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Prep football: Amherst beats T-C to snap eight-game skid

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Central Wisconsin Sunday

MADISON — Huddled in the north end zone at Camp Randall Stadium at halftime, Amherst players got an earful from James Blanke.

The senior fullback let the Falcons know he didn't want to leave Madison without a victory. He then proceeded to put the team on his back, rushing for 91 yards and two touchdowns in the second half as the Falcons defeated Tri-County 14-12 in the annual Wisconsin Football Coaches Association's Badger Classic.

"I told them that I wanted this game more than anything," said Blanke, who finished with a game-high 124 yards on 25 carries. "The linemen stepped up to the challenge and gave me what I needed to score."

With the victory, Amherst breaks an eight-game losing streak for the program dating back to last season and nets the first win for coach Brian Toelle. The two touchdowns also breaks a streak of four games without a score for the Falcons.

In the first half, however, Amherst appeared on its way to its seventh loss of the season after mustering just 47 yards and two first downs offensively. The Penguins, meanwhile, got things going late in the half and scored when Dylan Goodwin hit Josh Knights for a 13-yard touchdown pass to put T-C up 6-0 at halftime.

In fact, the Penguins dominated statistically for much of the game. T-C finished the game with a 290-167 advantage in total offense and had 21 first downs as compared to just nine for the Falcons.

"We did a lot of good things, but we never finished drives," T-C John Sherman said. "There would be a dropped pass or something that would stop us, and that haunted us today."

A short kickoff gave Amherst the ball at their 49-yard line to start the second half, and the Falcons responded with a 9-play drive ending with a Blanke scoring run from 13 yards out.

On the ensuing possession, Goodwin fumbled a snap that Amherst recovered on the Penguins' 31-yard line, and Blanke followed with a 10-yard plunge to put Amherst in the lead.

The Penguins added a touchdown pass from Goodwin to Jacob Schwartzman early in the fourth quarter, and after a Blanke fumble drove to the Amherst 27-yard line with just under 20 seconds left in the game. But on fourth and 10, Brandon Sopa picked off Goodwin to seal the game.

"We did a much better job handling their offense in the second half," Toelle said. "Offensively we put the pressure on our line and told them to give James some room to work. It was great to see all of that come together."

Amherst 0 0 14 0 — 14

Tri-County 0 6 0 6 — 12

Second Quarter

TC—Josh Knights 13 pass from Dylan Goodwin (pass failed).

Third Quarter

A—James Blanke 13 run (Luke Allen kick).

A—Blanke 10 run (Allen kick).

Fourth Quarter

TC—Jacob Schwartzman 7 pass from Goodwin (pass failed).

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Team statistics

A TC

First downs 9 21

Rushes-yards 35-151 35-143

Passing yards 16 147

Total yards 167 290

Comp.-Att.-INT 1-5-0 16-33-1

Punting 4-42.0 1-34.0

Fumbles-lost 4-3 2-1

Penalties-yards 9-55 1-5

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INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

Rushing

(Att., yards)

A—James Blanke 25-124, Nate Martin 2-2, Bryan Konkol 8-25. TC—Collin Schwartzman 13-82, Derek Dudei 12-33, Brad Knights 2-32, Dylan Goodwin 7-5, Jacob Schwartzman 1-(minus 9).

Passing

(Comp.-Att.-INT-Yards)

A—Martin 1-5-0-16. TC—Goodwin 16-33-1-147.

Receiving

(Rec., Yards)

A—Ryan Schwanz 1-16. TC—C. Schwartzman 2-9, J. Schwartzman 6-50, B. Knights 3-31, Josh

Knights 5-57.

Team records: Amherst 1-4 in the CWC Large, 1-6; Tri-County 0-5 in the CWC Large, 1-6.