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Vikings wallop Chargers with ease

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 Comments (No comments posted.)

CARPENTERSVILLE – After tying a school record with 11 wins last year, Geneva running back Michael Ratay and his teammates hit the ground running.

And running. And running.

Ratay rushed for 187 yards and scored five times before halftime to pace the Vikings in a 49-7 road win against Dundee-Crown. Geneva's defense stuffed the Chargers' ground game and foiled its pass-first strategy in the Vikings' first game since losing to East St. Louis in the Class 7A quarterfinals last year.

"It's a long season, but that's a good start," Geneva coach Rob Wicinski said.

After Dundee-Crown went three-and-out on its first possession, Wicinski turned to Ratay and never looked back. The senior carried the ball on all six plays of Geneva's first drive, tallying 40 yards that ended with a 2-yard sprint up the middle for the game's first score.

Ratay scored twice more in the first quarter on runs of 10 and 19 yards, respectively, before adding two more touchdowns in the second quarter to break the score open to 35-0. Last season, Ratay rushed for 1,743 yards and 29 touchdowns to earn all-state honors.

"The offensive line, the holes were huge," Ratay said. "I made a couple cuts, but [it was] the offensive line. The only time I got hit was when I got tackled."

Geneva's defense also shined, limiting Dundee-Crown to 52 yards passing and minus-5 yards rushing on seven attempts in the first half. Geneva defensive back Jacob Landau stopped Dundee-Crown's second drive with an interception in the first quarter, while the Vikings' front line pressured Chargers quarterback Logan Kissack all night.

"It looked like they fired and guys were flying around," Wicinski said. "That's what we ask them to do. Have fun and fly. And they did a nice job at that."

Defensive linemen Frank Boenzi and Cory Hofstetter were among those who made life difficult for Kissack and his Dundee-Crown teammates.

"I would never want to go against our D-line because they're so big," Ratay said. "And I think our secondary did great as well."

Wicinski eased junior Brandon Beitzel into the offense in his first start at quarterback. Beitzel showed a veteran's composure during a hurry-up offense at the end of the first half, finding Jason Holmes for a 22-yard touchdown with 17 seconds left on the clock.

Dundee-Crown coach Mike Davis said his team was overmatched by Geneva's size.

"They're big, they're fast, they're strong," Davis said. "We were outmanned. There's not much you're going to do about it."

Meanwhile, Wicinski said he looked forward to studying film from the game to highlight the team's best plays as well as its lowlights, including too many penalties.

"It's exciting to have some tape," said Wicinski, whose team will take on St. Charles East next week. "Now we've got a standard to go by. Now we just go back to work."

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