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Geneva, James boot Glenbard S.

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It's nice to have a place-kicker like Charlie James in your pocket.

The 6-foot-2 senior booted a 30-yard field goal with 7:14 left in the fourth quarter to boost Geneva 26-24 over Glenbard South in Friday's Western Sun Conference game in Glen Ellyn. James kicked a 39-yarder in a wild first half.

"The funny thing is," Geneva coach Rob Wicinski said, "Glenbard South always has guys who just pound it. We've come here for years and they've got Division I kickers that are just kicking it through the end zone and doing 50-yarders.

"I guess what goes around comes around."

Glenbard South (2-2, 1-1) will hope so after it was unable to convert a kick or 2-point conversion after any of its 4 touchdowns - 3 courtesy of quarterback Trace Wanless, who scored on 80- and 1-yard touchdown runs and opened the scoring on a 59-yard pass to Connor Douglas.

"It was awesome," James said of his game-winner. "Special teams are another third of the game, and I think we won that part."

Geneva (4-0, 2-0) also won the momentum part. Starting its first offensive series of the third quarter on its own 2-yard line after a Geneva punt, the Raiders fumbled on their first play and Geneva's Blake Champer recovered. It took Michael Santacaterina two cracks to get into the end zone to pull within 24-23.

"Coming out and covering a fumble at the beginning of the half, that really set us off," said Geneva quarterback Brandon Beitzel, 14 of 27 passing for 168 yards, who praised the play of offensive linemen Justin Craig, Jake Mills, Dan Carlson, Ben Humbert, Matt Springhorn and Brandon Prosek.

From then on Geneva had to reign in the wily Wanless, who ran for 117 yards and completed 20 of 29 passes for 298 yards. Only 72 yards came in the second half.

"They did a lot of blitzes," Wanless said. "They blitzed me outside. We only have five linemen and when you rush seven guys it's going to make a big difference. They did some stunt-blitz, they did some twists, and it got to us."

If the second half was a defensive scrum the first was an offensive bonanza. Starting with Douglas' touchdown at 3:57 of the first quarter the teams scored on six straight possessions, with Geneva fullback Connor Quinn answering Douglas on a 16-yard run.

Entering the game with 12 carries for 41 yards rushing, on Friday Quinn ran 16 times for 157.

"They sealed their blocks," Quinn said of his line, "and I just ran."

Skilled Nick Slezak, who joined Mike Rovanseck with 100-plus yards receiving for the Raiders, scored on a 7-yard run to end the first-half scoring.

"I'm very proud of their effort," said Glenbard South coach Dan Starkey. "That's the biggest thing, is our kids really battle, they play together and never give up. That's all you can ask as a coach. It was an exciting game, just the wrong ending."