**Athens claims Rusty Rail from Sayre.**

By: Terry Pruyne | [Towanda Daily Review](http://www.thedailyreview.com/) | November 3, 2012 | Photo courtesy Terry Pruyne

ATHENS - The Wildcats won their 12th straight Rusty Rail game with a 37-14 victory, but, despite the score, it wasn't easy - as usual. The bitter rivalry that began in 1914 hasn't soured as things got a bit chippy at times Friday night.

After Sayre punted on their opening drive, Athens handed the ball off six straight times to Tyler "T-Bird" Birdsall for 26 yards. After an incomplete pass by Troy Stivason, the Wildcat quarterback then found Curt Moore open for a 21-yard score. Stivason connected on the point after for an early 7-0 lead.

The Redskins responded with repeated handoffs up the middle to Albert Bodolus. The Redskins were aided by a defensive holding and a pass interference call, but the big play came when Adam Wampole connected with his favorite target - Kyle Post. Wampole threw to Post's back shoulder and the defensive back overran the play and fell, allowing Post to trot into the end zone untouched on the 35-yard pass-and-catch. James Harbst added the extra point to tie the game.

On their next series, the Wildcats went to Birdsall six of seven plays. The odd play was a 16-yard pass from Stivason to Brad Sampson. Athens scored on a fourth-and-three when Stivason rolled left, looking for a receiver, but tucked the ball in and ran for the corner of the endzone for a 13-7 lead.

On the ensuing, kickoff Cody Ketter returned the ball to Athens' 35, but the Redskins were called for a blocking below the waist penalty on a pivotal play. The penalty left Sayre on their own 13-yard line. After gaining only a yard on three plays, the Redskins set up to punt, but Harbst bobbled the snap and was tackled by Tom Shenot to turn the ball over on downs.

Athens took over on the three and three plays later Birdsall scored from the three for a 20-7 margin.

Sayre again responded - this time with a 14-play drive that featured Bodolus up the middle for tough yards, but the big play was a 44-yard scamper by Post. It looked like the Redskins scored on a three-yard run by Jeremy Kyc, but the play was called back for holding.

On fourth-and-goal from the 20, Ray McDougan intercepted a Wampole pass in the endzone, but the Wildcats' celebration was cut short when Kyc returned the favor and intercepted Stivason on the very next play.

The Redskin played it safe this time, handing the ball to Bodolus on the three of the next four plays. Bodolus scored from 8-yards out to narrow Athens' lead to six points with 1:15 remaining in the half.

The Wildcats were not going into halftime with just a six-point lead. On their first play in the series, Stivason connected with Garrett Clark for a 28-yard gain. After a short gain by Birdsall, Stivason rolled right and let it fly to Sampson open in the endzone for a 32-yard score with 44 seconds remaining for a 27-14 halftime lead.

In the third quarter, the Redskins found themselves with poor field position. At one point, Stivason nailed a perfect coffin-corner punt, leaving Sayre starting a drive on the one-yard line. Offensively, the Wildcats tried two field goals in the third. Stivason missed from 47-yards out, but connected from 31 yards.

Athens added another touchdown in the fourth when Sampson found himself behind the Redskins' defensive backs. Stivason read the play and hit him for a 35-yard scoring strike. Stivason added the PAT for the final 37-14 tally.

Stivason finished the game with four touchdowns - three in the air and one on the ground - and added four extra points and a field goal. Birdsall finished with 116 yards on 26 carries while, on the other side, Bodolus had 75 yards on 23 carries. Birdsall and Bodolus each scored a touchdown.

Athens will host a D4 game next week at Alumni Field, likely against Troy, depending how things fall.

Sayre came up a bit short in a playoff bid this season. They also came up short on a bid to reclaim the Rusty Rail Trophy.