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Failed play works this time for Newark's 1st win

BY TOM WILSON • SPORTS WRITER • SEPTEMBER 6, 2008

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WORTHINGTON -- Calling the same pass play that resulted in a 92-yard interception return a week ago, Newark coach Jeff Buchanan had faith his team would execute this time around.

ADVERTISEMENT With the score tied at 13 and facing a third-and-goal at the Thomas Worthington 7-yard line with only 3:15 left in the game, Buchanan called timeout and told his team it was running the exact same play that turned into a disaster last week.

This time, it was executed so perfectly that Taylor Huffman was wide open in the end zone, and Rahlin Watson found him for the winning score.

The 7-yard touchdown pass gave the visiting Wildcats (1-2) a 19-13 victory against pass-happy Thomas Worthington (0-3).

"When I went out to the huddle, I think they thought I was nuts when I told them we were running the same play," Buchanan said. "I knew if we could just execute it this time, it would be there.

"I think they learned from last week, and they believed in themselves. That was a well-thrown ball by Rahlin, and Taylor was so open, those are sometimes harder to catch than if someone is all over you."

It was Newark's first win of the season, and Buchanan's first as the Wildcats' coach -- something that wasn't lost on the players.

"It means a lot because we obviously didn't want to go to 0-3," said Terrence Steele, who was in the lineup after missing the first two games. "It was really important to get a win, not only for us, but to coach for his first victory."

Steele's presence was felt in the secondary. He had an interception in the fourth quarter and several big hits.

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"This being my first game, it just felt like a volcano ready to explode," Steele said. "I just wanted to bring a lot of energy to our defense, and I felt like I did that."

Newark's defense was outstanding. If the Wildcats weren't pressuring Cardinals quarterback Sam Bohon, who was 21-of-40 passing for 197 yards, they were making his receivers pay with big hits.

The Cardinals rushed the ball eight times for minus-1 yard.

"That's the best our secondary has played," Buchanan said. "We were in position all night, and Terrence makes a big difference back there. He'll hit you, that's for sure. That's the most physical we've played."

The winning score was set up by a bad snap to the Cardinals' punter, which Newark blocked, giving the Wildcats the ball at the 8-yard line.

The Wildcats took an early lead thanks to interception by defensive end Nic Barber, who was headed for the end zone for an apparent score before slipping.

"I was a little shocked because defensive lineman usually don't get that opportunity," Barber said. "I guess I got a little weak in the knees."

The Wildcats settled for a 20-yard field goal by Jordan Spurlock.

It stayed that way until the Cardinals returned a punt to the 2-yard line. On the next play, Justin Dugan scored to give the Cardinals a 6-3 lead with 9:28 left in the half.

Newark tied it on Spurlock's 44-yard field goal.

After stopping the Cardinals on their opening possession of the second half, Newark responded with its best drive of the night.

Spencer Satterfield capped the 45-yard drive off with a 3-yard run with 8:19 left in the third to give the Wildcats a 13-6 lead.

Bohon then went to work, completing 5-of-6 passes, the last one for a 6-yard touchdown to Dustin Armstrong that tied the score with 5:11 to go in the third.

After Newark's go-ahead touchdown, the Cardinals drove to the Wildcats' 20, but Newark's defense held, forcing four straight incomplete passes.

Tim Williams had a big night, finishing with 127 yards on 35 carries.

"Hopefully, this will boost their confidence," Buchanan said. "We did a good job of not letting adversity bother us tonight."

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good job Cats.not the prettiest game but a win is a win.kudos to #10,9,8 and 21 you boys came to play.all we can hope is ya continue to improve.and #21 keeps setting the tone with hits.good job by the OFF.great effort out of #22.now we know we have bell cow back there. strap em alittle tighter this week,OCC starts.Good luck boys

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