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Vikings cruise past Barbs

GENEVA – Geneva's second-stringers stormed onto mucky Burgess Field to begin the second half Friday night with clear heads and white jersey numbers.

They left with only one of those intact. Good thing football teams get a week to launder their uniforms.

Banging away at DeKalb with backups just as easily as starters, Geneva rolled past the Barbs, 55-0, behind a clockwork ground attack that produced a running clock. Reserve running back Dylan Nobregas had a 64-yard touchdown on his first carry of the season while 5-foot-3, 130-pound Grant Hudson's 4-yard plunge capped the scoring in the Western Sun Conference game.

"They played awesome. Those are our boys out there," senior offensive lineman Justin Craig said. "That's our job to get them in."

Geneva (6-0, 4-0 WSC) clinched that novelty by intermission, as senior Michael Santacaterina scored on runs of 3, 3 and 1 yards before showing his touchdown versatility on a 15-yard pitch to the left side.

Sporting new three-quarter-inch spikes his parents donated as a homecoming gift, Santacaterina marveled at the near-ease of running for 93 yards on 14 carries in the rain.

"You can make one cut and get the defense just sliding everywhere," he said. "The O-line opened up the holes and we just went from there."

Craig and Co. pushed the Barbs' defensive front around for 219 rushing yards in the first half. DeKalb (1-5, 0-4 WSC) managed just three yards in the same span, falling behind, 42-0, as fumbled snaps began to pile up. The Barbs lost possession of the ball four of the six times they put it on the ground Friday. Later saying he was happy to dive and roll in the mud, Geneva senior linebacker Bret Shannon fell on two of them.

DeKalb fumbled on its own 10 on the third play of the game, paving the way for Santacaterina's first score behind an improvising offensive line.

"They teach you big first step, get a nice jump on your guy," Craig said, "but conditions like this it's all about short, stable and get a nice base. You've got to make up for it."

Mother Nature notwithstanding, Geneva's halftime homecoming fireworks show wowed a shivering crowd as scheduled, while the second string kept Vikings cheerleaders busy. The group performed a high leg kick for each point Geneva scored, and a handful of cheerleaders faked limps after Hudson's touchdown.

Before leaving his players to celebrate and sing with the crowd, Vikings coach Rob Wicinski told them he was proud of the way they didn't let up. Closing games was a primary concern after the team played Sycamore closely in Week 5, and this one was all but decided by the half.

"The whole idea of finishing applies not just to the game, but now to the season," said Wicinski, whose team took over sole possession of first place with a Kaneland loss on Friday. "Let's finish the season strong and keep going, and that's what we're focusing on."

If the backups get in, all the better.

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