

Chiefs win opener in dramatic fashion

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Canton's Weston Price (No. 22) eludes a West Ottawa player Thursday night. / BRIAN QUINTOS

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Here come the Canton Chiefs as they embark on another high school football season. / BRIAN QUINTOS

Canton opened the 2013 [football](#) season with a thrilling 28-21 victory over visiting Holland West Ottawa at the Junior Varsity Stadium Thursday night.

Back and forth scoring paved way for a game reminiscent of last year's opener against Midland; but with a different end result. Canton [quarterback](#) Greg Williams was all smiles following the victory and was happy to start the season off on the right foot.

"Wow that was just amazing. We haven't won a big [game](#) in a while and as a team we really wanted this one. We really fought through adversity," Williams said.

Victor Villarini sealed the victory for the Chiefs when he intercepted Jared McNitt's pass as it went through the hands of James Lacy with 1:50 remaining in the fourth quarter.

"I saw it coming off of his hands and I focused in on the ball so I could seal the game for the team," Villarini said.

Veteran Canton head coach Tim Baechler was jubilant that Villarini got a chance and took advantage of it to redeem himself from his play earlier in the game.

"He was getting picked on all night, and I really like how he got the last laugh on that interception," Baechler said.

The Chiefs broke the 21-21 tie when Williams found Jake Boucher on a play-action pass on fourth and two from West Ottawa's seven yard line with 6:49 left in the fourth.

Canton's final scoring drive featured two quarterback keepers by Williams, one of them kept the drive alive on a third and five. Also in the mix on the Chiefs final possession were running backs Chase Winningham, James Hall, and Chuck Turfe.

"We were [reading](#) the defense and went with what was working. We had some big plays to keep the drive alive. The offensive linemen did a great job," Williams said.

Winningham took carries in the second half when Price needed to rest.

"That was so huge that he [Winningham] came in like that and he took great care of the ball. We needed to give Westen some rest." Baechler said.

The score was on the ensuing possession after West Ottawa tied the game at 21 after a 25 yard touchdown pass from McNitt to Alex Zimmerman with 1:02 left in the third quarter.

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The Chiefs secondary was led by Daniel Kilgore who had an interception as well as many crunching hits. Back there with him were Price and Hall along with a plethora of younger players that Baechler said played well.

"Our defense wasn't dominant, but man did they step up and make some plays," Baechler said. "Our special teams, we won that one third of the game."

Boucher, Turfe, and Price each played both ways for the Chiefs. With the temperatures in the high 80's with 90-percent humidity, it wasn't [easy](#).

"You had to be a man to play both ways on a night like this," Baechler said.

Price (6:27 of first quarter) and Joe Grinage (0:20 of second quarter) each had rushing touchdowns for the Chiefs and Boucher also had a receiving touchdown that put Canton ahead 21-14 midway through the third quarter.

P.J. Trammell scored on an eight yard pitch with two minutes remaining in the first quarter, tying the game at seven for the Panthers.

The other West Ottawa score came as McNitt connected with Lacy on a wheel route down the left sideline on third and ten with 1:50 left in the first half.

Canton plays its next game 7 p.m. Friday at Brighton.