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Grady makes plays on every chance

By KEVIN CHROUST
editorial@kcchronicle.com

GENEVA – The Vikings have hoped all year to save their best game for last, Geneva football coach Rob Wicinski said after Friday's IHSA Class 7A semifinal victory.

Sean Grady might have a tough time appeasing his coach next weekend after the performance he turned in Friday.

The senior defensive back and kicker made a big play almost every time the ball came his way in the 25-21 win against Crystal Lake South. The kicking game aside, Grady had four touches in the game on defense and special teams and only one didn't result in a Vikings' takeaway or points.

Grady had a key interception, a fumble recovery, and even threw for a two-point conversion on a botched extra-point snap. He also tied the score at 3 early on with a 34-yard field goal and made the two extra points he actually got a shot at kicking.

"He's a gym rat," Wicinski said. "He's got a high athletic IQ – baseball player, basketball player. We move him around on defense. He makes all our calls defensively. We try to get our best DB in the proper situations."

The interception came at a crucial point in the second quarter with Geneva trailing, 9-3. After Crystal Lake South scored its first touchdown to regain the lead, Geneva quarterback Brandon Beitzel was intercepted by Max Bush, giving the Gators the ball on the Geneva 41-yard line. Three plays later, Grady nabbed a Drew Ormseth pass to pick up his junior quarterback.

"I just sat on the coverage and went for the ball," Grady said. "We always say we've got to pick up the offense, offense has got to pick up the defense, so it's great to be able to do that for Brandon."

Geneva (13-0) took the lead on the opening possession of the third quarter. A high snap on the point-after attempt momentarily made it look like the score would be tied at 9-9, but Grady scooped up the ball, ran right, and when he realized he wouldn't be able to run it in, he found Cory Hofstetter in the back of the end zone for two points.

"I just saw Sean pick the ball up," Hofstetter said. "I went to my spot. We have our fire call where we're supposed to go to our spots. Sean saw me and threw the ball to me."

"Sean, I've said this before, he's so underrated. He has a great football mind. He makes really, really smart plays all the time. He was really aware there and found me for a pretty big play at the time."

The only play he was in on that didn't go his way was a deep ball from Ormseth to Crystal Lake South running back Colin Masterson that Grady initially seemed to make a good defensive play on by tipping it away, but Masterson was able to adjust to make the catch and pick up 50 yards on the play.

"I tipped on it," Grady said. "The kid made a great catch. It bobbed a couple times. I tipped it right in his lap basically."

So maybe there is a little room for improvement in Champaign.

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