

## 2012 MCHS Round 3 Write Up

Written by Allen J. Dunavant

Monday, 26 November 2012 00:00 - Last Updated Monday, 26 November 2012 08:01

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Traveling to Guin to face the State 1-A defending champions of Marion County high school for the second time this season brought an end to the Lions historic season. The Lions were battling the Red Raiders for the second time this season with hopes of advancing to the semi-finals of the state play-offs but the results were not favorable for the visiting Lions. Both teams fall into region-five and had met earlier in the season when the Raiders handed the Lions their second loss of the season. Senior's David Aldridge, Danny Bagwell, Aaron Dillard, Justin Franklin, Taylor Oden, Drew Price, Calan Robertson and Corey Stewart serving as team captains represented the Lions at mid-field for the coin toss. Following the coin toss the Lion receiving team took to the field getting the much anticipated game underway.

Dax Benton made the opening kick reception at the 12-yard line and raced up field to the Lion 34-yard line setting Vess Benton and the Lion offensive front up for their first possession. The rushing game by Aaron Dillard and Stewart got off to a slow start with big defensive stops by the Raider defensive front led by Sean Wallace and Deshawn Riebesehl. Facing fourth down and 7, McKain Hubbert rushed to the field and punted the ball deep down field with Dorryl Swannigan making the reception at the 26-yard line. Jordan White was quick down field making the tackle at the Red Raider 31-yard line.

Five consecutive first downs with rushing attacks by Justin Sanderson and Wallace proved costly as the Red Raiders were quick to score with Sanderson crossing the goal line untouched from the 3-yard line. The PAT kick by Samuel Riggs was perfect and with 7:35 showing on the clock the Red Raiders were on the scoreboard.

Following penalty flags against Marion County on the ensuing kick, V. Benton and the Lions lined up at their own 35-yard line. Rushing attacks by Aaron Dillard moved the ball across mid-field to the Red Raider 41-yard line for the first down but the Lions were penalized moving the ball back to the 46-yard line. With the replay of down, Aaron Dillard was stopped by a host of defenders after a two yard gain. V. Benton attempted a pass connection deep down field with T.J. Pratt on second down but the ball was just beyond Pratt's reach bringing up third down. Stewart got the call to carry and was stopped after a two yard gain leaving the Lions facing fourth down and 11-yards at the Red Raider 43-yard line. Electing to go for the needed yardage, V. Benton attempted a pass connection with Aaron Dillard deep down the left side line and following the play the Lions were encroaching on the Raider territory as the pass defender was penalized for pass interference awarding the Lions with a first down at the 29-yard line. Aaron Dillard gained four yards on first down and Stewart added an additional yard to bring up third down and 5. Dillard got the call to continue with the rushing attack moving the ball twelve yards setting up first and goal at the 12-yard line. The Red Raider defense led by Garrett Waites and Sanderson made back to back stops leaving the Lions facing third down and 9-yards from the 11-yard line. Dillard took the hand-off and rushed right before cutting back to the middle where he was brought down by Waites. With 29.5 seconds remaining in the first quarter, the Lion coaching staff elected a field goal attempt. Aaron Dillard, with Aldridge holding, made the

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successful kick to put the Lions on the scoreboard.

Dillard's ensuing kick was received at the 8-yard line by Reibesechl who was forced out of bounds by Dillard at the Raiders 46-yard line. Reibesechl took the pitch out and rambled away from would be tacklers reaching the Lions 33-yard line before Devin Marcum and Blayke Hill could make the stop as the first quarter of play came to a close. Calan Robertson made the tackle on Sanderson after a 6-yard gain on first down and Marcum broke into the backfield to make the tackle for a 3-yard loss on second down. Robertson and Austin Palmer made the tackle on third down leaving the Raiders facing fourth down and 8-yards. Electing to continue the fight, Wallace attempted a pass connection to Swannigan down the right side line but V. Benton was on coverage knocking the ball away turning the ball over on downs to the Lions at their 32-yard line.

