

Sports

Canandaigua catches Kearney off balance in Class AA final

Diversified offense wears down Kings as Braves win title

By Richard A. Kiley

More so than any other Section 5 high school football team, Mike Foster's Canandaigua Braves always seem to turn opponents' miscues into points.

Canandaigua did just that against Bishop Kearney in the Section 5 Class AA championship game at Fauver Stadium Saturday, Nov. 14, taking advantage of crucial mistakes by the Fighting Kings (7-3) and seizing the sectional trophy in the process with a 21-7 win.

Canandaigua (9-1), which was eliminated in the semifinals a year ago after capturing three consecutive titles during the "Bill Scharr years," has now won four of the last five Section 5 Class AA football championships. Scharr is now redshirting as a freshman at nationally ranked Syracuse.

Mike Damrau was the key man for the Braves, icing his 11th and 12th touchdowns of the season. One of those scores came after a turnover by the Kings.

Damrau, a senior tailback, scored on a four-yard toss from senior quarterback Tom McWilliams in the first quarter and secured the win with a two-yard run at 7:30 remaining. The short touchdown run culminated an 81-yard drive for the Canandaigua offense, which kept Nick Teta's Kings off balance most of the game.

Gardner Smith also scored for the Braves, gathering in a 23-yard touchdown pass from McWilliams in the third quarter.

Like many other Section 5 grid coaches who have played Canandaigua this season, Teta was extremely impressed by McWilliams' performance at quarterback.

"Mike (Foster) has an outstanding QB; we had some difficulty defending the pass," Teta said. "They threw a lot of short passes and medium-range passes."

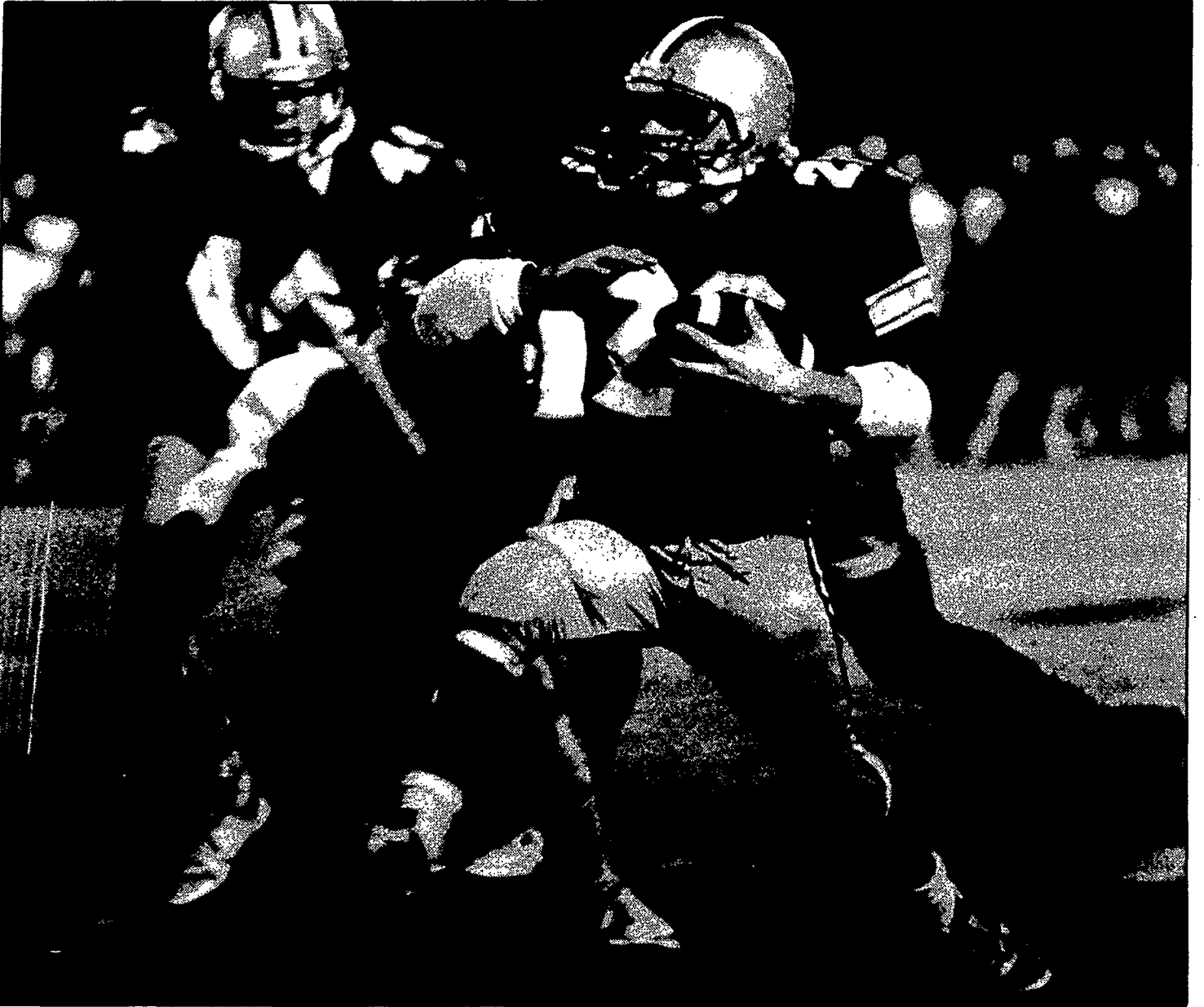
Foster's game plan followed a pattern similar to the one that frustrated Finger Lake East divisional opponents all season, providing the Kings with a far more complex offense than they had seen against Wilson a week earlier in the sectional semifinal. Wilson is predominately a running team.

