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Towanda wins 38th annual bronze helmet

By RYAN LEMAY Staff Writer
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Wyalusing's Kashawn Cameron (15) punches in a second-half touchdown Friday night against Towanda.
Photo provided by Ed Boardman

WYALUSING — Towanda head coach Craig Dawsey dove through a mud puddle surrounded by his players in a moment of pure unbridled joy after defeating Wyalusing 20-8 on Friday night capturing Towanda's first win of the season.

"I am just so proud of the kids and the coaches," Daswey said. "We have ground it out all year, worked all year, and this is a great culmination everything so I am just really proud of everyone."

By the fourth quarter of the game, you could hardly tell who was who on the field. The constant rain turned the field into a mud pit and played right into the hands of the Black Knights.

Wyalusing has found a majority of its success on offense this season passing the ball. The terrible field conditions made that almost impossible for Blake Morningstar and his offense.

Morningstar completed 14 of 23 passing attempts for 149 yards, one touchdown, and one interception.

The problem was not moving the ball, but punching it in for the Rams. Three red zone possessions ended in turnovers.

In the first quarter a costly holding penalty made it third and long in the red zone. Wyalusing turned the ball over on downs. Towanda drove down on the ensuing drive, culminating in a four yard touchdown rush for Towanda's Rhyan West.

Penalties marred an otherwise strong offensive game by the Rams. Wyalusing was penalized six times for 50 yards at key moments in the game.

West rushed for 87 yards and a touchdown on 18 carries.

Wyalusing drove it down into the red zone again, but Morningstar had a pass deflected for an interception.

Morningstar hooked up with Kashawn Cameron on a third and 12 setting the Rams up in the red zone once again with just a minute remaining in the half.

Snaps were fumbled throughout the night by both quarterbacks, and with just eight seconds remaining in the half and the ball at the one yard line, a bobbled snap resulted in a Wyalusing fumble to end the half 6-0 in favor of Towanda.

In the third quarter a fumbled snap for Wyalusing on fourth down resulted in a first down for Towanda on Wyalusing's 18 yard line.

Towanda quarterback Grady Flynn went on to connect with Mason Hartman for a 17-yard touchdown extending the lead to 12-0 in the third quarter.

Flynn didn't pass much, however did so effectively completing one of three for 17 yards and a touchdown.

Wyalusing marched down the field on the next drive culminating in a 11-yard yard touchdown pass from Morningstar to Cameron cutting the lead to 12-8 after a successful two point conversion.

Cameron had five receptions for 48 yards and a touchdown.

Towanda's Riley Vanderpool stemmed any momentum returning the following kick-off for a 75-yard score. Flynn connected with Hartman on the two point conversion sealing the 20-8 win.

Vanderpool also excelled on the ground, rushing for 88 yards on 12 carries.

Brian Arnold led the way for Wyalusing on the ground, rushing for 100 yards on 16 carries.

Towanda finishes the season with a 1-8 record, however Dawsey believes that the performance was a huge step in the right direction for his program.

“These guys never gave in and they just kept getting better and better as the season went on and believing and I think that is a huge piece,” Dawsey said. “We came here knowing it was going to be a big game in the rain and mud but we got it done and hats off to wyalusing but this is great for our program.”

It was an emotional post-game celebration for the Black Knights. The players and coaches celebrated in the mud, and then sung in unison with the fans who faithfully withstood the conditions.

“I just love being here and being around the kids so that is all that matters,” Dawsey said.

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