

Canton football defeats Plymouth, 30-20, for KLAA South title, playoff spot



Marcus Sanders ran for 140 yards and a touchdown as Canton defeated Plymouth, 30-20, to win the KLAA South. (Tom Barry | MLive.com)

By Tom Barry | MLive.com
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10/10 - 7:00 PM Football	Final
Plymouth	20
Canton	30

The **Canton** football team put up a strong first half on offense Friday to defeat **Plymouth**, 30-20, at the Plymouth-Canton Educational Park Varsity Stadium to win its second consecutive Kensington Lakes Activities Association South Division title.

Running back Marcus Sanders paced the Chiefs (6-1, 5-0) with 19 rushes for 140 yards and a touchdown to lead his team to its seventh straight postseason berth.

“This was a good game for us,” Sanders said. “Plymouth is a really good team and we had to fight for this one. We didn’t score a touchdown in the first half, but our defense stepped up when we really needed them to.”

Canton scored the first 24 points of the game and the defense held strong in the second half despite Plymouth (5-2, 4-2) rallying back into contention.

The Chiefs will play for the KLAA Kensington Conference championship Oct. 17 at 7 p.m. when they travel to South Lyon, a 43-13 winner Friday over South Lyon East.

After intercepting Plymouth’s first pass attempt, Canton needed just three plays to record the first points as quarterback Greg Williams launched a 75-yard pass to wide receiver Robert Guarjardo for a 7-0 lead with 7:52 remaining in the opening quarter.

The Chiefs used a 73-yard pass to go down to the Plymouth one-yard line on its next drive, allowing Jones to take the ball and walk into the end zone to go up 14-0.

With Canton facing 4th-and-goal on the Plymouth one-yard line for the first play of the second quarter, Chiefs running back Brian Newton was given the ball and pounded it through the defensive line to put Canton ahead 21-0.

Plymouth fumbled away the returning kickoff to Canton and the Chiefs capitalized as kicker Andrew Loehnis booted a 35-yard field goal to extend the Chiefs’ lead to 24-0.

Wildcats quarter Deji Adebisi took Plymouth downfield for a 90-second drive and capped it off with a 26-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Victor Abraham, trimming the deficit to 24-7 with 6:10 left in the first half.

Canton took its time moving the ball in the next drive, finishing it with Loehnis kicking a 21-yard field goal with a second remaining before halftime, pushing the Chiefs’ advantage to 27-7.

Loehnis added the next points for Canton with just 12 seconds left in the third quarter to extend the lead to 30-7.

Only 19 seconds into the fourth quarter and Plymouth facing 4th-and-5 on its own 39-yard line, Adebisi launched a 61-yard pass down the right sideline to wide receiver Christian Wells, pulling the Wildcats to within 30-14.

As time was winding down in the game, Adebisi threw a 46-yard pass to the Canton three-yard line and ran the ball into the end zone himself with 3:13 to go, slicing the Chiefs' lead to 30-20, but Adebisi's attempt to pull Plymouth closer failed as the two-point pass attempt fell incomplete.

Plymouth went for the onside kick, but Canton jumped on the ball and ran down the clock before the fans rushed the field to celebrate with the Chiefs.

Williams threw for 176 yards and a touchdown one just 3-for-6 passing for Canton.

"This win feels great for us," Canton head coach Timothy Baechler said. "We've been through so much with injuries and eligibility issues, but these kids keep stepping in. I'm so proud of them. They really deserved this."

Adebisi contributed to 212 yards of Plymouth's offense, 177 of which came through the air.

Plymouth will attempt to lock up its first playoff spot since 2012 on Oct. 17 at 7 p.m. when it plays a KLAA crossover at Northville.

"We killed ourselves in the first half," Mike Sawchuk said. "We spotted Canton 17 points with mental errors. One of our kids didn't make a tackle and thought the receiver was out-of-bounds and he stopped playing and the receiver scored. We blew coverage repeatedly. We hurt ourselves."

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