

Mick McCabe: Livonia Churchill takes charge with upset victory over Canton

Oct 2, 2011

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Things were setting up so nicely for next weekend's gargantuan showdown between Canton and Plymouth.

Both teams were unbeaten and ranked among the top four in Division 1 entering Friday's games. Canton took a 14-0 lead on Livonia Churchill and appeared to be rolling toward Plymouth with a head of steam.

"If it's possible to be down 14-0 in a good way in the second quarter, that was us," said Churchill coach John Filiatraut. "When Canton's really good, they're jumping on you early and often. I kind of felt in the first half that we were at least able to make them earn their points. They didn't get out there and run quick-fullback trap for 90 yards."

Churchill made Canton earn everything except a victory as Churchill recorded a shocking 27-26 win.

Quarterback Seth Suida threw three touchdown passes in the final 3:36 of the second quarter to give Churchill a lead it never lost.

Filiatraut knew his team wasn't going to shut out the Chiefs. He only asked for key stops.

"I thought we would need three or four stops in the game to have a chance," Filiatraut said. "When you play Canton, the game is over in 10 possessions. We ended up getting one punt and two fumbles and three stops on downs. We had to hang in there and get enough stops to give ourselves a chance."

Early in the third quarter Romello Brown (125 yards, 15 carries) ripped off a 75-yard run to set up his 3-yard TD for a 27-14 lead, and then the Chargers held on.

Derek Jakubowski forced a fumble that led to a Churchill score, then blocked an extra-point attempt as the defense held off Canton.

"We played, for us, just about a perfect game," Filiatraut said. "We had no turnovers and had one penalty for 5 yards. They turned it over twice and had five penalties for 45 yards and still almost beat us."

The victory means Churchill is 4-2 entering Friday's game at Livonia Franklin (3-3), and the Chargers should be thinking playoffs.

"This (Canton) win is going to be as meaningful as it can be if we win our next game," Filiatraut said. "It can't just be a flash in the pan and then we have a big letdown. We haven't beaten Franklin since 2004 -- it has been forever."

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"In two months when we look back on our season, we're going to say this was a nice win, a nice homecoming win, or we're going to say this is where we got things started and we really had a nice season."