

Foxboro rallies to top Mansfield in triple-OT thriller

By Sean T. McGuire smcguire@thesunchronicle.com

Nov 20, 2018

BOSTON— All things considered, the rivalry game played between Foxboro High and Mansfield High at Fenway Park on Tuesday night may go down as one of the best in the 88-year history.

In a crazy swing of constant twists and turns, which featured both potential game-winning stops and game-tying scores, the Warriors made one more play and pulled out a triple-overtime, 35-33 victory in the 72nd holiday meeting.

“Without a doubt,” said Foxboro coach Jack Martinelli if it was one of the best he has been a part of. “Anytime you can beat Mansfield it’s a feather in the kids’ caps, but the way they did it today was extra special.”

Foxboro quarterback Liam Foley threw three touchdowns spanning from the fourth quarter to the three overtime periods. The last of which went to senior Mike Luong in the third-overtime as the running back, similarly, scored three touchdowns in the game. With both teams instructed to go for the two-point conversions after a score, Foley came back on the next play and found senior Rob Fay on a throw across his body as he rolled right and hit his receiver in the middle of the end zone.

While those on hand at Fenway may not have known it at the time, it was that connection which proved to be the difference.

Mansfield, of course, did what it had done all game. The Hornets answered.

Senior Cincere Gill scored on the following possession with a four-yard rush to close the gap to two points, 35-33.

The Hornets had already answered Foxboro both at the end of regulation and in the first overtime.

However, a holding penalty brought the ball to the 13 yard line on the two-point try and a pass from quarterback Jack Moussette fell incomplete in the end zone.

The Warriors stormed the field.

And despite the abundance of highlight-reel plays from the offense, each defense made key stops, as well.

Mansfield defensive lineman TJ Guy blocked a potential walk-off field goal for the Warriors in the second extra session. The blocked kick came after Foxboro defensive back Shayne Kerrigan made a fierce goal line hit to force a Mansfield turnover on downs as both teams went scoreless in the second overtime period.

“It was a classic,” Mansfield coach Mike Redding said. “A classic we don’t want to remember, but it was a great effort by both teams.”

The victory gives the Warriors their first win over the Hornets since 2015. Mansfield, however, still holds the advantage in the holiday series, 36-34-2.

Each overtime period started with the first and goal from the 10 yard line.

Foxboro started with the first session with the ball. Foley found junior receiver Brian Derba for the touchdown in the back of the end zone, but Foxboro did not convert the two-point conversion.

Mansfield quickly answered the Foxboro score as standout Aidan Sacco (two touchdowns) ran it in, a 10-yard rush, on the first play for the Hornets.

And the overtime came after plenty of regulation excitement. Mansfield led Foxboro 13-6 heading into the fourth quarter, but the Warriors used a pair of fourth-quarter touchdowns to take a 21-13 lead with less than three minutes remaining in the game.

Moussette led the Hornets on their first game-tying drive, covering 64 yards in 16 plays and the vast majority of the final 2:33.

With less than 20 seconds left and the Hornets without a timeout, Mansfield threw two incompletions before Moussette found senior Khristian Conner for the game-tying touchdown. The score came with two ticks left on the clock, literally.

Still trailing 21-19, Gill ran in the two-point conversion behind a brigade of Hornets. During the two-minute drive, Mansfield twice converted on fourth down. The first went to Joe Plath (one touchdown) as the big back gained two on fourth-and-one while the second came as Moussette scrambled for 16 on fourth-and-seven. Plath rushed for a gain of 13 on third-and-short to set Mansfield up at the Foxboro 7 yard line.

Mansfield tied the game after Foley found Foxboro receiver Shayne Kerrigan for a 58-yard touchdown to give the Warriors a 21-13 advantage with 2:33 left. It extended the Warriors first lead of the game, 14-13, as Luong scored his second rushing touchdown. Foxboro forced three Mansfield turnovers, including two in the first half, but still the Hornets held a 142-41 advantage in total yards after the first half. Mansfield ended with nearly 100 yards more of total offense (355 to 263).

“Way too many turnovers,” Redding said. “An interception and two fumbles. I think it probably should’ve been 21-0 at the half and instead (it was) 6-0 and (Foxboro) had what they wanted.”

Mansfield attempted a 28-yard field goal following a nine-play drive with less than a minute left in the first half. It would have given the Hornets a two-possession lead, but instead Foxboro trailed just 6-0 at the break.

Plath scored the lone touchdown of the first half. It came after a four-play, second-quarter drive in which Gill gained 54 yards to set up the Hornets inside the Foxboro 10 yard line. Moussette threw for 79 yards on 10 completions with one touchdown to Conner, who led the Hornets in receiving with six receptions for 46 yards. Sacco rushed for 86 yards on 10 carries and two touchdowns while Gill rushed for 54 yards on 11 carries and one touchdown.

