

Mansfield fends off King Philip

By Peter Gobis



*King Philip Regional High wide receiver David Morganelli, left, stiff-arms Mansfield High linebacker Vinnie Holmes after making a catch in the first quarter Friday night in Mansfield.
Paul Connors / The Sun Chronicle*

MANSFIELD — For all of the miscues that the Mansfield High football team committed through the first half of play — the 40 yards in penalties, the 20 yards lost on a trio of quarterback sacks, a botched punt, surrendering a safety, not to mention the many miscues in motion, the Hornets still only faced a seven-point disadvantage against reigning Hockomock League and MIAA Division 2 Super Bowl champion King Philip.

Owning a 14-point lead nine seconds into the fourth quarter after converting a pass interception by Vinnie Holmes and a fumble recovery on a kickoff by Joe Cappelletti into touchdowns with a 24-second span, the Hornets never could rest comfortably.

“Battling to the last play, this is as good as it gets in high school football,” MHS coach Mike Redding jubilantly stated of the breathtaking 28-27 victory over the Warriors.

KP quarterback Robbie Jarest completed scoring strikes of 11 and 19 yards to Tim Nault within the final four minutes of play, the latter reducing the gap to merely one point with 39 seconds remaining on the scoreboard.

Then KP coach Brian Lee elected to bid for the win, instead of instructing an almost automatic conversion kick by Cole Baker, who had drilled 23 and 33 yard first half field goals. However, with Mansfield High’s 6-foot-4, 235-pound sophomore defensive lineman T.J. Guy putting pressure on Jarest, the potential two-point conversion pass went astray.

“At that point, we’re on the road, I wanted to go for it,” KP coach Brian Lee. “I’m not sure that we had what we wanted,” Lee added, the Warriors without a time out.

“The one thing that we are doing is that we compete, we make a lot of mistakes, but we put ourselves in position (to win) at the end, to make a play, to be there.” Ultimately, it was four conversion kicks by Hornet junior kicker Mike DeBolt that spelled the difference between a W and an L.

“I think on the road, you go for the win, luckily we survived it,” Redding said of the seemingly, unending twists and turns throughout the four quarters.

For Mansfield, that was surviving KP’s 6:33 offensive series to start the second half without yielding any point.

And on the Hornets' very first set, Cincere Gill capped a 69-yard, six-play drive (with an Aidan Sacco 41-yard run to the KP 21) and DeBolt's PAT knotted the score at 14-all.

That was the first of a trio of Hornet six-point excursions within a three-minute span. Three plays into KP's very next offensive series, Holmes picked off a Warrior pass. And on the very first Mansfield play, Nick Marciano scored his second TD of the game on a 31-yard scamper.

The Hornets weren't finished as Cappelletti recovered a KP fumble on the ensuing kickoff, wrestling for control of the ball at the Warriors' 27-yard line. Two plays later, on the second play of the fourth quarter, Sacco scored on a broken play from 23 yards out.

"We tried to keep our composure, as bad as we played we were only down seven," Redding said of the dis-jointed first half performance.

And in the fourth quarter, the Hornets yielded a 14-yard third down pass to Deric Casado and a fourth down TD pass by Jarest. Then the Hornets surrendered a 19-yard fourth down pass from Jarest to Casado to set up KP's final TD in the final minute.

"Both defenses, it's hard to go 80 yards against either one," Redding said, the Hornets not completing a pass. "If we go down seven (at the half), it's still within reach — we survived that. We didn't look very sharp in the first half. It felt pretty good if we could settle down without the penalties and the turnovers."

Mansfield took a 7-3 lead with three minutes left in the opening session on an 80-yard run by Marciano.

KP had taken the lead as Dave Morganelli's fumble recovery of a botched snap from center resulted in Baker's first field goal. The Warriors drove 82 yards on 11 plays with Baker hitting another three-pointer.

"Their first half they were really making mistakes, they gave us those points (safety) and at the same time, what do we hang our hat on," Lee said of abandoning the running of Ryan Halliday (52 first half yards, 89 overall) in trying to recover from a 14-point second half deficit behind Jarest (nine for 15 passing in the second half for 122 yards).

