

Quaker grididders self-destruct

◆Methodist Capitalizes on Guilford Mistakes, Wins 26-19.

BY DAN GATTI
Sports Editor

The Quakers were their own worst enemy on Saturday, losing to Methodist 26-19 despite dominating for much of the game.

The Quakers hurt themselves badly with 6 lost fumbles which stopped several promising drives and led to 19 of Methodist's 26 points. They also hurt themselves by committing 7 penalties for a total of 63 yards.

These turnovers and penalties negated what was, overall, an impressive Quaker effort. Straight from the beginning, the Quakers played charged-up, inspired offense, led by receivers Junior Lord and William "Squirt" Rochelle, who combined for 18 catches and 290 yards, many of which were after the catch on screen routes and slant patterns.

The defense, too, played extremely well. Led by linebackers Chris Li (11 tackles and 1 sack) and Jason Laners (8 tackles, 1.5 sacks), the defensive line was consistently able to break through the huge Methodist offensive line, anchored by 300-pound tackles Damon Slone and Randall Webster. Overall, the defense limited Methodist to 153 passing yards, collected 4 sacks, and gave up only 37 yards to Methodist star running back DeCarlos West.

But the turnovers killed Guilford. The first of them—a fumble by quarterback Jason Hoffman—stopped the very promising Guilford opening drive. The second negated a good defensive stop by Guilford and gave Methodist the ball at the Guilford 12, which put Methodist on top early, 6-0.

Guilford then, under the direction of quarterback Dan Strelkauskas, ran off 19 straight points against the Methodist defense, relying mostly on screen passes to Lord and Rochelle along with the powerful running of running back David Heggie. At half-time, Guilford was leading, 19-6. But that was all the scoring Guil-



Methodist defensive end Ronnie Pilfroy reaches up to block a Matt Daly kick early in the 1st quarter.

ford would do.

"In the first half, we owned 'em," said Lord. "But they came out and made the adjustments they needed to make at half-time, and really stopped our running game, and that's what got us."

The difficulty Guilford had running the football was in no small part due to the loss of Heggie, who ran for 28 yards on 7 carries in the first half, only to be sidelined for the 2nd half of the game. It is not known if Heggie will return to action next Saturday against Washington & Lee.

In the second half, two fumbles on consecutive drives by Strelkauskas hurt Guilford badly, one setting up a Methodist touchdown to begin the half, and then another stopping a promising Guilford drive at the Methodist 12. But the worst was yet to come.

By far the most controversial call of the game came on the Quakers' next drive. Deep in Quaker territory, Strelkauskas threw a screen pass to Lord. The ball appeared to bounce off Lord and fall to the ground, an incomplete pass. It was ruled a catch and a fumble, however,

and when Methodist recovered, it set up the tying score.

"The ball just sailed through my hands. It wasn't a catch. It was an incomplete pass," said Lord. "It was a bad call. But that's a part of football. Sometimes the calls don't go your way."

One of the big controversies of the day—the decision to start UMass transfer student and first-year player Jason Hoffman at quarterback over the Guilford veteran Strelkauskas—came to an ambiguous conclusion. Hoffman started the game, but after the first two Guilford drives were unsuccessful, coach Mike Ketchum was quick to put Strelkauskas back in. It was Strelkauskas who then led the team to all of its 19 points, ending the day with 23 completions

in 39 attempts for 328 yards and 2 TDs.

"Yeah, I was disappointed with the amount of playing time I got," said Hoffman, "but I understood it. I was expecting to have a series off [in the first half] but once Dan was out there, he started putting us in the end zone... it's very tough for me. I didn't get to do the things I had wanted to do." Hoffman came back in for a short period in the 3rd quarter, but was unsuccessful, and ended the day just 3 for 5 for 17 yards.

By the Numbers...

Receiving - Lord - 12 rec, 192 yds
Rochelle - 6 rec, 98 yards
Rushing - Heggie 7 for 27 yards,
Fearrington 9 for 31 yards
Passing - Strelkauskas 23 for 29,
328 yds, 3 TDs

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