

Long homecoming night

Written by STEVE OSTERMANN
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Miscues, Germantown's staunch defense too much for Hawks in tough loss

Last Friday night was no time for breakdowns on the football field.

Just ask the Grafton Black Hawks, who found themselves slowed by a sluggish offense and defensive miscues in a 35-0 homecoming loss to Germantown.



After showing considerable potential in their first five games this season, host Grafton was expected to hold its own against a perennially strong North Shore Conference foe.

But the Black Hawks stumbled during a second quarter in which they gave up 21 points and never recovered.

"We knew we wouldn't be able to give Germantown any breaks, and we did," said Grafton coach Ben Chossek, whose team lost its third straight game after starting the season 2-1.

"We gave them a couple of scores, and then we couldn't run the ball after the first quarter. It was just tough to get anything going."

After scoring a combined six touchdowns in losses to Homestead and Whitefish Bay the previous two weeks, Grafton was poised to keep its option offense in high gear again.

The Black Hawks got rolling on their second possession of the game, mounting a 59-yard drive

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that reached the Germantown 33 and included four conversions for first downs.

But after Germantown stopped Alex Teich short on a fourth-and-5 run, it was the visitors' turn to get on the scoreboard.

Five plays later, Germantown got all the points it needed when quarterback Dwayne Lawhorn Jr. flipped a pass to receiver Nick Holcomb on the left side of the field. Holcomb eluded several defenders and raced 49 yards down the sideline for a touchdown.

"We were in position, but we couldn't make the tackle on that play, and it cost us," Chosseck said.

Germantown's defense continued to set the tone, pressuring quarterback Choo Weisflog and taking away the Black Hawks' perimeter attack.

After a shanked punt gave Germantown the ball on Grafton's 25, it needed only four plays to find the end zone again.

On first down at the 12, Connor Schulz rolled out on an option play and found Holcomb open for a touchdown. With 6:34 left in the half, Germantown owned a 14-0 lead.

Grafton had plenty of time to turn things around before the break but again failed to move the ball. After having to punt, the Black Hawks got no help from their defense.

On second-and-12, Lawhorn found Schulz wide open for a 55-yard pass to the Grafton 11. One play later, running back Joe Lemerond broke through for a touchdown run that made it 21-0 with 1:56 left in the half.

"Offensively, Germantown did a good job of mixing their plays. We were not in position several times, and then we failed to tackle," Chosseck said.

Grafton's first-half defensive highlight was an interception by Teich that ended a Germantown scoring threat after the Black Hawks lost a fumble in the final minute.

Any thoughts of a Grafton comeback slowly faded in the second half. The Black Hawks picked up two first downs on their opening possession but never crossed midfield the rest of the night.

They finished with 120 yards of total offense, including 43 rushing yards on 32 carries.

Weisflog was 7-for-18 passing for 77 yards and an interception.

Germantown's opportunistic offense tacked on a pair of second-half touchdowns and finished with 372 total yards.

Lemerond, a junior, did most of the ground work, rushing for 102 yards and two touchdowns on 19 carries.

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Lawhorn was 10-for-15 passing for 197 yards, two touchdowns and two interceptions.

“Going into the game, we felt we could use our option game to move the ball, and we did that to a certain extent early,” Chossek said.

“But when we got behind, we had to change things and didn’t handle it well.”

Homecoming distractions aside, Chossek wasn’t about to make excuses for a disappointing loss.

“I think our kids were ready to play and were focused, but we ran into a team that played better than we did,” he said.

Germantown improved its NSC record to 3-1 and dropped to Grafton to 1-3. The Black Hawks are still clinging to WIAA playoff hopes but have to win their final three regular-season games.

That mission starts this Friday when they travel to Port Washington for a 7 p.m. game against a 2-2 team also fighting to reach the postseason.

Image Information: GRAFTON’S JOE FUGATE tried to find an opening in Germantown’s defensive line during his team’s homecoming game last Friday. Photo by Sam Arendt