

Late-game heroics on offense and defense propel Canton to 40-35 victory over Livonia Churchill





1 / 9

Canton quarterback Greg Williams prepares to hike the ball against Livonia Churchill in the MLive Detroit Game of the Week.

Jared Purcell | japurcell@mlive.com

Photos from the MLive Detroit Game of the Week between Canton and Livonia Churchill on Oct. 3, 2014. (Jared Purcell | japurcell@mlive.com)

By Tom Barry | MLive.com

on October 03, 2014 11:30 p.m.

10/03 - 6:30 PM Football	Final
Livonia Churchill	35
Canton	40

MLIVE DETROIT GAME OF THE WEEK

Down seven points in the fourth quarter, it looked like [Canton](#) was going to be the next victim for undefeated [Livonia Churchill](#) on Friday in a Kensington Lakes Activities Association South Division football contest.

Instead, the Chiefs picked up a late touchdown and picked off Churchill in the end zone to secure a 40-35 upset in front of the home crowd.

Canton's comeback drive started when the Chiefs froze Churchill running back [Paul Romain](#) on 4th-and-1, allowing the chiefs to take over at the Churchill 31-yard line.

Just 10 seconds later, Canton quarterback [Greg Williams](#) ran the ball 28 yards down to the three-yard line, putting the Chiefs on Churchill's doorstep.

"Our coaches called up the plays and we just had to work the magic," Williams said. "I told my guys we had to make the big plays and just focus. We were able to execute, finish our plays and win the game."

Just two plays later, Williams threw the ball into the waiting hands tight end Nolan Gilo, giving Canton a 40-35 advantage, its first lead since the first quarter.

"My line gave me plenty of time to make the throw," Williams said. "My receiver made a great route and I threw it to only where he could catch it."

Canton wasn't out of the woods yet, though, as Churchill stopped running Charlie Turfe just shy of the end zone on a two-point conversion.

Churchill then returned the ball near midfield and on its first play from scrimmage, quarterback [Brian Alsbrooks](#) lobbed a 46-yard pass to wide receiver Timothy Dulin to the Canton 21-yard line.

After Alsbrooks took the ball down to the Canton five-yard line, that was when the Chiefs defense stepped up.

Canton forced Alsbrooks to throw two straight passes short and almost came away with an interception on third down.

On 4th and-goal, Alsbrooks went to the opposite side of the end zone for the potential game-winning touchdown.

However, he did not see Canton defensive back Jared Stephens in his path.

Stephens leaped up into the air, took possession of the ball with both hands and fell to the ground to complete the interception and put the game on ice.

Stephens said that was the biggest interception he had in his life.

"That is the best play I've ever made," Stephens claimed. "I'm hoping there's many more to come. I saw them come out in the bunch formation, so I switched with (defensive back) Robert Guajardo. I took his receiver and came up with the ball."

For Williams, watching the play unfold from the sideline was a nerve-wracking experience.

“This is unbelievable,” he stated. “Our defense did a terrific job with those stops. When they finished the game and allowed us to take the victory formation, that was the best feeling in the world.”

Canton head coach Timothy Baechler was overwhelmed during the postgame interviews but did say it was the best come-from-behind victory in his 23-year coaching career.

“When we were down at halftime, I told the team that we needed to go to the junior varsity playbook and double-teamed the players,” Baechler said. “I also told asked them if they rallied from behind in any sport and they all raised their hands. I told them that we could do it again.”

Now, Canton stands alone atop the KLAA South and is a win away from clinching its seventh consecutive trip to the playoffs.