

Canton wins big, earns playoff spot

Evan Paputa, Correspondent 11:27 p.m. EDT October 14, 2016



When Canton lost its first two games of the season to Dearborn Fordson and Walled Lake Western, the question on everybody's minds was 'what's wrong with Canton?'

Ever since their second defeat, the Chiefs have rattled off six straight wins and qualified for the MHSAA playoffs with a definitive 49-0 victory over visiting Westland John Glenn on Friday night.

"People were wondering what was wrong with Canton. But it was like there's nothing wrong with Canton, but that there's a lot right with (Dearborn) Fordson and Walled Lake Western. We lost with a minute left in both games," Canton head coach Tim Baechler said.

"I'm so proud of them. They had to buckle down, it was like playoff time right from the get-go," Baechler said.

It was an unusual game of sorts for Canton (6-2), as they racked up 294 rushing yards, but on only 18 minutes of possession and 35 plays.

It was Senior Night for the Chiefs, and fittingly, senior running backs Julian Thornton, Reid McDonnell, and Markus Sanders paced the Chiefs to a hot start.

McDonnell (five carries, 66 yards) raced for 43 yards on the second play of the game and followed it up with a 1-yard touchdown plunge.

Junior Lou Baechler capped Canton's energetic first quarter with a nifty 28-yard touchdown reception from Jake O'Donnell.

"Offensively, we wanted to come out and smash. Our backs ran hard and our offensive line blocked their hearts out," Lou Baechler said.

For the second week in a row the Canton defense stood tall and forced a shutout. The success defensively can be attributed to film study and determination in practice, according to Lou Baechler.

"It was pretty important (getting the shutout). Our defense is finally getting it together after the first two, three weeks when it was shaky," Lou Baechler said.

Sanders ran for 58 yards and a touchdown. William Hall ran for 52 yards and two touchdowns. Thornton ran for 91 yards highlighted by an 85-yard touchdown to close the scoring.

In addition to Senior Night, the game was also the annual "Coaches vs Cancer" charity game with proceeds benefiting the American Cancer Society.

With everybody, from fans to coaches, decked out in pink, Baechler was proud of the overwhelming support.

"It's amazing that everybody is chipping in. It makes it so awesome. We know so many people that have cancer now or have died of cancer.

Anything we can do to contribute and make it a bigger awareness, we are happy to do it," Baechler said.

John Glenn (1-7) was led by senior receiver, Roq Williams, who ignited the Rocket offense with three catches for 60 yards.

Canton will travel to Northville (7-1) to play the Mustangs for the Kensington Conference championship while John Glenn will play at Livonia Stevenson (4-4).



Canton's Reid McDonnell (No. 18) closes in on Westland John Glenn's Justin Lawrence (No. 14). (Photo: MICHAEL VASILNEK)