Landon Miller took the hand-off on first down and gained 2-yards before the stop was made by Michael Gosa and a host of defenders. On second down Stewart burst his way up the middle for a 13-yard gain setting the Lion offense up at their own 47-yard line. Aaron Dillard gained additional yardage on first down moving the ball just shy of mid-field. Following a penalty against the Lions, Dillard took hand-off and followed his blockers around the right side of the line of scrimmage racing down field where he was knocked out of bounds at the one yard line by Swannigan to save the 55-yard touchdown run. Facing first and goal, Dillard got the call to continue the rushing attack but was met by Swannigan and a host of defenders just shy of the goal line. Second down brought Miller with the carry over right guard untouched into the end zone giving the Lions their first and only lead of the night. The PAT kick by Aaron Dillard was perfect and the score stood 10 - 7 with 6:47 remaining in the first half of play.

Wallace signaled for a fair catch on the ensuing kick and the Red Raider offensive front lined up at their 31-yard line to begin their quick scoring drive. Wallace called his own number on first down gaining nine yards before Austin Palmer made the tackle. Attempting to connect down field on second down was unsuccessful as Hill and Dakota Dozier rambled into the backfield applying pressure and forcing Wallace to scramble up field where T.J. Pratt forced him out of bounds at the Lion 47-yard line. Reverting back to the rushing attack by Sanderson paid off for the Raiders as Sanderson moved the ball down field with two carries reaching the Lion 17-yard line. With a new set of downs, Reibesechl got the call to carry taking the hand-off from Wallace and racing untouched to the end zone to regain the lead. The PAT kick by Riggs was good leaving the score at 14 - 10 in favor of the Red Raiders with 5:07 remaining in the first half of play.

Dax Benton made the reception on the ensuing kick at the 10-yard line racing up field to the 21-yard line where he was brought down by Cullen Reese and Colby Cole. Rushing attempts by Aaron Dillard and Miller left the Lion offense facing fourth down and five at their own 26-yard line. Hubbert was called on the field to punt the ball away with A. Palmer and D. Dozier making

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the stop at the Red Raider 38-yard line.

With time ticking off the clock the Red Raider offense continued the ground rushing attack with Wallace and Sanderson pushing the ball down field. Six plays later with 1:05 remaining in the half and facing first down and goal at the 3-yard line, Wallace called his own number and advanced up the middle into the end zone. Riggs kick on the PAT was perfect raising the score to 21 - 10.

Jordan White made the reception on the ensuing kick at the 18-yard line advancing to the 25-yard line before being stopped. Aldridge took the hand-off on first down but was met by Reibesehl and a host of defenders after a 3-yard gain. A passing attempt along the right side line was unsuccessful with time expiring on the first half of play.

Starting the second half of play, Hubbertville attempted to catch the Red Raiders off-guard with an on-sides kick but Sanderson made the recovery at the 45-yard line setting Marion County up with excellent field position. The opening drive was kept alive following mental mistakes by the Lion defense which moved the ball deep down field to the Lion 25-yard line. Aaron Dillard made the tackle on Wallace after a five yard gain on first down but on second down Wallace raced over his right tackle to reach the 8-yard line before A. Palmer and Stewart could make the stop. Reibesehl got the call to carry on first down and raced untouched around the right side line for the score. The PAT kick by Riggs was perfect and the Red Raiders continued building their lead with 8:09 remaining in the third quarter.

Following an 8-yard reception return by White on the ensuing kick, V. Benton and the Lion offense lined up for their first possession following the half-time break at their own 22-yard line. Sticking to the ground attack with rushing carries by Seniors Aaron Dillard and Stewart the Lion offense found themselves facing fourth down and two at their own 30-yard line. Stewart got the call to battle for the needed yardage and burst his way over left tackle reaching the 36-yard line to keep the drive alive. Continuing with the rushing attack, Aaron Dillard and Stewart moved the ball across mid-field but once again the Lion offense found themselves facing fourth down and three at the Red Raider 32-yard line. Aaron Dillard took the hand-off and fought his way up the middle behind Austin Bourland, Drew Price, and Taylor Oden to reach the 24-yard line for the first down. With the snap of the ball, Dillard followed the left side of the offensive line to the end zone for the score with 1:19 remaining in the third quarter. The PAT kick by Dillard sailed right leaving the score at 28 - 16 in favor of the Red Raiders.

