

Washington Demons too tough for Marion

Written by Clete Campbell

Saturday, 06 September 2014 00:08 - Last Updated Wednesday, 10 September 2014 19:37

Warning to all future opponents of the Washington Demons: Don't make them angry. You won't like them when they're angry.

Embarrassed and fighting mad after a humiliating season-opening shutout loss to Pella, the 2013 Class 3A state runner-up took out its frustrations Friday night on an offensively flat, butterfingers Marion team that stumbled badly in Week 2 of its daunting 2014 "Schedule of Death" slate.

Defensive end Thomas Bump, the face of the Demons' aggression, forced three fumbles and quarterback Daryn Sebelius threw two touchdowns, ran for two scores and sealed the game late as the Demons overwhelmed the Indians, 35-25, at Thomas Park Field.

Washington's fiery response denied Marion Coach Tony Perkins an opportunity to tie Les Hipple for most career wins at the school.

"These are kids who played in a state championship game (last year)," Washington Coach Garrison Carter said. "They know how to win games."

"They don't look at (the Pella loss) as 'Oh my Gosh, we lost a game.' They look at it as 'Oh my gosh, when are we going to play again? We're going to win it.' When you have a team that thinks like that you're going to probably do some pretty big things."

Faced with another shaky start of its own, Marion (1-1) didn't have a recovery plan to match its successful response in last week's 28-6 season-opening win over Mount Vernon. After

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surrendering a Ryan Muller touchdown off a fumble on their first play from scrimmage, Marion rolled through the Mustangs.

There would be no such rebound Friday, mainly because Marion could never keep a firm grip on the ball. The Indians' main problem, Perkins said, was simply "mental errors."

Turnover issues continued to plague Marion, which coughed up six fumbles, losing four. The Indians fumbled the ball away on three consecutive second-quarter drives, turning a scoreless game into a 14-0 Washington lead.

"I thought our defense played outstanding in the first half," Perkins said. "The problem was our offense gave away 14 points with those fumbles."

The Indians' oak tree-strong defense bailed out the offense on its first two fumbles of the second quarter, but couldn't work a pardon for the third – the costliest turnover of the game.

Quarterback Hayden Meisner – trying to work an option pitch on a lost play – pitched it away as Bump creamed him at his own 23-yard line. Bump is a 6-foot-3, 197-pound missile who hits like a human cyclone.

"Thomas is a beast coming off the edge," Carter going. "When he's going, he's unstoppable."

Bump's fire-starting set up Washington with a golden offensive chance it finally converted. A pair of nice Jacob Hennigan runs set the Demons up at the Marion 1, and Sebelius (an ultra effective 14-for-24 passing for 209 yards) broke the goal line on a QB keeper with 2:11 left in the half to end Washington's nearly six-quarter scoreless drought to open the season.

"Offensively, we finished drives," Carter said.

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The Indians went three and out on their next possession and committed a costly 15-yard horse-collar penalty on the ensuing punt, setting the Demons up again with a prime scoring chance at the Marion 36.

Sebelius, heating up, threaded the needle over the top to find Jack Giardino in double coverage for a 24-yard touchdown and a 14-0 Washington lead with 46 seconds left before intermission.

Lost chances and missed opportunities were the theme of Perkins' halftime speech. The coach's message wasn't lost in translation.

"We couldn't have any more fumbles," quarterback Gage Kray said.

The Indians' defense returned to the field and made an immediate stand with Kyle VanMeter covering Thomas Bump's fumble to kill the Washington drive at midfield.

Perkins rotated Kray in for Meister and Kray produced immediately. The 6-foot-4 junior signal caller issued Marion's wakeup call, hitting Isiah Michaca on a 48-yard igniter that set up Kory Walsh's 7-yard sweep to the end zone and Marion's first score with 9:44 left in the third.

The Marion defense delivered another quick stop and the Indians' offense stayed hot, going 42 yards in three plays with Walsh reaching the house on a 3-yard run.

"The second half we came out and were actually playing football," Perkins said. "We were aggressive, making plays and actually not hurting ourselves."

But Carter Stigge hooked his point after attempt wide left, enabling Washington to keep the lead at 14-13.

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The miss was an omen of a rally about to quickly run out of fuel. The rest of the night was mostly Washington as the Demons re-seized control of the game.

Sebelius, who produced 345 yards of offense but no touchdowns in five red zone changes against Pella, had the big-play execution to match his numbers Friday.

His 1-yard run – following a beautiful block by the do-everything Bump – and gorgeous 39-yard touchdown pass to Jacob Hennigan in the fourth quarter gave Washington a 35-13 lead with 8:33 left and seemingly the knockout punch on Marion.

But the Indians took advantage of a slew of personal foul penalties – including two 15-yard roughing the passer flags – by an undisciplined Washington defense that was unable to put the game away. Meister located Derek Smith on a 5-yard touchdown pass with 2:51 left to keep the Indians' hearts beating. Marion (in it to the end despite being outgained 350-184) then recovered Stigge's perfectly placed onside kick attempt and marched right back into the end zone with the versatile Meister pulling in a 12-yard touchdown pass from Kray with 1:15 left.

Walsh could not break into the end zone on his two-point conversion attempt, leaving the score at 35-25.

Still, the issue wasn't settled until Sebelius – Washington's starting quarterback, cornerback, punter and playmaker of all trades - covered Stigge's second onside kick attempt.

“Daryn's going to be the best athlete on the field most weeks,” Carter said. “You ask him to do things that you don't even realize you're going to need him to do. Not many quarterbacks are going to get you an onside kick at the end of the game. We're just lucky to have a kid like that.”

Marion's no-breaks schedule brings another major test next week when the Indians visit Cascade to face the Cougars' explosive spread offense in their final non-district test.

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"We've got to go 110 percent against everyone we play," Kray said. "There's no doubt about that."

This year, that's just life for the Marion Indians.

WASHINGTON 35, MARION 25

Washington 0 14 7 14 - 35

Marion 0 0 13 12 - 25

W – Daryn Sebelius 1 run (Jacob Baughman kick)

W – Jack Giardino 24 pass from Sebelius (Baughman kick)

M – Kory Walsh 7 run (Carter Stigge kick)

M – Walsh 3 run (kick failed)

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W – Bryce Rickey 13 run (Baughman kick)

W – Sebelius 1 run (Baughman kick)

W – Jacob Hennigan 39 pass from Sebelius (Baughman kick)

M – Derek Smith 5 pass from Hayden Meister (kick failed)

M – Meister 12 pass from Gage Kray (run failed)

RUSHING

Washington – Bryce Rickey 10-60, Joe Smith III 11-43, Jacob Hennigan 5-26, Daryn Sebelius 14-(minus-7).

Marion – Kory Walsh 15-67, Nick Kramer 3-12, Hayden Meister 5-5, Austin Brown 1-3, Kray 7-(-32), Dontavious Young 1-(-9).

PASSING

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Washington – Sebelius 14-24-0 209 2 TDS.

Marion – Kray 8-19-0 147 TD, Meister 2-3-0 14 TD.

RECEIVING

Washington – Giardino 5-48, Thomas Bump 5-42, Dakota Suchan 3-79, Hennigan 1-29.

Marion – Meister 4-57, Derek Smith 3-36, Austin Brown 2-13, Isiah Michaca 1-48, Kramer 1-7, Ben Knapp 1-4.