



Geneva wears down Rochelle

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With Michael Ratay gaining more and more attention, Geneva had some news: the other guys can run too.

Take fullback Drew Fagot, who gained 73 yards and scored a touchdown in Friday's 35-14 win at Rochelle.

Or how about Brennan Quinn, a linebacker most of the time, who scored in an 8-yard fullback draw himself?

"When (Ratay's) in the backfield, he's like a magnet," Quinn said. "He draws a lot of attention. But when our other guys score, it takes the pressure off him."

Ratay hadn't disappeared. He gained 250 yards and scored 3 touchdowns. But there was considerable offensive balance as the Vikings moved to 7-0 and 5-0 in the Western Sun Conference.

"This was a big win, a huge win, probably our biggest win of the season so far," Geneva coach Rob Wicinski said. "We came in here, we took care of business and we executed well."

Ratay's 55-yard touchdown run with 9:53 to play in the game brought a raucous Hubs' crowd to near-silence and ensured the Vikings averted any potential upset bid.

"Some people were saying the crowd shut down and people started to leave," Ratay said. "But they kept fighting on the field to the end."

The balance was apparent from the opening play, a pass from Brandon Beitzel to Jason Holmes. While Ratay remained a focal point, he was hardly alone on the team's stat sheet.

"It's really nice," Wicinski said. "We've been trying to get some other people involved. We're starting to get some gimmick defenses. 'You stop Ratay, you stop Geneva.' We know that's been the mantra for other teams all year."

Geneva hit Rochelle (4-3, 2-3) immediately from the opening kickoff. The Vikings scored on their first two possessions. Ratay gained 110 yards in that time and scored on runs of 40 yards and then on a 1-yard plunge.

But if that seemed as if it came easily, the Hubs showed they meant business when they rallied to tie the game. First Nate Eyster hit C.J. Navarro for a 19-yard pass to the back of the end zone. Then Ben Schwartz grabbed a 38-yard touchdown pass and, with 8:32 left in the first half, the score was 14-14.

"That woke our secondary up and they had a little more urgency," Wicinski said. "That's important for our DB's, to have a sense of urgency."

Then Fagot and Quinn scored their touchdowns and just as suddenly as they were tied, the Vikings restored their two touchdown advantage.

"Our whole line opened up huge holes," Quinn said. "On my run, I had no one even close to touching me. (Fagot) had a touchdown run where no one touched him."

The defense rose in the second half. After allowing 160 first half yards, Geneva did not allow a completed pass and only surrendered 78 yards in the second half.

"You could feel that we really started to wear them down a little bit," Quinn said. "But they were fighting hard the while game."