"We've never seen a QB of McWilliams' caliber (in City-Catholic Division I), and it's hard to teach the kids how to stop a good passing game in such a short period of time," said Teta, whose Kearney team was playing in the sectionals for the first time ever.

The Kings were also victimized by poor field position most of the game, beginning most of their drives deep in their own territory.

"We never had good field position," Teta said. "In a close ball game, it's tough to open up the offense (when you have poor field position). We didn't want to take a lot of chances."

Kearney's lone score — a controversial one at that — came on defense. Trailing 7-0, the Kings tied the game with 5:04 to play in the first half. On a second-and-10 play from Kearney's 37-yard line, McWilliams had a pass batted down near the line of scrimmage.



Bonnie Traflet/Courier-Journal

The Braves' offense kicked into high gear in the second half, propelling Canandaigua to its fourth sectional championship in five years.

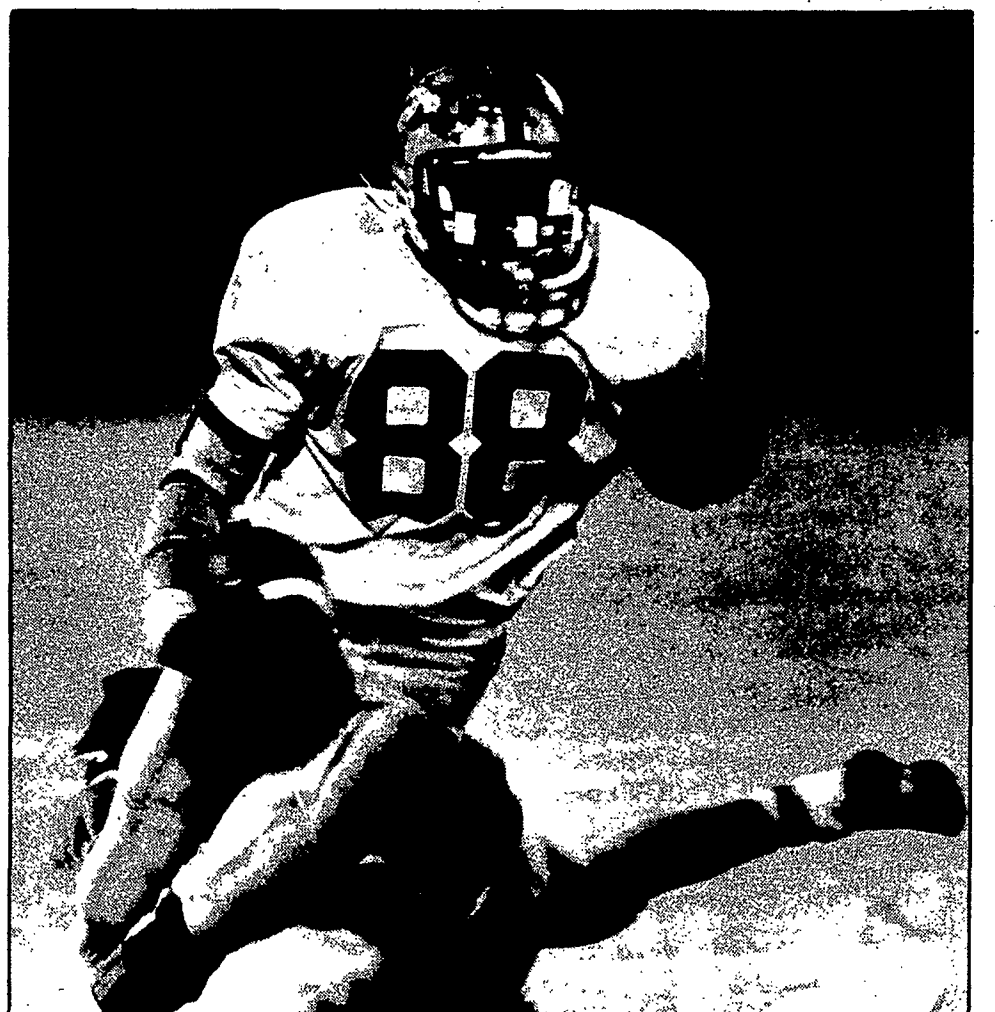
When no whistle was blown, Kearney senior Jeff McCullough picked the ball up off the artificial turf and ran into the end zone as the Braves stood in disbelief. And when the officials — who viewed the pass as a lateral — signaled the touchdown, Foster protested vehemently.

The disputed play was somewhat similar to one that — much to Teta's dismay — went against Kearney during a regular-season game with Aquinas. During that game, McCullough was one of several defensive players who watched Little Irish fullback Tony Postell scoop up a ball and run uncontested for a touchdown to spur an AQ comeback win.

