

# Short-circuited: Storms stop grid games at Park

Tim Smith, 10:17 p.m. EDT September 5, 2014



(Photo: JOHN KEMSKI | EXPRESS PHOTO )

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For the football fans who ignored the weather forecast Friday night, they did enjoy an eventful six minutes between the host Canton Chiefs and Hartland.

Canton senior running back Chuck Turfe blew past the Eagles defense on the first play from scrimmage, for a 69-yard touchdown.

On the ensuing kickoff, Hartland's Brett Oliver answered with a 98-yard TD return to make it 7-all at Plymouth-Canton Educational Park before 30 seconds had elapsed off the scoreboard clock.

Moments after the Chiefs went up 14-7 following a conventional 61-yard march in 10 plays, the skies darkened. Lighting bolts were spotted in the distance, play was stopped and fans were evacuated from the aluminum bleachers to ensure their safety.

Next came 45 minutes filled with a non-stop light show, 60-mile-per-hour wind and hail — not to mention yard markers, first-down sticks and end zone pylons flying all over the varsity turf field.

Officials from both high schools agreed to resume the game midway through the first quarter on Saturday.

"We really want to get out here and we want to play," said Turfe, waiting with teammates in front of the fieldhouse at the north end of the varsity turf field. "Hartland's a great team, it's a hard-fought game so far and I'm really excited to get back out there.

"Of course the weather's a huge factor. But whether we play tonight or tomorrow, I'm going to be ready, the Chiefs are going to be ready and we're going to come out here and get this win."

A similar fate played out over at the junior varsity grass field. Plymouth and Pinckney were knotted up at 7-7 with

about 6:30 left in the second quarter when that game was suspended, to resume the following morning.

There was no update about Salem's game at Walled Lake Western by press time.

### **Mutual agreement**

According to Canton interim athletic director Brian Samulski, it wasn't a surprise that weather interrupted Friday's proceedings. Bad weather was forecast all day. But until the storms arrived, there remained hope that somehow the game would get played on the scheduled date.

"We checked the weather all day and we knew it was a possibility," said Samulski, during the delay. "But you just roll with it. It's normal procedure, everyone in the state's doing it. You're on delay and we already got a makeup time if we have to."

According to the Michigan High School Athletic Association, the first time lightning is spotted yields a 30-minute delay. With each successive lightning bolt, the half-hour clock is rebooted.

"The determining factor, usually you only get an hour and a half delay total," Samulski continued. "But because there's no school tomorrow, there's no limit. So it will be a mutual agreement between us and Hartland."

Ultimately, after the weather turned particularly nasty, with sheets of rain blowing sideways while equipment littered the field and its surrounding track, coaches and officials concurred to try again Saturday.

The weather spoiled what was looking to be an intense, hard-fought matchup between two KLAA powerhouses. After Turfe and Oliver traded touchdowns in the first 30 seconds of the game, the Chiefs took control at their own 39-yard-line and went on an impressive scoring drive. Senior quarterback Greg Williams ran a bootleg around right end for one key first down, moving the football to near midfield.

On the next play, 5-6 sophomore running back Marcus Sanders shot through the middle for a 14-yard gain into Hartland territory.

Hartland's helmet-pounding defense stopped Canton's next two running plays.

But on third down and long from the Eagles' 37, Williams stepped back and connected on a 21-yard completion to senior wide-out Robert Guajardo near the left sideline stripe.

A personal foul against Hartland moved the ball inside the 10-yard line and Sanders muscled in from seven yards out to put the Chiefs ahead. An extra point by Andrew Loehnis made it 14-7 with 6:40 remaining in the frame.

Two Hartland plays later, however, that was all for the evening.