

Gateway swamps 'Cats in Foothills Conference opener

BY MIKE DUDURICH
For the Bulletin

MONROEVILLE — The opening game of the football season is always full of hope and promise with every player who puts on a uniform believing this will be *the* year.

But there's always a sense of reality in all that hope and promise for some teams.

The Greater Latrobe Wildcats opened their season Friday night at Antimarino Stadium on the campus of Gateway High School and walked into the "Swamp" with the knowledge that they were up against not only one of the WPIAL Quad-A Foothills Conference's favorites, but one of the teams to be reckoned with at the end of November as well.

For coach Ray Reitz's young team, reality hit in this manner: Nine of the first 10 plays Gateway ran produced first downs.

That set the pace for the game and the Wildcats found themselves quickly in the chasing mode: on the brand-new artificial surface and the scoreboard as Gateway rolled to a 61-6 win.

The Gators scored two plays into the game with quarterback Thomas Woodson, a University of Arizona recruit, dashing into the endzone untouched from 23 yards out.

Gateway 61

Greater Latrobe 6

| | GL | G |
|---------------|--------|---------|
| First downs | 8 | 22 |
| Rushes-yds | 45-151 | 30-296 |
| Passing yds | -1 | 196 |
| Passes-int | 1-4-1 | 9-130-0 |
| Fumbles-lost | 5-3 | 0-0 |
| Penalties-yds | 5-40 | 8-67 |
| Punts-avg | 6-25.7 | 1-28 |
| Total offense | 150 | 492 |

| Score by Quarters | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|----|----|---|------|
| Gr. Latrobe | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | — 6 |
| Gateway | 19 | 21 | 14 | 7 | — 61 |

- Scoring**
- G—Woodson 23 run (kick failed)
 - G—Martin 19 run (kick failed)
 - G—Ford 4 pass from Woodson (Fitchwell kick)
 - GL—Monteparte 5 run (kick blocked)
 - G—Jeter 88 kickoff return (Fitchwell kick)
 - G—Martin 5 run (Conti kick)
 - G—Randall 60 pass from Woodson (Conti kick)
 - G—Martin 37 run (Fitchwell kick)
 - G—Edwards 2 run (Kalonicki kick)
 - G—White fumble recovery in endzone (Fitchwell kick)

- Rushing**
- GL—Carns 9-47; Monteparte 12-33; Aiello 8-27; Vasinko 4-24; Mucci 4-10; Hoopes 2-5; Weltz 2-5; Kowatch 2-2; Findle 1-2; Friedline 1-(-4)
 - G—Martin 12-135; Edwards 5-62; Irvin 5-33; Woodson 1-23; White 3-21; Thomas 3-16; McDonald 1-6

- Passing**
- GL—Carns 1-4-1-(-1); Mucci 0-0-0-0
 - G—Woodson 9-13-0-196; Moore 0-0-0-0

- Receiving**
- GL—Hoopes 1-(-1)
 - G—Randall 3-98; Ford 4-63; Harris 2-35

Greater Latrobe picked up its first first down of the season on its second series when Robert Vasinko burst for 15 yards, but that drive lasted only for plays.

Gateway made it look easy on its second series, this time Andre Martin bouncing off a couple tackles in the middle of the GL defense and scoring from 19 yards out.

"They're obviously a good football team, but we were misaligned at times tonight, our tackling was poor and that's on me," coach Ray Reitz said. "We didn't come ready to play and that's on me, too."

The Wildcats' cause was hampered by the loss of Vasinko, the team's starting running back and defensive secondary standout who suffered an ankle injury early.

"When you lose somebody like that, and we don't know how bad the injury is, but when that happens, you lose a player on defense and then you have to adjust, and it got kind of scramble for us out there," Reitz said.

GL quarterback Logan Carns had a pass picked off by Delvon Randall at the Gateway 40 on the next series, and the Gators methodically shredded the Wildcats' defense, finally cashing in on a Woodson to Mileak Ford four-yard pass.

Through one quarter, the score was 19-0, but it was to get worse.

Carns, who rarely had a chance to set up and pass because of Gateway pressure, took the team on his back, picking up runs of 16 and 38 yards, the latter of which put the ball on Gateway's 5.

Lucase. Montaparte, who finished with 33 yards on 12 carries, took it in from there on Greater Latrobe's first drive of the second half.

"Our quarterback played well, I thought. We just didn't execute in front of him," Reitz said. "When that starts to happen, things snowball and that can happen in a hurry against a team like this."

Trouble struck quickly, however. On the ensuing kick-off by Adam Drake, the ball was fielded by Todd Jeter at the 10 and he didn't stop running

until he hit the endzone. After that, it was another six-yard run by Martin and a 60-yard touchdown pass from Woodson to Randall.

The teams went to the locker rooms with Gateway leading, 40-6.

Three plays into the third quarter, Martin, who rushed for 135 yards on 12 carries, bolted into the endzone from 37 yards.

That gave the Gators a 47-6 lead, which kicked in the mercy rule with 10:51 left in the third quarter.

Smith then flooded the field with reserves, and Vincent Edwards, a 5-foot-8, 195-pound bowling ball, banged into the endzone from three yards out.

The final score of the game came on a fumbled pitch deep in GL territory that was recovered in the endzone by Gateway's Adam White.

Clearly, Gateway is a good team...some might say very good. But coach Terry Smith called off the dogs at a reasonable time in the game and Reitz responded by putting in his reserves as well.

"We weren't perfect by any means," Smith said. "We had some substitution problems, our running game wasn't consistent."

"But it was the first game. Yes, we have a lot of depth at a lot of positions and we have a chance to be good, but the way we played tonight won't be acceptable if we're to get there."

In the last five meetings, Gateway has outscored Latrobe, 235-20.

The 'Cats managed to pick up eight first downs, most of them later in the game, but rushed for 151 yards. Sophomore Nick Aiello got into the game late and carried the ball eight times for 27 yards.

The Wildcats are on the road again next Friday, traveling to Hempfield. The Spartans shocked the WPIAL football world Friday night by knocking off McKeesport Area, 33-18.

"You know some of these kids didn't play against Gateway much last year and were probably a little bit star struck," Reitz said. "But sometimes getting punched in the mouth makes you grow up in a hurry."