

Mohawks, Stallions to vie for midget football title

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DELPHOS — The Delphos Raiders went through the 2012 midget football regular season unbeaten at 5-0, while the Delphos Mohawks were 5-1.

Those two teams met up in the first of two semifinals on a brilliant Sunday afternoon at Stadium Park.

Despite Cole Reindel running 26 times for 126 yards to lead the Raiders, the Mohawks got big plays when they counted to grab a 20-16 triumph.

In the nightcap, the St. Marys Stallions scored early in the fourth period and made it stand up for a 14-8 victory.

The two victors will battle 3 p.m. Sunday for the title, while the Raiders and Reds battle in the consolation contest at 1:30 p.m.

After forcing a 3-and-out on the Mohawk' first possession, the Raiders went on a 8-play drive from the 40 to the Mohawk 28 but a costly fumble on a 4th-and-6 there ended the threat.

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The Mohawks returned the favor on the fourth play, with Luke Reindel recovering at the Mohawk 38. Four plays later at the 21, Conner Anspach (8 rushes, 59 yards) took a trap inside left guard and veered toward the outside to the pylon. Cole Reindel ran in the 2-pointer for an 8-0 edge with 6:01 left in the second half.

The Mohawks replied with a 12-play, 65-yarder. Collin Will (10 rushes, 53 yards) ran four times for 30 yards and finished it off with the pass. On 4th-and-8 at the Raider 10, he caught a fade route in the right corner of the end zone from Connor Hulihan (3-of-6 passing, 88 yards, 2 TDs) at the 46-second mark. The conversion run failed as the Mohawks trailed 8-6.

After the Raiders recovered the onside kick at the 49, on the very first play, Devin Ricker tried to find Reindel on an attempt behind the line of scrimmage that was ruled a lateral; Evan Grothouse recovered the ball at the 42 and was off to the races. The 2-point pass failed as the Mohawks led 12-8 with 30 ticks left in the half, which would be the halftime margin.

The Raiders received the second-half kickoff and started at the 36. They attained the Mohawk 1 in 11 plays — all runs — but a fumble on a 4th-and-goal short-circuited the play and the Raiders turned the ball over on downs at the 2 with 1:41 showing in the third period.

The Mohawks got out of trouble by converting two first downs and garnered the 28 in seven plays. On play eight, Hulihan tossed a go route to Troy Schwinnen on the left side and he gathered the pigskin in at the 45 and outran the last defender to the end zone for a 72-yarder. Hulihan threw to Schwinnen for the 2-pointer; it was tipped twice but ended up in the receiver's arms for a 20-8 edge with 5:38 remaining.

Anspach returned the kickoff to midfield, touching off a 12-play series. Cole Reindel ran nine times for 39 yards and on 4th-and-goal at the 4, he took a sweep left and outran the defense to the pylon with 43 ticks showing. Richard Cocuzza added the 2-pointer for a 20-16 deficit.

Brady Welker recovered the onside kick and Hulihan took a knee three times to finish out the game.

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In the second contest, the Reds (6-1) started their first series at the 49, courtesy of a 24-yard Troy Elwer kickoff return. He found Kole McKee (2 grabs, 47 yards) for 19 yards, then from the Stallion (5-2) 32, Elwer (8 rushes, 58 yards), in the gun, swept the left side and cut back across the grain and beat the defense to the right pylon for the tally. He connected with Collin White for an 8-0 lead just 58 ticks into the contest.

The Reds would not score again.

The Stallions (5-2) retaliated with an 8-play, 51-yarder, all on the ground. On 4th-and-goal at the Reds' 5, Tanner Stephens (16 rushes, 54 yards) took a step back to fake a pass, then tore up the middle to the end zone. The conversion pass failed as the Reds still led 8-6 with 2:53 left in the opener.

Forcing a punt, the Stallions then drove from their 30 to the Reds' 15 in 12 plays but Stephens was thrown for a 3-yard loss and an incomplection on 4th-and-9 ended the threat with 29 seconds to go, effectively closing the half.

The Reds kicked off in the second half but Elwer recovered the squib kick when the Stallions failed to cover the ball, starting at the visitors' 30. However, an interception by Carson Liming at the 2 short-circuited that drive.

A huge 40-yard dash by Chandler Gray (6 totes, 79 yards) got the Stallions out of trouble en route to a 10-play game-winner. At the Delphos 8, Stephens did the same thing as before: dropped one step, then tore up the middle to the end zone with 7:16 to go. Skylar Koester ran in the 2-pointer for a 14-8 edge.

Stephens hit Gray for 27 yards on 4th-and-10 to set up the TD.

The Reds — hurt by a procedure call on their first play from the 17 — misfired on a fourth down from the 24, giving St. Marys the ball in great shape.

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However, the Reds' defense held on 4th-and-8 from the 22 with 2:28 remaining.

A 28-yard connection from Elwer to McKee got the drive going but the Reds could only gain the Stallions' 33 before giving the ball over on downs to effectively end the contest.