

# Hawks come within one game of undefeated regular season, fall to Camp Point Central 34-28

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CAMP POINT - The Carrollton Hawks were a game away from finishing the regular season with a perfect record despite coming in with a mostly inexperienced set of players. However, that dream ended Friday night when they lost 34-28 to the upstart Central Panthers in Camp Point.

“We knew we had a hard fought game on our hands,” Carrollton head coach Nick Flowers said. “We have been spoilers. “We haven’t played four quarters in a while, and we knew it was going to haunt us. This is one of those situations where it came against us tonight. Not to take anything away from them, they’re a good football team; they’re peaking at the right time.”

Hunter Flowers threw for 238 yards with two touchdowns and one interception. He also ran for two scores. Byron Holmes rushed for 127 yards on 19 carries.

Things started out well for Carrollton as they were up 14-6 early in the second quarter with touchdowns via a Byron Holmes 15-yard catch and a Hunter Flowers one-yard run. However, the Panthers reeled off several big plays that set them up in the red zone all game long. The Panthers running backs, Chayse Houston and Cole Williams often outran the Hawks linebackers and secondary to the outside and ate up huge chunks of yards.

“We gave up too many big plays,” Flowers said. “They gave us some trouble early on in the game with some pressure.”

A key play in the game was the Hawks going for it on fourth down at Central’s 47-yard line and threw an incomplete pass. The Panthers ended up scoring on a Williams three-yard run to go up 22-14 with 30 seconds to go until halftime.

The Panthers received to start the third quarter and scored on a four minute and 18-second drive to go up 28-14, which forced Carrollton to play catch up the rest of the way. The Hawks wouldn’t go away quietly.

A little over three minutes later, Flowers scored his second rushing touchdown to bring Carrollton within a score at 28-20, but the Panthers would drive down the field again and score on a 17-yard touchdown pass by Eric Jones to Tristan Brocksieck. That gave Central another temporary two-score cushion at 34-20.

Nathan Walker caught six passes for 84 yards, but none bigger was his 14-yard touchdown catch with just over nine minutes to play. With less than four minutes to play, Carrollton stopped Central from scoring for the first time in the second half and quickly moved down the field, but the drive stalled at the Panthers 40-yard line and the Hawks failed to convert on a fourth down and 12.

Anytime a team loses a close ball game for their first loss is a tough pill to swallow, but Flowers and the Hawks will try and maintain a positive attitude going into the playoffs. They’ll also reflect on how far they’ve come in a short span of time.

“We are a long ways from peaking. We’re going to learn from this defeat for sure. It would’ve been pretty unique to win tonight and having an undefeated season. It hurts.” Flowers said. “We got bigger and better things ahead of us. This is a great regular we’ve had.”