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Sabercats mauled

Turnovers, long plays spell disaster as Sault drops 63-13 decision to Stallions

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THE SAULT STAR

While turning the ball over is always dangerous, against an explosive opponent it can be absolutely humbling.

The Sault Sabercats learned that lesson Saturday en route to dropping a 63-13 decision to the Huronia Stallions at Rocky DiPietro Field.

Quarterback Cory Wensley was intercepted five times and the Sault defence surrendered four touchdown plays of at least 35 yards each.

Stallions quarterback Kyle Graves threw five touchdown passes — all in the first half.

The loss dropped the Sabercats record to 2-4-1, further weakening their Ontario Varsity Football League (OVFL) playoff hopes.

The Cats would need to win both of their remaining games to have any chance of playing in the post-season.

They entertain Hamilton at 1 p.m. Saturday before visiting Brantford July 19.

“Big plays killed us,” said Sabercats slotback Tom Hicks. “We came out well, but big plays took away our momentum.”

“At the end of the day, our youth certainly showed,” said Sault head coach Cale Krezek, whose team dropped its third straight. “We have a lot of young guys and against a really good team, we weren’t able to step up to the challenge. I think that’s the best team we’ve played all year.”

The Stallions offensive talents were quickly apparent.

On their first play from scrimmage, Graves lined up at running back and tossed a 75-yard option pass to receiver Colin Carswell who galloped into the end zone.

With just 1:20 remaining in the first half and the Sault trailing 28-13, Wensley’s first two interceptions helped Huronia blow the game open.

After Mike Minter picked one off near midfield, Graves hit Carswell with a 47-yard, touchdown strike on the next play.

As soon as the home team got the ball back, Ed Shrubsole intercepted and, again on the next play, Graves connected with Oladipo Onayemi from 21 yards out.

Graves and running back Brett Haenni finished with three majors each while Onayemi scored twice and Matt Cross once.

“Overall, we’re pleased,” said Stallions head coach Martino DiSabatino, whose club improved to 5-1-0. “We like to spread the ball around, have fun and create a lot of opportunities.”

After quickly falling behind 7-0, Wensley hooked up with Tyler Brown on the Sault's first offensive play, an 87-yard, pass-and-run romp. Hicks converted to tie the game 7-7.

Wensley scored the home team's other major, running the ball in from one-yard out at the 10:45 mark of the second quarter. Hicks convert attempt was blocked and the home side trailed 21-13.

But the next 42 points belonged to the Stallions.

"I'm very disappointed. You can't help but be disappointed after losing like that," said Cats linebacker/running back Chris Tithecott, who led his team with eight tackles.

But Tithecott said he and his teammates plan to complete the 2008 season as strongly as possible.

"You have to have a short memory," he said. "We have a lot of heart and we come to play every game. This won't make a difference in how we finish the season."

"We've two good teams coming up," said Hicks, who led his club with five catches for 92 yards. "We have to forget about this game and get ready to work hard next week."

Notes: The Sabercats were minus their leading rusher, Matt Buchan, who has been diagnosed with mononucleosis and is lost for the season.

Wensley wound up passing for 234 yards, completing 14 tosses in 25 attempts.

Max Cicchello caught four passes for 38 yards while Brown finished with three receptions for 90 yards. He also led the Sault in rushing with 34 yards on seven carries.

Defensively, Brandon Hazelton was credited with seven tackles and Nap Tousignant five.

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