

# First-half TD blitz powers Canton to bounce-back rout, 39-0



The Canton Chiefs came out angry and with a collective chip on their shoulder pads Friday against Northville, looking to wipe away the disappointment of the opening loss to Livonia Churchill.

Canton lost a fumble in the first series, but the defense stiffened enough to force a punt. And from that point on, the Chiefs dominated on both sides of the ball in a 39-0 victory.

Spearheading the offense was senior running back Steven Walker, who scored three touchdowns (80, 14, 31 yards) in the first half and finished with 299 yards in 12 carries.

It was Canton's first shutout since 2010 and the first win in Andy Lafata's new head coaching regime.

“Our kids, they were angry this week,” said Lafata, who took over this season from retired Hall of Famer Tim Baechler. “They played angry. We coached angry. And that’s the result.

“They’re a great team, great program. Coach Ladach over there’s had a ton of success. We knew we were in for a battle. When you’re playing Northville you know you got to be focused, because they’re one of the best teams in our league. Success all over the place. That really helped to focus us up, going against a team like that.”

Coveted Division I recruit Darius Robinson said his team came out of the locker room fired up to turn the young 2018 season around, erasing the memory of the 35-21 loss to Livonia Churchill on Aug. 24.

“We just played desperate,” said the 6-5, 265-pound Robinson, a force on both sides of the line of scrimmage. “We had a desperate week of practice. Because we wanted that first win. We came out here and we just showed it from the get-go.”

Northville head coach Matt Ladach lamented the early turn of events, not taking advantage of Canton’s first-series fumble — which was recovered by junior Robert Husband.

“We had the momentum, they fumbled, we had the ball in great field position,” Ladach said. “And on first-and-10 we snapped the ball over the quarterback’s head. So bad snaps and penalties are killers. Unfortunately, everything just went downhill from there.”



Following are several takeaways from the KLAA South Division matchup, which left both teams with a 1-1 record.

## **Canton awakening**

Northville had the misfortune of facing a Canton team smarting from an opening game setback against Livonia Churchill.

The Mustangs could not stop the Chiefs' multi-pronged running attack, especially in Canton's 34-point first half. If it wasn't Walker it was Juwan Frazier (4-61) or Marco Johnson (6-29, one TD).

In addition to Walker's touchdowns, the Canton scoring feast included a 3-yard touchdown run by Johnson, a 21-yard field goal by Seth Troszak in the third quarter (to make it 37-0) and a last-minute safety.

"Whether Steve's in there, or Juwan Frasier, or Victor Mancuso, whoever's the fullback, his job is to hit that trap," Lafata said. "So Steve did play a great game, but whatever fullback is in there, that's what we ask him to do. And our line blocked, they played angry. I'm proud of them."

## **Canton Chiefs vs Northville Mustang football.**



**Canton Chiefs take the field.**

## Missed opportunity

Any positive momentum the Mustangs could have had after recovering a Canton fumble during the game's first series fizzled when the offense could not move the chains.

Walker then raced 65 yards down the left sideline to set up Canton's first TD, on the Johnson carry.

The Chiefs then broke the game open with two first quarter touchdowns by Walker, including an 80-yarder up the gut and a 14-yard dash through the left side of the line.

## Safety last

Even with the game already in the win column, the Chiefs kept the pedal to the medal, with Zach Kubacki tackling a Northville player in the Mustangs' end zone for a safety with 26 seconds to go.

## Scoreboard says

During the on-field huddle following the contest, Lafata broke the news that the shutout was the first for Canton in eight years.

"Yeah, we haven't had a shutout in 2010, look at that scoreboard," shouted Lafata.

His players then roared in unison about the feat.

Senior lineman Noah Van Berkel then added a punctuation mark to the victory, noting that the loss to Churchill gave the Chiefs the extra juice needed to take down a strong KLAA team.

"It feels great to be part of such a good team," Van Berkel said. "We've been working way to hard for nothing to happen, the results. We came right back, we stuck to what we do best. We're a tough, hard football team."

“Coming out last week, losing in front of our home crowd really gets to you. I’m proud of my boys on my team. We came out and fought hard. We will have a chip on our shoulder from now on.”

The Chiefs will look to do just that 7 p.m. Friday, Sept. 7 against campus rival Plymouth.

## Misfiring

Northville managed just 159 yards and five first downs. Ladach used both of his quarterbacks, Nick Lauderback (4-13, 102 yards) and Trevor Schornack (4-5, 39 yards), in an attempt to spark the attack.

“Nick is our guy and Trevor was getting the third series regardless, he’s a competitor,” Ladach said. “We love them both. Unfortunately, we weren’t able to get any offense going tonight. And that wasn’t the result of our quarterbacks, that was the result of our entire team.”

## 'Stangs turn to get mad

Northville now will have to lick it's collective wounds and take a page out of Canton's playbook — to get angry and take it out on their next opponent. That's what Ladach is confident will happen in Week 3 against Howell.

“For sure, we’re going to have to challenge our guys,” Ladach said. “We definitely have to be tougher, we definitely have to be more disciplined. And we have to execute.”

Senior kicker Jackson Cooney, who missed a couple field goals, concurred that the Mustangs must quickly turn the page.

“It was a bit disappointing, kind of embarrassing as well,” Cooney said. “We’ve got to learn from our mistakes. We made a lot of mistakes overall. Hopefully next week we can pull together and get the victory. Next week expect to see a different team.”



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Breaking off a long gainer for Northville during the first half is senior Nicholas Prystash (3). (Photo: Bill Bresler | [Hometownlife.com](http://Hometownlife.com))