

Carrollton downs rivals Greenfield-Northwestern 26-0

by John Hough, Sports Writer
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PALMYRA - For **Carrollton Hawks** head coach **Nick Flowers** the expectations of going out and taking it to the whoever the opposition is, is always high, however he admitted that he was a little surprised that his Hawks were able to score on their first three possessions of the game Friday night.

“We said each and every week we have to get better with this group, we have to grow up fast, and I believe we took huge strides tonight to doing that,” Flowers said.

Carrollton pitched a shutout against the **Greenfield-Northwestern Tigers** 26-0 at Northwestern Junior High School in Palmyra on Friday night.

The Tigers came into last night’s game with the unofficial home field advantage, being slight favorites, and averaging 35 points per game but barely sniffed the end zone thanks to the aggressiveness of the Hawks.

“Defensively all week long we said we got to get back to playing stingy Carrollton Hawks defense and that means running the line, playing team defense, and playing your position and not trying to do too much,” Flowers said.



Cole Brannan led that stingy Hawks defense with 13 tackles and wanted to make a statement that the Hawks defensive unit is better than they appear to be prior.

“We wanted to start the South off with a bang and coach was getting us all pumped up in the locker room and we came out on all cylinders and didn’t stop until the fourth quarter,” Brannan said. “Everybody was talking about how our defense has been giving up a lot of points and we wanted to come out and make a statement that we’re not soft and that we’re going to come up and hit you for four quarters.”

Brody Howard backed up Brannan with 10 tackles. Nate Shanks, and Alex Bowker each had 9.

“They got on top of us and things kind of snowballed from there, whether or not we were ready for the speed of the game tonight,” Greenfield head coach Joe Pembroke said. “We had some self-inflicted wounds in the first half and they took advantage of it like good teams are supposed to and we got ourselves in catch up mode and just weren’t able to get things going and sustain drives offensively.”

The Hawks set the tone early by getting a three and out on the Tigers and then proceeded to score touchdowns on three straight possessions. Quarterback, Wade Prough ran in a draw play from 5 yards out, Jerrett Smith ran in a 4-yard score, and then Prough found Cole Brannan on a 7-yard slant pass in the end zone.

Carrollton made plenty of improvements but perhaps the biggest one came in the form of their offensive line. They created space for Brannan, Bowker, Prough, and Smith to run through. The Hawks had a total of 177 rushing yards on 42 carries, which is a season high for a game total.

“We got after it out front in the trenches,” Flowers said. We rushed the ball down the field those first three drives and also gave Wade time to throw.”

The biggest momentum shifting play of the game happened when the Tigers were driving with a minute and 21 seconds to go on Carrollton’s 26-yard line when a host of Hawks tackled Taegen Grigsby just as he received the handoff from Cole Arnett. The ball popped loose, Smith scooped it up, and ran it back 74 yards to make it 26-0.

In the second half Carrollton experimented with different plays/formations, while Greenfield appeared to have made adjustments to keep the Hawks at bay, which is something the Tigers can take away from.

“From the third or fourth series on I thought we did a much better job by playing more physical, they (Carrollton) may not have been quite in as much of attack mode that they were in the first half, but I thought maybe we took a step forward in the second half defensively,” Pembroke said.

Wade Prough threw for 155 passing yards on 15 for 25 completions and threw a touchdown pass. Brannan had 4 catches for 59 yards and a touchdown. Jayce Arnett had 6 catches for 38 yards and Tyler Frye with 3 snags for 31 yards.

“Throwing the ball gets big yardage but the run set it up,” Prough said. “That was our goal today to set up the run and we can really hurt you deep.”

Carrollton was originally supposed to host the game but could not because their stadium's lights couldn't be turned. It appears Carrollton should have the issue resolved before next week's game against undefeated West Central.

“In life we deal with lots of changes we don't want to but we do. I'm not happy about having to come over here tonight, I'm very happy now after the outcome,” Flowers said. “They're going to be working tomorrow on our lights and we'll have it ready for the West Central showdown.”

On the other side Northwestern was gracious to get to be hosts and it has been a long time coming.

“I know Northwestern people were excited to host a game here. This is a big time game and they've been wanting to host games like this for a long time. It was great to come over here and win on their field,” Flowers said.



