

Sanders' OT touchdown sparks Canton to 27-21 victory



Hartland found out Thursday night that there is no easy way to stop Canton running back Markus Sanders.

The host Eagles had few answers for Sanders and the Chiefs in one of the few KLAA football games that weren't postponed by the wave of thunderstorms in southeast Michigan.

Sanders rushed for 234 yards in 20 carries (9.8 avg.) and scored three touchdowns — including the winner in OT — as Canton earned a 27-21 victory to improve to 2-0 on the young season.

Sanders scored on a 20-yard run in the extra frame to snap a 21-21 tie. He found the end zone earlier in the contest on gallops of 25 and 2 yards, respectively.

"It was a very hard fought game," Canton head coach Tim Baechler said. "We ran the ball very well, but missed on some big play opportunities that hurt us a little bit. Defensively, we played well enough to win."

Baechler cited a goal-line stand by his defense in the fourth quarter after Hartland ran a kickoff to Canton's 5-yard line. That stop kept the Chiefs from falling behind.

Canton got on the scoreboard early in the second quarter when Jacob Wickens punched it in from the 1-yard line. A point-after by Ben Tubaro made it 7-0.

Hartland answered with the equalizer four minutes later, setting the tone for a back-and-forth game.

But Sanders enabled Canton to go into the intermission up 14-7 following his 25-yard TD.

The teams traded touchdowns in the second half, too, with Sanders putting the Chiefs in front for the second time when he scored from 2-yards out with just three seconds left in the third stanza.

That 21-14 edge held for most of the fourth quarter, until the Eagles forced overtime with just 2:03 remaining in regulation.

Sanders wasn't finished, however, to the chagrin of the home crowd.

Led by the diminutive dynamo — he stands 5-7 — Canton outgained Hartland by a 376-206 margin.

Chipping in with 70 all-purpose yards was Jared Stephens (45 on the ground, 25 in the air on a single reception) while quarterback Joel Foster added 37 yards on the ground.

Leading the defensive charge was junior Jake Warner, with six solo tackles. Stephens helped the cause with four solo tackles. Junior Reid McDonnell tallied two solos and three assists.

Baechler said it was instrumental that the Chiefs make the first stop on defense during overtime.

"In overtime our defense stepped up huge for us," Baechler said. "We stopped them first.

"Our plan was to run two running plays and then kick the field goal on third down, but fortunately we scored on first down. A great win over an excellent team."