his quarterback, saying the receivers, including him, dropped too many passes.

"Beitzel made a lot of great throws, and most of the time we are catching those balls," he said.