Mansfield 28, King Philip 27

	KP	Msf.
First downs	16	9
Total yardage	278	245
Rushing yardage	90	265
Passing yardage	209	0
Sacks-yds.	2-11	3-20
Comp.-Att.-Int.	12-19-1	0-3-0
Punts-Avg.	3-39.6	3-30.3
Fumbles-lost	1-1	1-1
Penalties-yds.	5-60	8-65

Team	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	Final
King Philip	03	11	00	13	27
Mansfield	07	00	14	07	28

Scoring summary

First quarter

KP — Cole Baker 23 field goal, 3:31.

Msf. — Nick Marciano 80 run (Mike DeBolt kick), 3:14.

Second quarter

KP — Baker 33 field goal, 8:42.

KP — Tim Nault 24 pass from Rob Jarest (pass failed), 4:19.

KP — safety, Aidan Sacco tackled in end zone, 1:56.

Third quarter

Msf. — Cincere Gill 7 run (DeBolt kick), 2:09.

Msf. — Marciano 26 run (DeBolt kick), 0:15.

Fourth quarter

Msf. Sacco 23 run (DeBolt kick), 10:51.

KP — Ti. Nault 11 pass from Jarest (Baker kick), 4:08.

KP — Ti. Nault 19 pass from Jarest (pass failed), 0:39.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING:

Holmes 8-27, Gill 6-32, Marciano 6-113, Sacco 7-93

PASSING:

Msf. — Sacco 0-3-0--0.

RECEIVING:

Msf 0

Hornets Hold On To Knock off King Philip



*Mansfield quarterback Aidan Sacco runs for a 42-yard gain in the third quarter against King Philip.
(Ryan Lanigan/HockomockSports.com)*

MANSFIELD, Mass. – After a spectacular second half that featured a combined five touchdowns from Mansfield football and King Philip, it all came down to one final play.

King Philip quarterback Robbie Jarest (12/20, 206 yards, 3 touchdowns) found Tim Nault (four receptions, 58 yards, three touchdowns) for an 18-yard touchdown with just 39 seconds to go in the game, bringing the visiting Warriors to within just one point.

The Warriors elected to go for the win, keeping the offense on the field for a two-point attempt. But pressure from a leaping TJ Guy off the left side forced Jarest to loft a throw off his back foot, and the pass fell short, sealing a 28-27 win for the host Hornets in the HockomockSports.com Game of the Week.

“That was about as good as it gets,” said Mansfield head coach Mike Redding. “You go into overtime, you just never know. I think they had a good play call, and on the road, you go for the win. We’re lucky we survived it. They made so many plays in the last five minutes, I’m glad we survived the last one and got the win out of it. This was a great game with two great teams battling literally until the last play. This was as good as it gets in high school.”

King Philip had a 14-7 advantage to begin the second half, but Mansfield scored three times during a span of 2:17, scoring two touchdowns late in the third and one on the first play of the fourth to seize a 28-14 advantage.

Things were looking good for the Hornets, as they carried that lead over five minutes into the fourth. But the Warrior refused to quit. After starting at midfield, Jarest found Nault on the fifth play of the drive – again on fourth down – for an 11-yard score, getting with one touchdown, down 28-21 with 4:08 to play.

KP's defense did its part, forcing a three and out and Nault put the Warriors in good position, taking the punt return to the Mansfield 49-yard line with just 2:06 left. After three straight incompletions, Jarest hit Deric Casado for 19 yards and a first down with 1:38 to go. Two plays later, Jarest connecting with Casado again and used a sneak to get a first down at the 18-yard line with 57 seconds left.

Jarest hit Nault for a touchdown on the next play, setting up the two-point conversion attempt.

"On the road, I just wanted to go," said KP head coach Brian Lee of the decision to go for two and the win. "I would have liked to have a timeout, get the right play call that we wanted there but in the end, we wanted to go for it, I'm just not sure we had what we wanted. We had to burn a lot of timeouts in the third quarter and that kind of put us in a bind down the stretch."

While King Philip's comeback attempt was impressive, Mansfield's stretch to end the third quarter and begin the fourth was a complete game changer.

The Warriors opened the second half with a 14-7 lead and the ball. In typical fashion, KP marched down the field on 11-plays, moving into Mansfield territory and eating up over five minutes of clock.