The Kearney coach thought the officials made the right call this time around.

"Our kids rushed the passer (and batted the ball). The officials ruled it a lateral, so that's what it was," Teta said. "We had a couple of calls go against us during the course of the game, too."

The contest remained tied until Canandaigua marched 80 yards on a 10-play drive that ended with Gardner's TD with 3:44 to go in the third quarter.



Bonnie Traflet/Courier-Journal

With much of the team returning in '88, Kearney's Fighting Kings should be a force to be reckoned with again next year.

Mercy students to present 'Snoopy' as fall musical in November.

Our Lady of Mercy High School has chosen "Snoopy" as its fall musical. This year, the theatrical department will offer a special matinee production on Friday, Nov. 20. All local public and private elementary and junior high schools are invited to participate. Visiting classes are being offered a special ticket price of \$1 per student, and visiting teachers and drivers may attend free. The curtain goes up at 9:30 a.m.

"Snoopy" focuses on the hopes and fears of

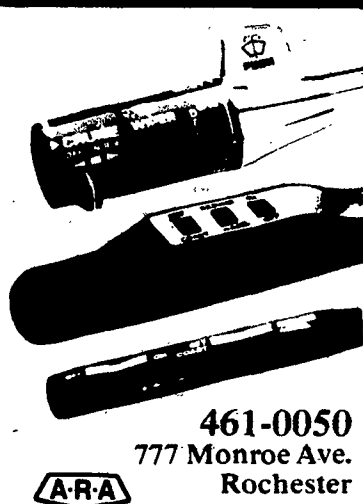
the Peanuts gang from Charles Schultz's popular comic strip. Snoopy is particularly hopeful about getting one of his stories published. His buddy, Woodstock, however, only delivers rejection notices in the daily mail.

Many rousing songs and countless classic Schultz dialogues are performed in the show. Seating is limited, so please make your reservations by November 6. Contact: Juli Palma, (716) 288-7120.

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