

Canton runs by Dearborn Fordson 42-25 in opener

By **Wright Wilson, Special to the Free Press** August 28, 2015

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Canton's Markus Sanders runs for a touchdown against Dearborn Fordson during first half action in the Prep Kickoff Classic on August 28, 2015 at Wayne State's Tom Adams Field in Detroit.

After two quarters, Canton led Dearborn Fordson by two touchdowns and had outrushed them, 191-30, yet the Chiefs somehow sensed that wasn't going to be enough.

"Our running backs started running harder after halftime because our coach said we weren't running too well, so we lowered our shoulders and pounded them. Our coach has high expectations for us," said Jared Stephens, who scored three first-half touchdowns.

Those expectations were necessary for the Chiefs, who had numerous chances to send the Tractors packing up early but couldn't quite do it. Although Fordson changed up Canton's tempo with a couple of quick-strike touchdowns, the Chiefs hung on for a 42-25 win at the Prep Kickoff Classic Friday night at Wayne State.

"We just couldn't put them away," Canton coach Tim Baechler said. "Credit to their coaches and their kids, they never quit. They scored quickly several times too, and we had that fumble (which set up a touchdown), so that gave them life. That's something we've got to get better at — when we have a chance to put someone away, we've got to do it."

- [Week 1 Michigan high school football scoreboard](#)

Canton scored on its first four possessions to take a 28-6 lead. Stephens had plunges of one and two yards to go with a 19-yard pass reception, and Reid McDonnell added a 3-yard run.

Junior Markus Sanders had several big plays en route to a 212-yard night, on 19 carries. He had a 55-yard burst up the middle on the second play of the game, and gained 22, 37 and 25 yards on other carries when the Chiefs made that same offensive call.

"Big-time players make big-time plays in big-time games, that's all there is to it," Sanders said. "My line worked harder than anybody in the state, that's why I had the success that I had."

Fordson kept hanging around, though.

Late in the first half, Hamze Elzayat connected with Mohamad Sareini across midfield, and after the ball squirted loose, fellow receiver Hesham Alaidarous scooped up the ball and scampered the remaining 34 yards for a touchdown.

The Tractors scored two more times on big plays in the third quarter. Sareini caught another pass from Elzayat and sped up the left sideline for a 65-yard touchdown to make it 35-19, and three minutes later, Alaidarous hauled in a long bomb for another 65-yard score, and suddenly Fordson was within 10 points.

But Sanders quashed the Tractors' remaining momentum. When Canton faced a third-and-22 from their 31, he gained 25 yards up the middle to give the Chiefs a fresh set of downs to go with a fresh outlook.

"That was critical," Baechler said. "We said we are not throwing that ball. He's a good back."

By and large, though, Baechler was satisfied with his team's opening-week play.

"I think we were very ready," he said. "They were fast, or we're slow, I don't know. Defensively, we've got a lot of work to do. We were able to put the plow down on offense and grind it out, and try to keep our defense off the field as much as possible."