

Canton runs to big 56-12 win vs. Novi

Troup, Walker carry big load in KLAA Black Division triumph



Canton's Colin Troup was the game's leading ball carrier in a 56-12 win over Novi.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

That's been the mentality of Canton football for several years now under coach Tim Baechler, as his team's power running game once again proved to be their biggest asset in a 56-12 division win over homecoming opponent Novi.

While the faces underneath the helmets may change, the scheme has remained relatively intact, which is a rarity given the copycat mentality of coaches to latch onto the latest and greatest formations and gimmicks. Of course with over 200 wins in Baechler's 20 seasons as coach, it's clear that you can't argue with success.

The offensive beneficiaries for Canton (4-0 overall, 3-1 KLAA Black) on Friday night were the dynamic duo of running backs Colin Troup (14 carries

for 169 yards) and Steven Walker (12 carries for 166 yards), whom scored a combined five of the Chiefs' eight touchdowns.

"Novi's a very good team with a lot of talent, but what I really think what helped us pull off the win was Coach Baechler, whose been working us hard all week," Troup said. "The whole team has been getting over this hot, sweaty week and it just felt really good to come out and impress the crowd during our homecoming game."

It was off to the races from the get-go for Troup, who broke loose up the middle on the first play of the game for a 50-yard touchdown run.

Not to be outdone, Walker's moment came in the final minute of the first quarter on a 30-yard sprint to give Canton a 21-12 lead.

Troup reached the end zone once more on the Chiefs opening drive in the ensuing frame with a three-yard scamper, followed by Walker's 57-yard score up the gut to make it a 35-12 affair at the half.

The synergy behind Canton's running game was apparent in the third, with Troup taking the ball up the right side for a 54-yard run that would be capped three plays later by Walker from four yards out.

"Troup is a sleek runner and a racehorse kind of kid who we're trying to make a plow-horse and he has some explosive speed," Baechler said.

"Steve Walker's just dazzling and so hard to tackle. He breaks tackles and is so quick and has great vision. He makes people miss and runs through things...he's very special."

By the time the final whistle blew, there was an overwhelming disparity in total rushing yards, with Canton holding a 472-58 advantage over Novi (1-4, 1-3).

"You see spread, spread, spread, spread and then you go to this type of offense and it throws a monkey wrench in everything" Novi coach Jeff Burnside said. "You can't play your base defense because you have to change alignments and add more guys to the box and closer to the box. You change personnel because you may not want four secondary players in there and it makes you do things that you don't want to do."

Here are four other takeaways from Friday's game:

Scoring Party (Part 1): The Chiefs had cart blanche when it came to scoring TDs with four different players reaching the end zone.

Aside from Troup and Walker, junior running back Jawaun Frazier (six carries for 85 yards) accounted for two scores, which came on a three-yard run in the first and a 24-yarder in the fourth.

Senior quarterback Connor Engel had just four rushes in the contest, but his best one came with 4:47 left in the third, as he faked a handoff to Frazier before forging ahead on a two-yard run to make it a 49-12 affair and initiate a running clock.

“I think our offensive line and running backs are starting to get a little more physical at the point of attack, and we’re starting to move people,” Baechler said. “It’s still a work in progress and blocking is probably the hardest skill in football and I don’t think people realize that, but we’re starting to get better at that.”

Scoring Party (Part 2): The kicking game for Canton also saw plenty of action, faring 8-of-8 on extra points. Senior kicker/tight end Chase Meredith accounted for seven of them, while senior offensive lineman Evan Kernosek successfully added a point after following Frazier’s second score of the evening with 4:04 remaining.

Pass or Fail: Novi was able to generate some success throughout the air, finishing with 88 yards on 7-of-21 attempts by senior quarterback Sean Gilliam.

On their second possession of the game, Gilliam connected with senior wide receiver Traveon Maddox (five catches for 73 yards) off the post route for a 24-yard touchdown at the 7:40 mark of the first quarter.

The extra point however proved to be a no-go, with Troup blocking the kick to keep Canton ahead by a 7-6 margin.

Junior running back Kyle Klosterman (12 carries for 55 yards) added a 10-yard score for the Wildcats five minutes later, but the team was unsuccessful in their attempt to go for two, which would have tied the game at 14-all.

“The plays needed to happen in the first half and the boys knew that we were going to gamble and we were going to take chances,” Burnside said. “That’s why we onside kicked and went for it a couple times on fourth down. We missed a couple balls and we missed a couple blocks. When you play a team like Canton, the room for error is so small and you can’t make any errors.”

Two Scoops of Pigskin: One of the bright spots for the Wildcats came on the defensive side, with senior defensive lineman Chad Howell both forcing and recovering two fumbles in addition to his three solo and three assisted tackles.

The first one came on Canton's second offensive drive, where Howell pried the ball out of Engel's hands in what would lead to Novi's initial score. With 1:17 left until intermission, Howell killed off a red zone scoring opportunity for the Chiefs by executing a force and scoop in the backfield at the Novi 20.