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POWERED BY YOU AND THE **LANCASTER EAGLE-GAZETTE**

Gales strike it big; Win thriller

AUGUST 30, 2008

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By JOE ARNOLD

Sports Writer

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LANCASTER — The Lancaster players and coaches jokingly called it “the second game.” And the final seven minutes of Friday night’s home opener against Howard D. Woodson High School were exactly that.

A 74-minute lightning delay separated the bad from the good for the Gales, and Lancaster used the intermission to regroup, re-energize and reload in a thrilling 42-35 victory over the Warriors at Fulton Field.

Lancaster rattled off 21 fourth-quarter points and kept Woodson’s speed at bay long enough to escape with a win over a team whose skill was camouflaged by its small travel squad.

“It wasn’t pretty, and it certainly wasn’t textbook,” Gales coach Rob Carpenter said. “But our guys showed a lot of heart.”

PHOTO GALLERIES

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The Gales (1-1 overall) sat inside their locker room throughout the delay while Lancaster's coaches went to work devising different looks for what they hoped they could use in the final 7 minutes, 24 seconds of the game. Three times the referees told the Gales to suit up, and three times the delay was extended.

More than an hour after the game was suspended, both teams returned to the field at 11 p.m. Play resumed 9 minutes later with the Gales attempting a two-point conversion that would have tied the game at 29-29.

"We had most of the momentum and then they stopped it," linebacker Jerrid Karns said.

Lancaster's Ryan Cheek was stopped inches short of the goal line on the conversion attempt, setting up the Gales' dramatic finish.

Cheek, who shared time at quarterback and halfback with Nathan Carpenter, connected with Carpenter less than 2 minutes later on a 20-yard TD pass. Shaking off three weeks' worth of rust, Cheek picked his way through the middle of the Warriors' defense on the 2-point conversion and pushed Lancaster ahead 35-29.

All night long a handful of playmakers emerged for the injury-riddled Gales:

- Mark Maley recovered the onside kick that set up Cheek's TD pass to Carpenter.
- Linebacker Jerrid Karns stunted a Woodson scoring drive when he picked off Warriors' quarterback Terrance Bridgers at Lancaster's 23-yard line. The interception led to a 24-yard TD pass from Cheek to Jentzen Rohr seconds before the delay began.

"I was playing free and I read the quarterback's eyes and just sat on it," Karns said. "I went after it."

— Sean Hawkins intercepted Bridgers with less than a minute left to end the Warriors' last-gasp drive.

— Eric Storts and Donnie Roshon gobbled up valuable yardage in filling in for Connor Smith, who missed Friday's game with a broken left hand he suffered last week against Logan.

"A lot of guys have to step up on the spot," Carpenter said.

A 19-yard completion from Cheek to Carpenter set the Gales up at Woodson's 8-yard line. Cheek put the Gales ahead for good with 1:20 left in the game after he scrambled 8 yards for Lancaster's final TD.

Cheek finished with 140 yards rushing on 19 carries. He was 6-for-8 passing for 89 yards. He had a hand in five of Lancaster's six touchdowns.

Carpenter had 157 yards on the ground and two TDs.

Woodson (0-1), despite graduating six players to Football Bowl Subdivision (Division I) teams in 2007,

showed plenty of speed and quick-strike ability.

Joelil Thrash, an Illinois-bound receiver, had three catches for 152 yards. He had TD receptions of 88 and 46 yards.

Running back Nigel Rios ripped off a 67-yard TD run in the first quarter to kick off the Warriors' big-play offense.

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