

Livonia Churchill rolls past Canton in opener

Livonia Churchill 35, Canton 21



Canton's Marco Johnson (27) celebrates his second-half touchdown with teammate Noah VanBerkel (33) during Friday's game against Livonia Churchill at Canton.

Canton — The road back to the Kensington Lakes Activities Association championship game will be a tougher test in the new-look league this year.

One game in, Livonia Churchill looks up to the challenge.

Avery Greiner caught two touchdowns from quarterback Drew Alsobrooks and Churchill scored off two of its three blocked punts in a 35-21 victory at Canton in the season opener.

Joel Forgacs blocked two punts and caught a 24-yard touchdown in the rematch of last season's KLAA final, which Canton won by an identical 35-21 score. The title was the last in former coach Tim Baechler's storied 20-year career, which ended in the playoffs 17 times.

"We learned a lot from last year. it was a tough game all the way to the end," Alsobrooks said. "Our defense played really, really well. They read their keys, did their job. I was so proud of them."

Churchill's Darrell Mason Jr.'s 43-yard touchdown run on a one-play drive with 4:40 remaining answered a Canton run that closed the deficit to seven points.

Darius Robinson, Canton's three-star senior defensive end, got to Alsobrooks twice early, but was kept quiet by Churchill tackle Caden McCusker and guard Keegan Cutshaw, seniors making their first career starts on the offensive line.

"I was a little nervous, but I was ready and got pumped up before the game," Cutshaw said of blocking the 6-foot-4, 260-pound Robinson, whose scholarship offers include one from Michigan State.

"We just had to not worry about all his DI offers, just do our job." Mason, who had 103 yards on 12 carries, opened the scoring for Churchill with a 5-yard touchdown.

Churchill got out to a 21-0 lead after Alsobrooks found Greiner over the middle for a 74-yard touchdown on the first play of the second half.

Greiner's first touchdown, a 14-yard catch, made it 14-0 at halftime. He had five receptions for 122 yards and added an interception.

Juwan Frazier, Luke Joppi and Marco Johnson ran for Canton touchdowns. The team had 309 yards on 49 carries, led by Steven Walker's 123 yards on 18 carries for first-year coach Andrew Lafata.

Desmond Dewberry also blocked a punt for Churchill, which plays at KLAA newcomer Belleville next week in its East Division opener. Belleville is the top-ranked team in The Detroit News' Super 20 rankings.

"I'm excited, I always want to play the best competition possible," Alsobrooks said. "I know they're a good team. It's going to be a battle, but I think we can do it, man."