Damonz Walker made the successful recovery of the on-side kick at the Marion County 48-yard line. Reibesehl took the pitch-out and scramble down the right side line to the 15-yard line where Blayke Hill knocked him out of bounds to save the quick score. Not to be withheld, Sanderson took the hand-off to the end zone for a 15-yard rushing score with 57.5 showing on the clock. The PAT kick by Riggs was perfect and the Red Raiders continued to build their

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lead.

D. Benton fielded the ensuing kick at the 9-yard line and was met for the stop at the 18-yard line by Wallace. The third quarter came to a close with the Lions facing third down and 11 at their own 17-yard line following rushing attacks by Aaron Dillard and Stewart. Sticking with the ground attack, Dillard took the hand-off and scrambled down field before being shoved out of bounds by Reibesehl at the Red Raider 28-yard line. The Lions were unable to capitalize on the momentum as Dillard was stopped on first down and then again in the backfield by Sanderson and a host of defending Red Raiders bringing up third down and eleven at the 29-yard line. V. Benton attempted a pass connection with Stewart but the ball fell incomplete setting up fourth down. Aaron Dillard took the hand-off on fourth down and pitched the ball back to Aldridge with Aldridge attempting to connect thru the air down field to Dillard but the ball fell incomplete turning the ball over to the Raiders at their own 29-yard line.

Rushing attacks by Sanderson and Reibesehl proved successful for the Red Raiders as little time was wasted moving the ball down field to the Lion 28-yard line. On first down Swannigan lined-up in the backfield and took the hand-off racing around the left side line into the end zone for the score with 6:35 remaining in the game. The PAT kick was unsuccessful but the score stood 41 - 16 in favor of the home standing Red Raiders.

Sanderson's kick bounced into the end zone and the Lion offense lined up for their last drive at the 20-yard line. Stewart got the call to carry on first down advancing for three yards. Aaron Dillard took the hand-off and rambled down field for a 39-yard carry reaching the Red Raider 38-yard line before a host of defenders could drag him down from behind. Miller and Stewart continued the rushing attack leaving the Lions facing fourth down and three at the 31-yard line. Aaron Dillard kept the drive alive by following Bourland and Oden up the middle to reach the 27-yard line. V. Benton attempted a pass connection with Aldridge on first down but the ball fell to the ground stopping the clock. Stewart and Aaron Dillard continued with the rushing attack but left the Lions facing fourth down and four from the 21-yard line. V. Benton called his own number and battled his way to the 11-yard line for the first stopping the clock with just under a minute remaining in the game. With the snap of the ball, V. Benton connected with T.J. Pratt in the end zone for the touchdown with 40.1 seconds showing on the game clock. The two point conversion attempt was unsuccessful with Aaron Dillard attempting a pass connection to over the middle to Pratt.

With time expiring, the ensuing on-sides kick by Dillard was successfully recovered by Sanderson at the Raiders 46-yard line. Wallace took a knee on first down and time expired leaving the score at 41 - 22 in favor of the defending state champion Red Raiders.

Comments from Coach Lamar Harris:

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"We played an awful hard fought game tonight. We just met up with a team from our own Region who we recognize as being loaded with lots of weapons. If you manage to stop them in one area of play, they can hurt you in another area and that's what makes them such a hard competitive team to face. They're a great team with a very indurate defense. I know our players wanted to walk off the field with the victory tonight and they had the heart and desire to win, but I also think that emotionally we were just spun out of the game following our last two play-off victories. Marion County deserves the credit tonight. They are defending state champions and they played to that caliber and I expect them to continue their fight. Obviously I'm just as disappointed as the guys are with the out come of the game tonight. Although I am extremely proud of this group of guys because they have worked so hard and we've had a very successful season in setting history for our football program. They've stayed mentally focused and motivated, they've fought the fight and stuck together as a team and that's what makes them such a special group of young guys. I've got a lot of respect for my senior class, those who stuck with our program from early on in their junior team playing years and the ending results have shown as they've reached goals no other team before them has accomplished. This group has stayed focused on playing and learning the game and the results have shown as we've reached the play-off's continually over the past three years. Region Five is stacked with talented teams and exceptional leaders and I'm proud of the guys for not backing away when the test got tough. It was great to lead this group of players and I'm thankful for our dedicated fan support throughout the year. We've had exceptional support from our fans and that makes a difference as well. I will miss this group of senior players and I'm confident that they will always value the dedication, hard work ethics and invaluable experiences of being a part of this team and our football program."