

 Daily Herald

# Geneva slams the door on rival Batavia

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The Western Sun Conference sweep is complete.

Four years, four Geneva championships.

The Vikings wrapped up a share of the 2009 title with a 23-0 win on their rival Batavia's home field Friday, breaking open a 3-0 game with 20 fourth-quarter points.

Geneva (8-1, 6-1) shared the title with Glenbard South, who the Vikings beat 26-24 in Week 4. The Raiders won 32-20 at Sycamore Friday.

"That was one of our goals," Geneva defensive lineman Andrew Mariotti said. "We came out and stuck them. It was an all-around team effort."

Michael Santacaterina, who scored four touchdowns last week at Kaneland, had 3 more in the fourth quarter Friday to give him 21 this year. He carried 19 times for 117 and 2 touchdowns, and he concluded the scoring by taking a desperation pass from Jack Delabar after a fumbled snap on a punt and going 57 yards to the end zone.

Geneva's defense did the rest, holding Batavia to 5 first downs.

"We definitely didn't like that loss to Rochelle," Geneva linebacker Bret Shannon said. "We've been working hard. This game meant a lot to us."

The Bulldogs (2-7, 1-6) dropped a pass on their first play from scrimmage, threw an interception on the final play - and things didn't go much better in-between.

Batavia gained 22 yards in the first quarter, lost a yard in the second, and gained 15 in the third quarter for 36 yards of offense heading to the fourth when they gained 64 to finish with an even 100.

"We knew they would come in geared up to totally kill us," Geneva linebacker Asa Bielenberg said. "They are not going to the playoffs and they hate us a lot and we just had to match their intensity. I think we did a good job, especially the defense in the first half."

The Bulldogs' defense also responded for three quarters, holding Geneva to Charlie James' 27-yard field goal in the first quarter on a drive that stayed alive only on a Batavia penalty on fourth down.

Geneva had one other chance but fumbled at Batavia's 2-yard line. Bulldogs punter Ben Allison, who punted 9 times, booted back-to-back 57- and 54-yarders to get Batavia out of poor field position.

Batavia's best chance came early in the third quarter when the Bulldogs took over at Geneva's 34-yard line after two Viking penalties and a short punt. Danny Seiton picked up one first down before the drive stalled at Geneva's 22-yard line.

"We just couldn't establish any offense," Batavia coach Mike Gaspari said. "You have to credit their team. We were right there on the verge just being down 3-0. We just couldn't get enough going there. Our kids played extremely hard on defense."

Geneva finally wore the Bulldogs down in the fourth. Santacaterina scored on 4- and 61-yard runs for a 16-0 lead with 8:37 remaining.

About the only downer for Geneva came in the third quarter when James, the team's kicker and leading wide receiver, was ejected. He'll miss next week's playoff opener. Dan Hince replaced him at kicker and made two of three extra points in the fourth quarter and missed a 26-yard field goal.

"They (the officials) said he punched him," Geneva coach Rob Wicinski said. "They (James and a Batavia player) were going at it on the turf and it was an overreaction. I feel horrible for the kid. He doesn't have a mean-spirited bone in this body."

Batavia will look to rebound next year after its first 2-win season since 1989. Gaspari said he was impressed with how hard his team kept playing this year despite the losses.

"Great credit to our kids throughout the course of the season, as tough as a year as we had, our guys gave everything they had every week," Gaspari said. "Right up to the last sprint Wednesday night. As I told our seniors, that's a mark of great young people. It's been a tough year, but I'm really proud of them."