

JV Loses to Churchill 21 - 16 in the Closing Minutes

Coming off a 49 - 8 thumping of the Kennedy Cavaliers, Coach Dave "Slick" Fyock's Vikings confidently took the field on Tuesday for their match against the Churchill Bulldogs. That confidence was evident as the Vikes drove the ball in the first possession of the game into Bulldog territory. The drive was highlighted by excellent interior line play, and nearly forty yards of running by sophomore half back John Norris. The drive, however, was stymied by 2 Churchill sacks, and Whitman was forced to punt.

The Vikings defense took the field with the same enthusiasm as the offense, and was able to shutdown the Bulldogs first drive of the game. The ensuing punt was returned by J Norris from his own 25 into Bulldog territory. Another 16 yard run by J Norris and a 20 yard pass from QB Evan Smith to sophomore receiver Michael Lombardo put Whitman on the 2 yard line as the first quarter expired. Early in the second, J Norris was able to pound the ball into the end zone, but the touchdown was nullified by an illegal formation call. Two plays later, the Vikes were forced into a field goal attempt. Fortunately, sophomore kicker Zach Snyder hit the 25 yarder to put the Vikings up 3 - 0.

Churchill's second possession of the game was stopped cold when sophomore cornerback Brendan Hearn separated the ball from a bulldog receiver with a crushing open field tackle. Whitman's offense, however, struggled, and gave the Bulldogs the ball back on a third down and long half back pass that was intercepted which was just as effective as a punt because it pinned the Bulldogs down on their own 13 yard line. The ensuing Churchill drive was disrupted by several impressive defensive stops by Calvin Schalch, Matt Howell, Henry Doran, and Kevin Baker forcing another Bulldog punt. Sophomore, Nick Newsham, took the punt at midfield and followed a picket fence of Whitman blockers into the end zone for the Vikings first touchdown of the game which increased the Whitman lead to 9 - 0. A high snap resulted in a missed extra point, just brushing the outside of the right upright.

Churchill answered on their next drive with a nifty kickoff return to midfield, and a 50 yard pass play which narrowed the lead 9 - 7. Before fans could digest the Bulldog's quick strike, Newsham took the very next kickoff from deep in Viking territory, and returned it the length of the field for another Whitman touchdown. Zach Snyder added the extra point and the half ended after a change of possessions with Whitman up 16 - 7.

The third quarter was a battle over field position which appeared to be a grind for both offenses. Neither team seemed able to consistently move the ball. Whitman defenders, especially Schalch and Mark Norris, impressed the crowd with several stuffs in Churchill's backfield. Unfortunately, the Bulldog's offense gained some traction and their quarterback scored on an 8 yard keeper with ten minutes left in the game. With Churchill inching closer (16 - 14), Whitman's offense continued to struggle, and when Churchill regained possession they put together an impressive drive highlighted by a fourth and eight conversion on a pass and then a quarterback keeper gave them first and goal on the five. With less than two minutes remaining Churchill sealed the victory with a three yard run into the end zone.

This was a heartbreaking loss for the Vikings against a cross town rival. The team will be striving for a stronger second half against Wooten this upcoming Saturday in order to improve their record to 2 and 1.