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Wheaton Warrenville South scores, beats St. Charles North

By Chris Casey, Shaw Media - 09/10/2021

Ben Berkley knew he had to put the final stamp on an all-out effort from his team.

Trailing by 2 points, Berkley saw his Wheaton Warrenville South football team call a timeout with eight seconds left before a 29-yard field-goal attempt.

"I just felt like I had to do it for the team," Berkley said.

His kick split the uprights to give Wheaton Warrenville South a 12-10 victory over St. Charles North in the DuKane Conference opener.

After a tough loss to Neuqua Valley a week ago, the Tigers (2-1, 1-0) saw a team in St. Charles North (2-1, 0-1) coming to Red Grange Field, its home field, not having allowed a point this season.

While points were certainly hard to come by Friday night, Berkley got his team on the board first and, more importantly, last.

The Tigers got the ball on their own 24-yard line to begin the final drive. Despite not scoring a point yet in the second half, Berkley knew his team would find a way to get it done.

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"I think they kept us down for a little bit, but we persevered through," said Berkley, who snapped St. Charles North's shutout streak with a 26-yard field goal in the second quarter. "We had some big guys step up, so it took battling through a lot of adversity, but I had a lot of fun watching each and every guy battle tonight."

St. Charles North began its season with a 113-minute, 16-second scoreless streak on defense.

Berkley first started kicking in his freshman year of high school after playing soccer. He fully admitted that this was the "biggest kick of my life."

Despite not picking up its first down of the night until the three-minute mark of the second quarter, the North Stars continued to battle themselves, and Drew Surges's 4-yard score after the Wheaton Warrenville South fumble gave St. Charles North the 10-9 lead with 8:41 to go. Surges finished the game with 99 yards rushing on 15 carries and also caught a pass for 18 yards.

Although they led for most of the game and saw it fade in the final minutes of the game, Tigers coach Sean Norris knew his group wouldn't panic.

"I think it says so much about this group and the character of these guys," Norris said. "We don't shy away from playing good teams. We played a good team last week and we want to play against the best."

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This was a very good football team and our kids rose up to the challenge and responded great."

Facing a third-and-10 at its own 35 with just over two minutes to go, Wheaton Warrenville South quarterback Matt Sommerdyke found Danny Healy over the middle for a catch and run of 40 yards to set up Berkley's game-winning kick.

St. Charles North coach Rob Pomazak saw his freshman quarterback Ethan Plumb get sacked six times in the loss but knew a few tweaks in decisions would get his young signalcaller right back to where they need him to be.

Plumb finished the night completing just 7 of 17 passes for 107 yards and an interception (by WW South linebacker Emmett Johnson. Sommerdyke finished the night completing 14 of 29 passes for 157 yards. Michael Crider scored the only WW South touchdown from 8 yards out to extend the Tigers' first half lead to 9-0.

"I think this was a game where a lot of things were happening out there," Pomazak said. "We got our run game going a little bit there, our line did a nice job, as well. I'm just disappointed for the kids because they played well enough to win."

Kael Poulsen had a couple of the Tigers' sacks of Plumb Friday night and took it personal coming off a difficult loss. WW South held St. Charles North to minus-8 rushing yards in the first half.

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"There was a lot of talk about how their defense hadn't given up any points yet," Poulsen said. "We weren't going to let them come to Red Grange Field and get a victory tonight. We wanted to make them play scared and I think we did that tonight. Coming away with this victory tonight is an amazing feeling."

Online article found at:

<https://football.dailyherald.com/sports/20210910/wheaton-warrenville-south-scores-beats-st-charles-n/>