**Tioga rolls into sectional final**

By Terry Pruyne Sports Writer (Daily Review)

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BINGHAMTON, N.Y. — Running like a well-oiled machine, Tioga Central rolled over Harpursville by a 35-14 margin. The Tigers dominated on both sides of the ball allowing only two scores in the closing minutes of the game. Trey Floyd led the offense with four touchdowns — two on the ground and two in the air.

Tioga opened the game with a 14-play drive that set the tone for the game. Using their backfield by committee — Max Johnson, Justin Rockwell, Connor Hutchinson, John Worthing and Floyd — all saw carries during the possession until the final play of the drive.

On second down at the eight, Hutchinson dropped back and found Floyd open for the score. After eating up seven minutes of the first quarter on the drive, Tanner Hollenbeck added the PAT for an early 7-0 lead.

The Hornets responded aided by an unsportsmanlike call on the Tigers and a 39-yard run by John Wilson, who dodged and slipped tackles to the Tioga Central 10. Harpursville then went to Wilson two more times for six yards before Greg Akulis tossed an incomplete pass.

With the ball on the four and with a fourth-and-goal, the Hornet handed off to Wilson who came up two yards short and Tioga took over on the two.

Only able to garner one first down, Hollenbeck booted a 47-yard punt after Coach Nick Aiello called a timeout before the end of the quarter to keep the wind at Hollenback’s back. Harpursville took over on the their own 33-yard line.

Once again, the Tigers defense roared. After Wilson picked up four yards, Floyd sacked Akulis for a nine-yard loss. After a delay of game penalty, Akulis tossed the ball away under intense pressure. Dropping back the punt on fourth down, Hutchinson busted through the line and blocked the punt. Scott Siberski recovered on the 16.

On the Tigers possession, the Hornets sacked Hutchinson for a six-yard loss. Then Rockwell carried for three yards and Floyd added ten more. On fourth-and-three at the nine, Hutchinson did his best Aaron Rodgers and pulled the Harpursville defensive line offsides with a hard count.

After a run up the middle by Hutchinson, Floyd plunge into the end zone for the score for a 14-0 lead.

Tioga again forced the Hornets’ anemic offense to punt and took over on their own 22. Hutchinson tossed a wide pitch to yet another ball carrier — DeMario Chambers — for 16 yards and the Tigers went into a hurry-up offense with Johnson gaining three yards and Hutchinson connecting with Chambers for 12 more yards.

The drive sputtered after two incompletions by Hutchinson.

Back to punt, Tioga ran a fake with Worthing sprinting 21 yards to the Harpursville 22.

On the next play, with the clock under 30 seconds in the half, Hutchinson had an open Floyd, but the pass fell incomplete. However, an illegal hit by Wilson moved the ball to the 18. Floyd came back from the big hit and ran a post pattern on the next play. Hutchinson hit Floyd in stride. Floyd took a glancing hit, bobbled the ball, but regained control as he crossed the goal line with thirteen seconds left in the half and the Tigers led 21-0 at the half.

“That’s huge momentum,” Aiello said of the score just before the half. “At 21-0, we’re sitting a little easier than at 14-0. It was just good execution, especially with Klossner being out, so we had to sub guys in. DeMario had a nice catch and Trey, after getting popped, comes right back in and catches the ball right at the goal line.”

Aiello referred to standout Nick Klossner, who missed the game due to concussion protocol.

Defensively, Tioga outgained Harpursville 158-39 in the first half. Not bad, considering the Hornets picked up 37 yards on one play.

After holding the Hornets to a first down on their first possession of the second half, Tioga Central mounted a methodical but fruitless 14-play drive that ended with an incomplete pass on Harpursville’s 20.

It looked as though the Hornets might right the ship after Akulis completed a 16-yard pass to Hunter Sakowsky, but on the very next play Johnson stepped in front of the intended receiver and returned the interception to the 13.

Two plays later, Hutchinson scored from 5-yards out with 22 seconds left in the third quarter for a 28-0 tally.

Akulis faced the same fate on the ensuing series when Hutchinson intercepted his pass this time and returned it to the four. Two plays later, Floyd scored on a one-yard run and Hollenbeck added the extra-point for a 35-0 lead.

After bobbling the kickoff, the Hornet began their next series on their own six. However, Harpursville put together an 18-play drive that featured Wilson. Carrying the ball 13 times, Wilson picked up 66 yards, including a 3-yard run for the touchdown and ran in the conversion as well. Wilson’s 110 yards on the day put him over the 1,000-yard mark (1,038) for the season.

The Tigers attempted to run out the clock on their last possession, kneeling on each play, but were forced to punt. The Hornets blocked the punt and Brock Weist recovered the ball in the end zone on the last play of the game for the 35-14 final tally.

Tioga compiled 201 yards on the ground on 44 carries. Hutchinson complete 5 of 8 passes for 46 yards and three total touchdowns and added a blocked punt and an interception. The defense held the Hornets 64 yards total offense before their 94-yard drive at the end of the game.

“Defensively,” Aiello said, “it’s funny when you look at the stats. The defense is really our strength. We don’t talk about it much. I think in the first half we’ve only given up a score twice in the first half — that doesn’t mean anything going into next week — I’m just saying that our defense has been a strong point for us. And it’s going to have to be next week.”

Tioga will face Sidney next week for the Class D championship.