Mason holds off Fairfield, 21-17

Mark Schmetzer, Enquirer contributor *10:17 p.m. EDT October 7, 2016*

(Photo: Tony Tribble for The Enquirer)

Mason's defense wasn't feeling too good about itself early in the Comets' Greater Miami Conference game against Fairfield on Friday.

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By the end of the game, the feeling was much better.

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Mason limited the Indians to 78 yards of total offense in the second half and 240 in the game and seni defensive back Jacob Gapinski came up with a key late interception as the Comets held off Fairfield fo 21-17 win.

"They had us early," said Gapinski, whose interception with 2:19 left in the game stopped Fairfield's las meaningful possession. "We rallied together and fixed some things at halftime and locked their offense down. This was a good win."

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Junior quarterback Jake Harris threw two touchdown passes and junior running back Matt Sora snapped a 14-14 tie with a one-yard plunge with 4:59 left in the third quarter. The defense took over from there.

"The defense just kept grinding and grinding," Mason coach Brian Castner said. "I think that second half – all of our second halves – started in the off-season. They were relentless. They won the line of scrimmage. They refused to lose the line of scrimmage."

Fairfield made too many mistakes against what Indians coach Jason Krause called a "good team." Five penalties cost Fairfield 70 yards, while Mason was whistled for four penalties and 33 yards.

"I don't know how many penalties we had, but you can't commit penalties and you can't turn the ball over against good teams, and they're a good team," Krause said. "We were too sloppy."

Fairfield, ranked fourth in the Enquirer's Division I coaches' poll, needed a win to remain undefeated in the GMC going into its matchup next Friday with Colerain – ranked No. 1 both by the Enquirer and in the Associated Press Division I statewide poll.

The Indians' only loss was at Dublin Coffman, the state's 10th-ranked team.

Related: Fairfield football schedule, stats (http://preps.cincinnati.com/id/2/Fairfield/Football)

The Comets, the Enquirer's sixth-ranked team after losing 30-16 to Colerain last week, needed a win to maintain its faint heartbeat in GMC race. They are scheduled to play at Lakota East on Friday.

Both teams used pass plays of 40-plus yards to set up touchdowns on their opening possessions. Harris connected with junior wide receiver Christian Hutchinson for a 43-yard pass on the second play of the game and followed up three plays later with a five-yard touchdown pass to senior wide receiver Cameron Buford for a 7-0 Mason lead

Fairfield senior quarterback Aaron Carmack, who went into the game ranked second in the GMC with 1,113 passing yards, and junior wide receiver Chico Robinson teamed up on a 41-yard pass play on Fairfield's second play of the game, putting the Indians in position for Carmack's seven-yard scoring pass to senior wide receiver Ethan Burch.

Fairfield took advantage of a Mason violation during a punt to drive from the Comets' 46 to the one-yard line, setting up Carmack's plunge for a 14-7 lead.

Mason tied the game with 2:38 left in the first half on Harris's 60-yard bomb to junior wide receiver Austin Croy on the Comets' first play following a Fairfield punt.

Mason, which went into the game ranked sixth in the GMC with an average of 121.0 passing yards per game, had 110 by halftime.

Fairfield went into the game allowing an average of 8.8 points per game, second in the GMC and just ahead of third-place Mason at 13.7.

Fairfield+14+0+0+3 – 17

Mason+7+7+7+0 – 21

M – Buford 5 pass from Harris (Hauer kick)

F – Burch 7 pass from Carmack (McGuire kick)

F – Carmack 1 run (McGuire kick)

M – Croy 60 pass from Harris (Hauer kick)

M – Sora 1 run (Hauer kick)

F – McGuire 21 FG

Records: Fairfield 5-2 (3-1 Greater Miami Conference), Mason 5-2 (3-1 GMC).