

## 36 Unanswered Points Results in Big Win for Whitman JV

The Whitman High School Junior Varsity improved its record to 5 – 1 with a huge come from behind victory over the previously unbeaten Blair Blazers.

In a game that started badly for the young Vikings Thursday evening by fumbling the ball on three successive possessions, it continued to get worse Friday afternoon with another fumble and an interception on its next two possessions. The result was a very lopsided, seemingly insurmountable, 34 – 0 halftime lead by the Blazers. However, momentum can often swing both ways in high school athletics and what all in attendance witnessed Friday afternoon was a come from behind victory that will not soon be forgotten.

After halftime, Blair took Whitman's kickoff and proceeded to cough up the ball after only a couple of plays. Whitman's Wildcat offense took the field and proceeded to march towards the end zone. The drive was capped off by a short pass from the wildcat formation by #7 Nick Newsham to a wide open #8 Matt Howell who was parked in the end zone. The two point conversion was good. Blair was now up 34 – 8.

After the Whitman TD, #76 Zachary Snyder kicked off deep to Blair who returned the ball to the 17 yard line. Two plays later, with Whitman's defense holding firm, Blair again fumbled the ball on the 20 yard line. Once again the Whitman Wildcat offensive formation took the field and promptly scored a touchdown with a run by Newsham. The conversion was no good. Blair was now up 34 – 14.

The next Whitman kickoff was high and deep. The swarming coverage team battered the Blair return man until he fumbled the ball at the one yard line. Newsham punched it in and the conversion was good for 2 additional points; Blair was still on top 34 – 22. At this point though the mood began to change. The players on the sideline began to sense that a win was possible and began screaming to whomever would listen, "only two more scores, only two more scores!" And the growing crowd, led by cheering parents and other faithful fans knew the young Vikings had a chance too.

The ensuing Whitman kickoff was booming and resulted in a touchback. Blair, starting at their own 20 yard line, advanced the ball to mid field and stalled. Facing a fourth and 10 and ahead by two touchdowns, Blair decided to punt. The Viking defensive charge pushed the lone blocking back in front of the punter thwarting his effort. The Whitman offense took the ball to the Blair 17 yard line but the drive stalled and the Vikings faced fourth and 14. After a brief time out, Whitman confidently lined up with QB #10 Evan Smith in shotgun formation. At the snap, Newsham, lining up as a wide receiver, ran a fade route and caught Smith's pass in the front corner of the end zone. The extra point kick was good but Blair was still up 34 – 29 with seven minutes remaining in the game.

After another deep kick, the Whitman defense took the field and held the Blazers offense in check. With four minutes to go and down by a touchdown, the Viking offense took over at their own 40 yard line. However, moving the ball proved difficult and faced with fourth down and 4 yards to go for a first down, a hard count by Smith drew the Blair defense offsides. One play later, Newsham, from the Wildcat formation, took the snap and ran right, past the Blair defense for a 38 yard gain to the 8 yard line. Again from the Wildcat, Newsham lined up, faked another run to the right and tossed a nice pass to a wide open #40 Mark Norris who waltzed into the end zone untouched. The extra point was good. Whitman took the lead for the first time in the game, 36 – 34 with less than 2 minutes remaining.

Blair had a few more chances to reclaim the lead but the Whitman defense held strong as time ran out on the Blazers. Player of the game was Nick Newsham who played a part in every Whitman score and also was key to stopping the Blair offense in critical situations.