But the Hornets got the stop they needed and forced a turnover on downs. Two plays into Mansfield's ensuing drive, quarterback Aidan Sacco (seven rushes, 66 yards), kept the option play himself and scampered 42 yards. Two plays later, Cincere Gill took the jet sweep to the left side for a 7-yard touchdown, tying the game 14-14 after Michael DeBolt's extra point (4/4 PAT). "We felt like if we could score and tie it at home, we could get some momentum. We just had that run there where everything went right. Give [King Philip] credit, it looked like they were on the ropes and they battled back and found a way to get it to one play to win the game, and we made a good defensive play. These are two good football teams, I guarantee we'll play again. I just hope its in the South final and not the first or second round.

King Philip tried to pass for a first down on its next series, but Mansfield's Vinnie Holmes leaped into the air to snag an interception, giving the Hornets terrific field position. On Mansfield's first place, Nick Marciano bounced off a tackle up the middle, cut out to the right, and then cut back past two defenders to give Mansfield a 21-14 on a 31-yard touchdown rush. On the ensuing kickoff, Mansfield's Sean Weber was able to knock the ball free, and junior Jack Cappelletti pounced. Two plays later, Sacco kept it himself and went for a 23-yard touchdown on the first play of the fourth quarter.

"We talked about what we needed to fix at halftime, and we just came out in the second half and made plays," Sacco said. "The defense stepped up and made plays, the offense had some big runs, and I think that helped us.

"We like to establish the run game early on, and we have the three backs. With those three, when the third and fourth quarters come around, they aren't expecting me to pull it and run. We used it a couple of times and got a couple of breaks and capitalized on it." With 10:51 left in the game, Mansfield led 28-14.

"I think that stop [early in the second half] and then Aidan popped a big one," Redding said of what turned things around. "Just getting it tied up, we were able to feed off that. We got another stop and got the momentum and the crowd behind us, and I think they had a turnover, and we were able to take advantage of.

"Just having that fourth running option makes a big difference. It's hard to defend three good backs, but when you add the QB as the fourth, it can really complicate things defensively."

For as entertaining as the second half was, neither team really settled in during the first half.

Both teams opened with a punt, and then the Warriors capitalized on a bad snap on the second

Hornet drive for great field position. Mansfield's defense held strong, and KP settled for a 23-yard field goal from Cole Baker with 3:31 left in the opening quarter.

Mansfield didn't wait long to respond. On the first play of the next drive, Marciano found some space up the middle, cut back and turned on the jets, racing for an 80-yard touchdown and a 7-3 advantage.

KP's offense marched 66 yards on its third drive, using 10 plays – mostly on the back of junior running back Ryan Halliday (27 carries, 90 yards) – to get close to the Mansfield red zone. But a big tackle for loss from Philip Dinov, and a tipped pass from linebacker Chris Copponi forced the Warriors to settle for a 33-yard boot from Baker.

The Hornet offense sputtered for the rest of the first half, and a punt-turned-run fell well short of the sticks. KP made the Hornets pay as Jarest connected with a wide-open Nault for a 24-yard touchdown. KP converted the two-point conversion, but it was called back for a hold. The Warriors went for two again anyways, and the pass was incomplete.

Mansfield ended up going backward 10 yards on its next drive, pinned deep in its own territory. On fourth down, Sacco killed some clock out of the punt formation before taking an intentional safety, giving KP a 14-7 lead with 1:56 left in the half.

"I will say, the one thing that we're doing decent right now, is that when we're on the field, we compete," Lee said. "We still make a lot of mistakes which is on me. I don't think we're overly talented but they compete, and they put themselves in a position to steal that game at the end. I think we can build on that because that was a tough team we played today."

Redding said he felt giving up the two points on the safety was a better option than a Baker field goal, or a KP touchdown.

"We felt like they had a lot of momentum and we felt like if we punted out of our end zone, they were going to get the ball at the 30 or 35-yard line, and at minimum, they bang a field goal," Redding said. "If they score, now we're in trouble. We felt like if we went down seven, it was still in reach. Thank god the defense stopped them after the kick, or you really look like an idiot there. But we got it to seven and then got the stop and survived it. It just felt like we couldn't get out of that end of the field."

