



MLive.com coverage for the opening weekend of football

Football

# Rockford runs away with a 23-6 victory over Utica Eisenhower in a cross-state football matchup

By Allen Jordan | JMLive.com  
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Darian Vaughn carries the load for Rockford in a 23-6 win against Utica Eisenhower in a non-league football opening game Friday.

Rockford High School Football running back Darian Vaughn carried the ball 21 times for 158 yards, including a 24 yard dash late as the Rams pulled away late to beat host Utica Eisenhower 23-6 in front of a packed house Friday night.

After going 10-3 the previous season and allowing just under 13 points a game, the visitors were led by 5 returning starters on defense including AP All-state Linebacker Brett Showers and linebacker Randy Garvin.

Eisenhower after coming off a 8-3 campaign including a 5-1 non league record, the Eagles looked to come out and bounce back from a season where they struggled to score over 20 points in it's three losses.

"We played great defense out there and much credit to them keeping us in the game," Eisenhower Head Coach Chris Smith said after the game. "Eventually they just wore on us with their physicality."

Converted Rockford football quarterback Austin McKellar opened the season in place of starting quarterback Chase Hankins going just 2 of 5 for 28 yards, while contributing in the run game rushing the ball 11 times for 36 yards.

McKellar scored the game's first touchdown for Rockford on a sneak at the 1 yard line of Eisenhower after lineman Gabe Baumann recovered a fumble for the road team that resulted in the score to make it 7-3 at the 11:02 mark in the first quarter.

Place Kicker Glen Nordin booted a 30 yard field goal for a score in the second quarter to make the game 10-3 on his first of three conversions for three.

Nordin kept the points coming with another score from 37 yards away to make it 13-3 halfway through the third quarter.

Although Eisenhower was able to but three on the board midway through the third quarter to make it 13-6.

Rockford and that physical defense continued to bring pressure off the edges making it difficult to get any rhythm going on offense for the home team.

"Give them credit, they came out and just outplayed us," Eisenhower Starting senior quarterback Dan Chmielewski after being held to under 100 yards of total offense. "With them being one of the better teams in the state, we can use this as a barometer to determine where we go from here."

Following the field goal in the third by Eisenhower, Rockford tacked on another 3-point attempt this time from 35 yards by Nordin to make it 16-6 with just over 4 minutes to go in the fourth quarter.

Vaughn put the game out of reach after bouncing to the outside for his second long run of the evening that put the Rockford up 23-6 for good in the fourth quarter.

"Darian is a workhorse out there and we really have to give to the offensive line who kept lanes open for us the whole game." McKellar said.

Up next for Rockford, they head home to take on Holt High School on September 6.

Eisenhower will look to bounce back next Friday as they head to Utica Ford to take on their hometown rival.

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