Batavia wins double OT thriller over St. Charles North

By Jake Bartelson, Shaw Media – 10/22/2021

St. Charles North's Drew Surges (6) carries the ball during a game against Batavia at St. Charles North on Friday, Oct. 22, 2021. *Sandy Bressner/sbressner@shawmedia.com*

Jacob Hohmann had only seven carries all season entering the final week of the regular season.

He only needed one to make his mark in the most critical of situations.

Hohmann, Batavia's senior running back, gutted a 2-yard touchdown in double overtime and Batavia's defense then forced a turnover on downs to push Batavia over St. Charles North 36-29 in a DuKane Conference thriller and regular season finale.

"It just feels awesome," Hohmann said. "I don't get many of them [opportunities] Anytime I can, I just try to make the most of it and see what happens. Usually, I'm blocking or doing something else so it's good to get the ball for once."

With the win, Batavia wrapped up an undefeated season and outright DuKane Conference title.

Batavia was missing star running back Jalen Buckley during the second half with an apparent left leg injury, so it was left up to AJ Sanders, Ryan Whitwell and Hohmann to handle the workload.

"I saw the middle linebackers come up," Hohmann said of his game-winning TD. "It was supposed to be a three-hole [rush] so I was like 'Alright, I'm going to try to bump this out as best as I can.' I just worked out good for me."

Batavia had a 22-14 lead with 1:43 left in regulation, enough time for North Stars quarterback Ethan Plumb to engineer a masterful drive. Plumb was a perfect 6-for-6 and capped it off with a 6-yard touchdown pass to Carson Kuligowski with 14 seconds left.

The North Stars (4-5, 2-5), however, still needed a two-point conversion to force overtime. Senior running back Drew Surges executed a dump pass over the middle of the field to Jake Furtney to force overtime.

"We've been working on that all week and we knew that was our two-point conversion [play], so we felt confident in it. We felt like if we if we just got in the end zone, we were going to get the two," North Stars coach Rob Pomazak said. "And we did."

Batavia quarterback Ryan Boe scored on the first possession of overtime for a brief 29--22 advantage, but Plumb answered again with a 15-yard touchdown to Kuligowski to tie it.

Hohmann's score followed for the 36-29 lead and Batavia's defense did just enough to scrape by in the end.

"Then, we score and 'do we go for two or do we kick?' But I just felt like our defense was playing so well," Pomazak said. "[Batavia] was banged up, they had their backup running backs in and I felt like we would make a stop and it would come down to the kicking game. I felt like our kicking game, at that moment, was stronger than theirs. I just didn't anticipate; we just give up another touchdown and then, unfortunately, we couldn't put one into the end zone."

With the victory, Batavia finished the regular season undefeated at 9-0, the second time doing so in the last three seasons. The North Stars

have an unlikely chance to make the postseason without help from the field.

"As I always say, our defense is great at having a short-term memory and just believing in each other as brothers," Batavia linebacker Tyler Jansey said. "When you look to your side, you're fighting for your brother ... we've held that through every single game, no matter if we're winning by 40 or if we go into double overtime. I think it really just shows the character of our defense."

The North Stars had a 14-13 lead at the half. Plumb found Anthony Taormina for a 12-yard score to open the game, but Buckley answered two plays later on a 63-yard rushing touchdown to tie it.

Plumb finished with 13-of-22 passing for 108 yards and three passing touchdowns and one rushing.

Batavia took a 13-7 lead on Buckley's second touchdown, but the extra point was blocked. Plumb responded with an 8-yard score to take the halftime lead. Batavia hit a 37-yard field goal to make it 16-14 to open the fourth quarter, setting the table for the heart-racing finish.

Batavia's Jalen Buckley carries the ball during a game at St. Charles North on Friday, Oct. 22, 2021. *Sandy Bressner/sbressner@shawmedia.com*

Online article found at:
https://football.dailyherald.com/sports/20211022/batavia-wins-double-ot-thriller-over-st-charles-north/