

# **GAMBLE PAYS OFF: Carrollton slips by Pawnee after fake punt, pass, then touchdown**

by John Hough, Sports Writer  
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**CARROLLTON** - There are certain plays that you dream about making like throwing or catching the game winning touchdown to win a big game. Plays like that get remembered. **Jerrett Smith, Cole Brannan**, and the rest of the **Carrollton Hawks** can say they were involved in a memorable play that won them a big game in the playoffs.

“I didn’t really think of anything, I just knew where it was going to be. It all kind of went quiet when I saw Cole (Brannan) cut to the middle and I threw it to him. After he caught it I just kind of blacked out,” Carrollton’s Jerrett Smith said.

“We drew it up in the dirt, we had to make the play and we did it, it was awesome,” Carrollton’s Cole Brannan said.

On a fourth down and 23 from the Hawks 20-yard line, Jerrett Smith completed an 80-yard fake punt pass to Cole Brannan, who took it to the house to take the lead over the Pawnee Indians 28-22 with 4:26 left in the game, which proved to be the difference.

**Carrollton** hung on and defeated **Pawnee 28-22** in the second round of the IHSA Class 1A Playoffs in Carrollton on Saturday. The Hawks will travel to face the LeRoy Panthers next Saturday afternoon, who upset No. 1 Tuscola, 20-13.

Before the miraculous play, Carrollton head coach Nick Flowers called a timeout to assess the situation the Hawks were in on with 4:40 left in the game.

“I was thinking the whole time we had to punt the ball away and play some defense. The boys said we’re having trouble stopping them. It’s right now let’s fake this thing and Jerrett said we got it,” Flowers said. “Jerrett had a heck of a pass and Cole ran under it.”

Before the fake punt it seemed like the Hawks would be bowing out to the Indians with the way the Indians were dictating the game by pounding the ball through the Carrollton defensive line.

“They’re a very physical team and at times we really felt like we had them stopped at the line of scrimmage, but then they squeaked through,” Flowers said. “Their backs did a great job of pushing and engaging with their lead blockers.”

Austin Galloway ran the ball 20 times and tallied 104 yards for the day. Jordan Hampton ran for 88 yards on 13 carries with a touchdown run. Ethan Clark scored on two touchdown runs and compiled 29 yards on five rushes. As a whole the Indians ran for 282 yards.

Pawnee controlled the majority of the possession and had the ball for 28:40, while Carrollton had possession for 17:10.

“They milked the clock and I think that was their game plan,” Flowers said. “We’re used to being on defense a lot so that’s nothing unusual as far as that goes, but I’m sure they dominated the rushing stats.

On defense the Indians were very impressive at the line of scrimmage. They held the Hawks to a whopping 14 yards on the ground and sacked Wade Prough four times.

“They have a very good defense and they were stopping us and yeah it was getting frustrating towards the end,” Brannan said.

“He (Prough) was tested for sure and probably danced a little bit more than what coach likes to, Flowers said with a laugh. “They were bringing so much pressure up the middle, it flushed us in a hurry.”

Prough ended up with 169 passing yards with three touchdowns and one interception. He was 11 for 23 throwing the ball. Brannan tallied 151 receiving yards with three touchdown receptions.

A big story of the game was the amount of turnovers Pawnee committed, which was six. Quarterback Dane Moats threw four interceptions on 13 pass attempts. He also completed the same number of passes as well. Garrett Gillette muffed an attempted catch on a punt return, which the Hawks recovered and then the Indians fumbled on their second to last drive of the game.

Things began splendidly for the Hawks as Prough hooked up with Brannan on a leaping catch for a 20-yard touchdown pass to start the festivities off and led 8-0.

However Pawnee came right back on the ensuing possession two minutes later when Hampton broke free and rushed 58 yards for the touchdown, but the Indians failed to convert on their two-point conversion.

Early in the second quarter Prough found Brannan again in the back of the end zone on a 14-yard pass to make it 14-6 Carrollton.

Yet again Pawnee responded. They quickly drove downfield and Clark capitalized on a 5-yard touchdown and the two-point conversion tied the game up at 14 all.

The Hawks swiftly replied. One minute and 11 seconds later, Prough danced around in the pocket and finally located Alex Bowker behind the Indian secondary and scored on a 45-yard pass to make it 20-14 Carrollton.

After Gillette's muffed punt, the Hawks couldn't take advantage and failed to score. Pawnee then proceeded to drive down field and Clark once again found the end zone on a 2-yard score and tallied the two-point conversion to take a 22-20 lead into the locker room.

The third quarter breezed by as the Indians received to start the second half and killed off 6:20 and forced the Hawks to go three and out on the following drive.

Pawnee then went on an even longer drive that went into the fourth quarter, which lasted 8:10 and drove deep into Carrollton territory.

The Hawks got a stop at their 10-yard line and took over with 6:40 left in the game. Carrollton managed to get a first down, but went back words soon after and it all started to look bleak for the Hawks. Then the fake punt happened and the whole town of Carrollton went ballistic.

Carrollton still had to stop Pawnee with 4:25 left and did so as the Indians coughed the ball up yet again with 1:58 remaining. The Hawks could only burn off 58 seconds and failed to get a first down when the Indians had no timeouts.

Pawnee took over with a minute left and 75 yards away from the end zone, but two plays later Logan Duba picked off Moats for his second interception in the playoffs and sealed the win.

“I just knew we had to finish the game out,” Smith said. We had a lot of rough spots and we got to work on that in practice, but I knew that we just had to finish out the game we were going to win.”

Carrollton will visit LeRoy next Saturday at TBD. The Hawks defeated the Panthers 69-16 last season, in the second round of the playoffs.

**CLICK HERE FOR FULL VIDEO COVERAGE OF CARROLLTON VS. PAWNEE:**





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