Mansfield football (3-1 overall, 2-0 Kelley-Rex) takes sole possession of first place in the Kelley-Rex with the win. The Hornets are back in action when they travel to Taunton (3-1, 1-1). King Philip (2-2, 1-1) will try to bounce back when it welcome Thanksgiving Day rival Franklin (3-1, 1-1) to Macktaz Field.

Ryan Lanigan

Mansfield holds off King Philip

By Jake Levin Globe Correspondent

September 29, 2018

MANSFIELD — Given its recent championship pedigree, no one could fault No. 10 King Philip for playing for the win over No. 8 Mansfield on Friday.

Down 14 points early in the fourth quarter, the Warriors opted to go for a 2-point conversion after Robbie Jarest's 19-yard touchdown pass to Timmy Nault with 39 seconds left in regulation brought them within a point. But the pass play for 2 failed, and after Vinnie Holmes fell on the ensuing onside kick, the Hornets escaped with a 28-27 win in Hockomock League play.

"I thought, at that point, we're on the road, I just wanted to go [for it]," King Philip coach Brian Lee said. "I would've liked to have had a timeout and get the right play call . . . I'm not sure we had what we wanted."

The decision to play for the win capped a crazy second half, where the Hornets (3-1) faced a 14-7 deficit against King Philip (2-2) before their fortunes dramatically changed in a two-minute span late in the third.

Listless on offense in the first half, save for a Nick Marciano 80-yard touchdown run, Aidan Sacco's 42-yard keeper injected much-needed life into the Hornets. Sacco's scamper paved the way for Cincere Gill's 7-yard touchdown run three plays later. An interception by Holmes preceded a 31-yard touchdown run for Marciano as soon as the Hornets got the ball back.

The momentum swing was completed with a special teams play. Mansfield's Sean Weber jarred the ball loose on King Philip's kick return as Joe Cappelletti promptly fell on the ball. Two plays later, on the first play of the fourth quarter, Sacco scored to put the finishing touches on "We just tried to keep our composure," Hornets coach Mike Redding said. "We felt like as bad as we played, we were only down 7 [at the half]."

Redding understood the thought process behind the Warriors' decision to go for 2 at the end.

"You go into overtime, you just never know," he said. "I think on the road, you go for the win. We're lucky we survived it."

Mansfield stops King Philip on two-point conversion to preserve 28-27 victory.

Greg Dudek, Boston Herald September 28, 2018

MANSFIELD — In a game filled with heavy momentum swings, it all came down to one play. King Philip came severely close to completing a dramatic fourth-quarter comeback last night against Mansfield after the Warriors cut a 14-point deficit down to a single point on an 18-yard touchdown pass from Robbie Jarest to Timmy Nault with 39 seconds to play.

But instead of forcing a likely overtime with an extra point attempt, King Philip went for the two-point conversion, and Mansfield came up big when Jarest's pass fell incomplete to seal a 28-27 Hockomock League victory for the Hornets at Alumni Field.

"They made so many plays in the last five minutes, and I'm glad we survived the last one and got a win out of it," said Mansfield coach Mike Redding. "This was a great game with two great teams battling literally to the last play. This was as good as it gets in high school."

KP coach Brian Lee said being on the road factored into his decision to go for two and the win.

“I would have liked to have a timeout, get the right play call that we wanted there but in the end we wanted to go for it,” he said. “I’m just not sure we had what we wanted.”

Trailing 14-7 midway through the fourth quarter, Mansfield (3-1) turned KP (2-2) over on downs before riding a tidal wave of momentum. In a span of 2:17, the Hornets scored three touchdowns on four offensive plays bridging the third and fourth quarters.

A 7-yard TD run by Cincere Gill tied the score before a Vinnie Holmes interception set up a 31-yard touchdown scamper by Nick Marciano to take the lead. King Philip fumbled the ensuing kickoff and Mansfield capitalized with Aidan Sacco keeping it for a 23-yard touchdown and a 28-14 lead with 10:41 left.

Unlike Mansfield, which didn’t complete a pass in the game, KP went to the air to mount a comeback.

Jarest hit Nault on a fourth-down pass from 11 yards out to get within a score with 4:08 left. After forcing a three-and-out on Mansfield, King Philip leaned on the right arm of Jarest as he threw another scoring strike to Nault to get it to 28-27.

But the Warriors couldn’t complete the comeback.