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Second-round road trip fun for Vikes

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 Comments (No comments posted.)

ROCKTON – Michael Ratay can't be stopped. That powerful upper-body. Those ever-churning legs. That arm.

That arm?

Ratay threw a 5-yard touchdown pass to quarterback Brandon Beitzel on a halfback option, the most crowd-pleasing moment of a day full of them as Geneva crushed Rockton Hononegah, 46-28, on Saturday in a second-round Class 7A playoff game. The Vikings advance to a home quarterfinal matchup against Carmel, a game likely to be played Friday, Vikings coach Rob Wicinski said after the game.

Ratay's touchdown pass to Beitzel put Geneva up 21-0 in the second quarter, and the rout was on.

"I like gimmick plays," Wicinski said. "I like throwing them in there, ... that's the fun part of football. You can do that when you're able to execute your base stuff."

Beitzel was open in the end zone on the play as the Indians (8-3) directed their defensive resources toward what they assumed would be another punishing Ratay carry.

"It wasn't as fun as winning, but it was up there," Beitzel said of the play. "It was a lot of fun."

There was plenty of merriment to spread around for the Vikings. Ratay (19 rushes for 206 yards) had his usual monster game, running for three touchdowns and catching another in addition to his TD pass. Fullback Drew Fagot also enjoyed a big day, busting a 58-yard touchdown runs on the first play of the second quarter to start the scoring.

And despite the temperature hovering near 40 degrees, the Vikings sprinkled in some passing success. Beitzel was 6-of-10 for 114 yards, including a 23-yard touchdown pass to wide-open tight end Jack Delabar off play action, and a 50-yard touchdown pass to Ratay on a screen play.

The fans might have been dressed for a blizzard, but Beitzel said throwing in the cold was "like any other day."

"If [Wicinski] wants to throw the ball, throw the ball," Beitzel said.

Defensively, Geneva (11-0) was as dominant as usual against a Hononegah team that posted 42 points in a first-round win against Prospect.

Three of Hononegah's four touchdowns came in the fourth quarter, when Geneva's defense was playing reserves after the Vikings had built a 46-7 lead.

Vikings defensive end Cory Hofstetter inflicted heavy damage, sacking Hononegah quarterback Chase Robinson three times and recovering a fumble in Indians territory.

"You have to win on the road in order to make it far in the playoffs," Hofstetter said. "We did what we needed to do."

Wicinski liked his defensive players' approach against Hononegah's Wing-T attack, an offense similar to the one employed by conference foe Rochelle and next week's opponent, Carmel.



Hononegah quarterback Chase Robinson (14) is taken down by a swarm of Geneva defenders led by defensive lineman Rich MacDonald (57) during the fourth quarter of the IHSA Class 7A state playoffs Saturday in Rockton. Geneva won, 46-28. (Beck Diefenbach photo)

"The defensive coaches really had them disciplined with that offense," Wicinski said.

Robinson, Hononegah's sophomore quarterback, said he has "never seen a team like [Geneva] in my life," referring to the Vikings' size and power.

"They picked me up and threw me down a few times," Robinson said. "I know that for a fact."

The Vikings played without standout defensive tackle Frank Boenzi (mono) for the second straight week.

Geneva, the No. 1 seed in the 7A upper bracket, advances to the state quarterfinals for the fourth time in five seasons.

COMMENTS

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