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Photo by Tracy Dreslinski
 Fraser High senior offensive tackle Jon Czerwiński opens up some running room for senior receiver Chris McCall in a Sept. 12 game against Roseville High at Fraser High.

Horsing around

Fraser High football holds off late charge to top Roseville High

By Brad D. Bates
 C & G Sports Writer



FRASER — The Fraser High football team almost blew a 19-point, fourth-quarter lead.

Roseville High scored 13 unanswered points in less than two minutes Sept. 12 at Fraser and almost stole one from the Ramblers.

Coach Joe Kaczanowski believes the difference between what did happen and what almost happened could change the Ramblers' season.

“Even though we got in some bad situations, we feel good about this,” Kaczanowski said. “That second half, we became a football team.”

The Ramblers got on the scoreboard first in their Macomb Area Conference Blue Division opener with a 35-yard field goal off the foot of senior Randy Mathy with 4:25 to go in the second quarter.

Senior receiver Chris McCall then broke a 54-yard touchdown run at 11:02 in the third quarter for a 9-0 lead before a 20-yard scoring run from junior Anthony Allen at 8:32 in the third made it 16-0. Another Mathy field goal at 11:52 in the fourth made it 19-0.

On the next possession, Roseville started its comeback when senior running back Derrick Johnson followed up a 76-yard sprint to the Fraser 1-yard line with a touchdown with 10:14 remaining in the fourth.

The Panthers recovered the ensuing kickoff at the 50-yard line and promptly scored in under two minutes as senior quarterback Brett Makowski connected with senior receiver Kwan Thomas for an 18-yard score at 8:25 to pull within six points.

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After the Panthers regained possession at 4:07 in the fourth at their own 47, Fraser senior defensive back Nathan Smith intercepted Makowski at the Fraser 16 with 3:45 to play.

“We had a meeting before the game about answering,” Kaczanowski said. “Every time tonight, when bad things happened, they answered.”

The Roseville defense came back and forced a turnover of its own, as junior linebacker Chris Nash recovered a Rambler fumble at the Fraser 14 with 1:15 to play.

The Fraser defense stepped up and forced a fourth down and 3 on their own 7, where Roseville’s final effort would be thwarted as Fraser senior defensive back Eric Szczesney broke up the final pass attempt of the game with 41 seconds on the clock.

“After that fumble, I thought, ‘Oh no, this can’t be happening,’” Fraser High senior offensive tackle Jon Czerwienski said. “The defense came out, though, and said, ‘We’re going to answer,’ and that’s what they did.”

The Ramblers, now 1-2 after dropping their first two games to Clinton Township Clintondale and Warren Mott, respectively, are looking at that final defensive stand as a turning point for their season.

“This is going to show our team that you’re in it until the end,” said Czerwienski, whose team faces the MAC Red’s Romeo High (3-0) at 7 p.m. Sept 19. “We took it down to the wire today, but when we needed to do it, we did.”

You can reach Sports Writer Brad D. Bates at bbates@candgnews.com or at (586) 498-1029.

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