

Canton tops Northville, 55-29, for second consecutive week

By **Tom Lang, Special to Detroit Free Press** October 29, 2016



The Canton high school offensive line chases a kickoff during a game against Livonia Churchill on Friday. It's fairly typical for two high school teams to combine for a load of yards of offense in a game.

But Canton's win at Northville in the Division 1 pre-district was very atypical, because those yards came in just the third quarter alone, as the Chiefs beat the Mustangs for the second consecutive week, 55-29 Friday night.

Canton senior Reid McDonnell led all players with four touchdowns on 247 yards. The scores came on runs of 5, 56, 69

and 24 yards, thanks to excellent downfield blocking that opened holes and kept defensive backs from closing in.

“The linemen, the backs — no one ever gives up on a play,” McDonnell said of his teammates. “We just block until the whistle. We just help each other out as much as we can.”

McDonnell was nowhere near alone on making big plays. The Chiefs’ Julian Thornton rushed for 172 yards and one touchdown (48 yards), and Markus Sanders chipped in three touchdowns on 157 total yards. Canton only attempted two passes the entire game, and one was intercepted.

“It’s exciting that we get another week to play, to have another week with these boys,” Thornton said.

Northville (7-3) earned 402 yards of offense to combine with Canton’s 578 for nearly 1,000 total yards from scrimmage.

“We won by more than last time, so that’s good,” said Canton coach Tim Baechler. “I thought we played a little sloppy and had a couple stupid penalties. ... But to play a team back-to-back and win in the playoffs is pretty hard to do.”

Canton (8-2) makes a living off of long, grinding drives that kill clock and keep the ball away from the opponent. But with good field position on four recovered on-side kick attempts by Northville — to go with those big plays in the third quarter? Canton took only 2:51 seconds to score on four drives.

The Mustangs closed to within 42-28, early in the fourth quarter when Nick Prystash caught a 2-yard pass from backup QB Jonathan Michalak, before the Chiefs pulled away for good on Sanders’ third touchdown of the game. Anthony Abbott added an 80-yard touchdown reception for the Mustangs in the third as well and a scramble by Michalak also went for six points.