

Chiefs rise to Salem challenge, trounce Rocks 45-14

Game of the Week: Canton whips Salem

Cross-town rivals meet for the first time in 5 years.



The Salem Rocks stormed out onto the football field Friday night, stoked to have a chance to get after the campus rival Canton Chiefs after a five-year hiatus.

But 48 minutes and 45 Canton points later, it was the Chiefs doing the celebrating at Plymouth-Canton Educational Park, hoisting their helmets after their 45-14 victory over the Rocks.

Canton (3-1) outscored Salem 22-0 in the second half, as the Rocks could not even move the chains once. Conversely, the Chiefs displayed a business-like offense with consistent running from senior backs Steven Walker (15 rushes, 132 yards, three TDs) and Colin Troup (22-151, two TDs).

“I feed off (Troup’s) energy, he feeds off mine,” Walker said. “Every time I get yards he gets yards. We keep going, four yards a play.” Meanwhile, senior quarterback Connor Engel orchestrated the offense to a productive night. When he needed to make a big pass he found targets such as senior Noah Brown (2-53) and senior Danny Lanava, who caught a 22-yard touchdown pass in the third quarter.

“It’s crazy, it’s a blessing with what our O-line can do,” Engel said. “I just got to give it all to them. They put up those 45 points.” Canton head coach Tim Baechler said his defense held Salem’s big guns in check except for one big play — senior Andrew Davis scored on a 63-yard TD pass from senior quarterback Ryan Young. And on offense, the Chiefs put together several long marches that took chunks of time off the clock.

“We wanted to possess the ball,” Baechler said. “We thought we could just hammer our double-wing stuff, they were having trouble with it.

“... Our defense stepped up in the second half and got a couple stops, we were able to consume the clock and were able to knock a couple in there.” Salem head coach Kurt Britnell, whose team dipped to 2-2, said his players performed better than the final score indicated.

“There were some things that were sloppy, coming out in the second half like that, not being able to put a drive together hurt,” Britnell said. “And they are who they are, we didn’t get enough stops defensively. And we made too many mistakes offensively to keep drives going.

“But it is what is and I don’t think the score is any indication of what kind of game it was.”

Salem got the ball to start the second half, but Chase Meredith immediately sacked Young to set the tone.

After the Rocks punted, Canton went on a 64-yard drive in nine plays, with Engel connecting with Lanava, who was all alone in the end zone. That made it 29-14 and the rout was on.

Davis was Salem’s biggest offensive contributor with 163 all-purpose yards. The Rocks’ second touchdown was a 3-yard run by senior Cody Tapp. Also coming out with a key field goal at the end of the first half was Chase Meredith, to give the Chiefs a 23-14 edge. Canton also scored on a pair of two-point conversions and on a safety.

Following are five takeaways from the Park rivalry contest.

No time to waste

Canton quickly found the Salem end zone near the start of both the first and second quarters, with Walker and Troup each registering TD runs. Troup then scored on a 2-point conversion run to put the Chiefs up 20-7 less than two minutes into the second.

Throw the flag

The host Rocks bounced back to score on Tapp's TD. That closed out a 73-yard drive in 15 plays, taking more than eight minutes off the scoreboard clock. Two Canton penalties kept the chains moving for Salem.

More than a QB

One of the better defensive performers for Salem was the quarterback, Young, who ran down several Canton players to minimize damage on potentially big gainers. He registered 12 tackles while senior linebacker Parker Selby had eight.

“He can play, he’s a football player, period,” said Britnell, about Young (4-8, 85 yards).

Glad to see you

Canton and Salem last met during the 2012 season, with the Rocks missing a potential game-winning field goal. None of the current players were in high school when that contest took place.



Canton players face the flag for the National Anthem.