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Mt. Bethel storms back from early deficit to beat Lanier Christian

By Jack Martin MDJ Sports Correspondent
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Mt. Bethel vs Asheville Christian — Mt. Bethel's Wesley Dunlop (4) races down the sideline for a touchdown during their game with Asheville Christian. SPECIAL / Cecil Copeland

Cecil Copeland 2025 cecil@theathleticimage.com



MARIETTA — Mt. Bethel Christian rallied to score 27 unanswered points in its 27-7 win over Lanier Christian on Friday at Arrow Field.

The Eagles (6-1) started slowly, throwing an interception that set up Ben Hargis' touchdown run midway through the first quarter, giving the Lightning (5-2) a 7-0 lead.

After the touchdown, the game slowed with several defensive stops and drive-ending penalties by both teams.

Lanier Christian missed a field goal with 8:43 left in the half, and both teams traded two punts apiece before halftime, with the Lightning maintaining their 7-0 lead at the break.

Mt. Bethel coach Micah Hughes said he liked the halftime adjustments his team made and called the group resilient, but he wants to see the team put together a full game.

"We made some corrections and halftime adjustments, which I think we've done a really good job of this season," Hughes said. "Moving forward, I want to see us put together a complete game. We've kind of sputtered a little bit the last couple of weeks. We put together a good game and played a good second half, but we really haven't played well in the first half, so I'm looking forward to that as we progress into the rest of the season."



Mt. Bethel scored on its second drive of the second half with a 10-yard touchdown pass from Gino Luckie to Alex Hedden with 6:04 left in the third quarter.

As the quarter ended, a fired-up Hughes gathered his team in a huddle for a message he said was to stop feeling sorry.

“We had the momentum after halftime, but we were feeling sorry for ourselves,” Hughes said. “A couple of guys were arguing a bit, and we just locked them back in. We made sure we were doing what we were supposed to do and we were handling things the right way mentally.”

The Eagles later captured the lead with a 8-yard touchdown run from Wesley Dunlop with 6:11 left in the fourth quarter. Following a punt from each team, Mt. Bethel’s pass-rush got through, as Weston Studivant recorded two sacks. The second sack forced a turnover on downs, on which the Eagles capitalized with another Dunlop touchdown.

Hughes said Studivant is an unbelievable player.

“He’s a sophomore. He’s 6-foot-3, 270 pounds,” Hughes said. “He’s a true Division I player who’s really starting to garner that attention, and he’s playing like it. It’s been unbelievable to watch that growth this season.”



The defense applied pressure all night, as Ronin Thompson recorded multiple sacks and a forced fumble, while the Eagles totaled four sacks in the second half.

“Some of the plays that we made tonight, from multiple sacks, sack fumbles and so much pressure on the quarterback — (Lanier Christian) really couldn’t do anything in the second half,” Hughes said.

Luckie later connected with Asher Adams for a 25-yard touchdown to seal the win.

Dunlop ran in his second touchdown with 1:51 left, and a strip sack by Thompson was converted into a last-second score by the sophomore quarterback and defensive end.

