

Kahoks Take 21-7 Lead, Geneva Rallies With Two Late First-Half Touchdowns, Defeats Collinsville 28-21 In Class 7A Football Playoff Game

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COLLINSVILLE - The Collinsville High football team made their first appearance in the IHSA playoffs since 2010 on Saturday afternoon and had a 21-7 lead late in the first half, but two quick touchdowns late in the half allowed Geneva to take the momentum and the Vikings used a third-quarter touchdown to take a 28-21 win over the Kahoks in the first round of the Class 7A playoffs at Kahok Stadium.

The loss ended a remarkable turnaround season for Collinsville and it was a season to be very proud of.

"Absolutely," said the Kahoks' first-year coach, Colton Rhodes. "We turned this team around, 0-9 two years ago, 1-4 last spring, to go in and become 8-1, or 8-2 with this playoff loss, is something to be proud of, no matter what that we lost that game by. I'm so proud of them."

The Kahoks' 8-2 turnaround was perhaps the most overlooked story in St. Louis-area high school football this season, and the team's success was one that deserved more attention.

"I don't disagree with you," Rhodes said, " because we've done a lot to change here, and it's been amazing to witness these kids and how much work they've put forth. They've really grown into a family, and they've pursued wanting to the best that they can be."

As to the game itself, Collinsville started out strong, taking their 21-7 lead late in the first half, and even though the Vikings rallied to take the lead, the Kahoks kept going, and had a couple of opportunities come back, only to fall short.

"Yeah, we got injured there a little bit towards the end of the first half," Rhodes said, "and I really wish we could have that last 40 seconds of the first half back, because we fumbled the ball, let them score and tie it up right before halftime. They kind of got the momentum there, the second half calls didn't go our way, but man, I wish we could have a couple times back, but that's OK."

The Kahoks took the opening kickoff and went on a long drive to open the game, with junior running back Jerry Richardson picking up the first 23 yards on four straight rushing plays, and junior quarterback Kolby Anderson hitting Jeremiah Mosby for 17 yards to get a key first down. The drive climaxed with Anderson hitting Darren Pennell with a five-yard pass for the first touchdown with 6:42 left in the first quarter to give the Kahoks a 7-0 lead after Andrew Chi's conversion.

After an exchange of punts, it only took the Vikings 59 seconds to equalize, as Nate Stempowski went in from six yards out to tie the game at 7-7 with J.T. Frieders adding on the conversion with 2:06 left in the quarter.

On the next possession, Collinsville took four minutes to take the lead back, going 61 yards in nine plays, with Anderson keeping the ball most of the way, hitting Richardson for 29 yards on a big passing play. Anderson went in from seven yards out to give the Kahoks a 14-7 lead with exactly 10 minutes left in the first half.

Collinsville extended its lead on a drive that lasted 6:13, and was aided when Ethan Bagwell went 17 yards up the middle on a fake punt for a first down, and Anderson hit Aviation Swygeart with a pass good for 20 yards. Anderson finished the drive with 1:56 left in the first half on a one-yard run up the middle to give Collinsville a 21-7 lead.





Geneva answered back with a quick drive that finished with Carter Powelson going 11 yards for a touchdown with 43.5 seconds left to make it 21-14, then after recovering a fumble on the first play after the kickoff, Porter hit Stempowski from 27 yards out with 14.6 seconds left to tie the game 21-21 at halftime, giving the Vikings the momentum at the interval.

The Vikings took the lead with 2:18 left in the third quarter when Porter hit Tyler Costello in the end zone from 14 yards out, with Costello making a great catch and keeping his feet inbounds to give Geneva a 28-21 edge. The next two possessions saw the Kahoks being stopped by the Viking defense, and on the last possession, Geneva picked up a pair of big first downs to help run the clock out and preserve their 28-21 win.

The Vikings are now 6-4 and play against traditional Chicagoland power St. Rita Catholic, who defeated Rolling Meadows on Friday night 42-0 in their first-round game, while the Kahoks' season ends at 8-2, but with much promise on the horizon.

:"The sky's the limit for these guys," Rhodes said. "We just showed everyone what Collinsville football can be, we just have to make it a habit. We have the ability to do that, but the work's going to take place starting here pretty soon."

Anderson and Richardson will be two key returnees to the Kahoks, with Anderson having been the starting quarterback since his freshman year, and there's much to look ahead to for Collinsville's football future.

"Oh, absolutely," Rhodes said. "We're losing eight seniors, they're great kids, a lot of them are starters, but we're losing only eight, so pretty good deal to be working with, especially when you have a quarterback who'll be going into his fourth year as a starter next year, possibly. So that's going to be great. A lot of work, but loads of fun, for sure."

And Rhodes again mentioned how proud he was of his team and their success in 2021.

"Just again, wanted to reiterate how proud I am of these kids," Rhodes said, "and what they've overcome and shown out here this season."





[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)