

Prep football: Chiefs power past Salem



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Scampering down the field Friday night is Canton's Malcolm Hollingsworth (No. 10), getting some blocking help from sophomore teammate Daoud Roberts (No. 34). Closing in for Salem is senior Jack Vida (No. 59). / Bill Bresler | staff photographer

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During Friday's first half, Salem running back Gu'wain Ingram (No. 27) plows ahead for a gain, eluding the grasp of Canton junior Matt McKay (No. 4). Putting a hit on McKay for the Rocks is offensive lineman Eric Matthews (No. 73).

In a playoff [tuneup](#), Canton rolled up nearly 500 yards of offense against injury depleted Salem, winning 49-22 in Friday's regular season finale.

The host Chiefs showed their outstanding depth, because the onslaught took place on a night where top players such as seniors Kevin Buford, Ryan Jones, Zac Merillat and Demetre Lopez were nursing injuries or resting up for the postseason, which begins next Friday.

"We've got to check out a couple more kids we'll see tomorrow (Saturday) to see how they're doing," Chiefs head coach Tim Baechler said. "But we had five starters out that got much needed rest this week.

"Hopefully they recover and they're full strength next week."

Looking ahead

Speaking of next week, the Chiefs — 7-2 for the regular season — await Selection Sunday (7 p.m. on Fox Sports Detroit) to find out who their opponent will be in the first round of the Division 1 state playoffs.

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“Coaches will be at my house watching it and we'll find out who we're playing,” Baechler said. “We'll get on the phone, get film and get to work. ... Now it gets a little bit more fun.”

For Salem, a season of hope unraveled due to key injuries (seniors Marcus Houston, Evian Pardo and Ryan Jankowski) and the Rocks finished with a 3-6 record.

“We had quite a few (injuries),” Salem head coach Kurt Britnell said. “I can't remember a time, especially at key positions. But that's the way it goes. All three of them are excellent athletes that would have helped us.”

Britnell, however, finishing his third season at the Salem helm, said the “culture” with the football program needs to continue to improve.

“Until that happens,” he stressed, “we're going to play third fiddle to Plymouth and Canton.”

The Rocks did push the Chiefs at times. But emblematic of how the teams are faring, Salem moved the ball 87 yards during the third quarter only to lose the ball on downs.

On Canton's second ensuing play, senior quarterback Kyle Adams connected with senior [tight end](#) Evan Rinke for an 86-yard touchdown. It was the carbon copy of an 85-yarder to Rinke in the second quarter.

On both TDs, Adams threw medium-depth passes to the left flank that Rinke caught and motored about 60 yards unscathed into the Salem end zone.

In the first quarter, the Chiefs opened the scoring on a three-yard plunge by sophomore [running back](#) Daoud Roberts, a callup from the JV. A 39-yard burst by junior Malcolm Hollingsworth (7-92) helped set up the scoring play.

But the Rocks answered when junior tailback Kyle Cameron, who ran 14 times for 165 yards, broke a tackle and raced up the middle for a 76-yard score.

The game resembled a track meet during that stretch. Canton's first-down on the next series also went to the house — on an 89-yard TD run by junior Kendall Scott (11-148).

Momentum changer

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Britnell lamented what happened next. The Rocks had a first down near their 30 when Cameron fumbled.

Scooping up the pigskin and dashing in for a 33-yard fumble return to make it 21-7 was junior tight end Matt McKoy, the Chiefs' top tackler for the game with nine.

Canton seniors Michael Boes and Zachary Smilo tallied eight and seven tackles, respectively.

“The one fumble that they returned cost us,” Britnell noted. “If we score there, we were getting three, four yards a pop. and I thought we could have done that.

“We were moving the ball, if we don't make a mistake there it's a 14-point swing.”

Salem did bounce back to make it a 21-14 game before the end of the quarter.

A 57-yard carry by Cameron was the key play in an 80-yard scoring[drive](#). Finishing it off with a one-yard plunge was sophomore Justin Sydlowski, who played the first half at [quarterback](#).

Canton added three more TDs in the second quarter to take a 42-14 advantage into halftime.

Those were tallied by Adams (a 33-yard carry), Rinke (his first TD catch-and-run) and Scott's zig-zag touchdown run of 26 yards in the final minute of the half.

Rinke's second big score of the night made it 49-14 (with junior kicker Scott Piwowar nailing his seventh extra point) and Salem capped the scoring in the fourth quarter.

Salem junior quarterback Jacob Deprez, who took over in the third, fired a 21-yard scoring strike to junior tight end Cameron Werner, who was all alone in the end zone.

The Rocks added a two-point pass when Andrew Kelty connected with Youssef Barakat.

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