Foley completed 10 passes for 162 yards and three touchdowns for the Warriors and was also named MVP. He also led the team in rushing with 27 carries on seven attempts while Luong had 11 rushes for 21 yards and two touchdowns. Fay had two receptions for 49 yards including a 39-yard reception while Kerrigan led Foxboro in receiving with his lone touchdown catch going for 58 yards.

Senior linebacker Martin McIlroy had an interception for Foxboro after fellow linebacker Hunter Williams forced a bad throw in the first quarter. Mike Sheehan and Anton George each had fumble recoveries for Foxboro.

“It’s just they wanted to leave a mark,” Martinelli said of the Warrior seniors being the biggest contributors. “You want something to hang your hat on as a senior class and they certainly can hang their hats on beating a good Mansfield team at Fenway Park.”

Foxborough 35, Mansfield 33

In a triple-overtime thriller at Fenway Park, Foxborough outlasts Mansfield.

By Jake Levin Globe Correspondent November 21, 2018

Triple overtime was the only suitable outcome for Hockomock League foes Foxborough and Mansfield two days shy of Thanksgiving at Fenway Park.

When Foxborough denied Mansfield's conversion pass in the third extra session, the 35-33 upset was complete.

"It doesn't get much better than this," Foxborough coach Jack Martinelli said after his 37th iteration of the rivalry.

"Our kids, going in as the underdog, played harder than I've ever seen them play. I'm very proud of them all."

The game was tied at 27 after neither team scored in the second overtime. Foxborough went up by 8 on Liam Foley's 9-yard touchdown pass to Mike Luong and his conversion pass to Rob Fay.

Cincere Gill, who finished with more than 100 yards from scrimmage for the Hornets, scored from 2 yards to make it 35-33.

"Ups and downs," Foley said. "It felt like it was never going to end, and then it finally did. These guys, they just battle. We've been through so much. I can't tell you enough positive things about this team."

Mansfield's Joe Plath opened the scoring with a 5-yard run in the second quarter.
Advertisement

Foxborough (5-6) got a pair of rushing touchdowns from Luong, the second of which came two plays into the fourth quarter. When he tacked on a 2-point conversion run, the Warriors had their first lead of the game, 14-13.

Foxborough was seemingly out of the weeds later in the fourth. On third and 9, Foley scrambled around and connected with Shayne Kerrigan, the broken play culminating in a 57-yard touchdown and much-needed breathing room, up 21-13.

"We all thought when he scored it was game over," Foley said.

But Mansfield (8-3) countered with a 15-play, 64-yard drive, ending with Khristian Conner hauling in a 5-yard touchdown pass from Jack Moussette with two seconds remaining. Gill added the 2-point conversion run to send the game to the first extra session.

In the first overtime, Foley threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to Brian Derba. Aidan Sacco, who had given Mansfield the lead in the third quarter with a 68-yard touchdown run, tied the game with a 10-yard run.

Foxboro Holds On For Frantic Win at Fenway Park



Foxboro's Liam Foley carries the ball while being tackled by Mansfield's TJ Guy (top) and Chris Graham (right). (Ryan Lanigan/HockomockSports.com)

BOSTON, Mass. – A lot has happened over the last 80-plus years in the annual clash between Mansfield and Foxboro football.

But the storied rivalry between the Hornets and Warriors has never had a game like Tuesday night's contest at Fenway Park.

Foxboro outlasted Mansfield, 35-33, in triple overtime on the historic field inside Fenway Park — the first overtime game in series history.

“It doesn't get much better than this,” said longtime Foxboro head coach Jack Martinelli. “Our kids going in as the underdog, they played harder than I've ever seen them play and I'm proud of them all.

“There were a lot of things at stake for us. We struggled a bit in the first half of the year, and I saw a vast improvement the second half of the year. The kids won four of their last five games so I'm pretty pleased for the kids. Two great teams, a great rivalry, we have the utmost respect for Coach Redding and his kids. It was a battle of wills I guess and we outlasted so I'm pretty happy.”

After being limited to six points through the first three quarters, Foxboro scored four times between the fourth quarter and three overtime periods.

On the flip side, Mansfield orchestrated a game-tying drive over the final 2:32, driving 63 yards before tying the game with just two seconds left.

“[Foxboro] played hard, it was a great game,” said Mansfield head coach Mike Redding. “We told the Fenway people we have a great rivalry, we play great football, we're going to bring a great crowd and we did all of it. We had two very good teams battle to the end, it was like a three hour game, and we had a great crowd in the cold, They made one more play. It was a classic and a great effort by both teams.”

After the teams remained tied through two overtime periods, Foxboro was able to make one final stop to secure the win. The Warriors started on offense in the third overtime and found the end zone on second down. Senior quarterback Liam Foley (10-for-17, 165 yards, three touchdowns) hit classmate Mike Luong in the flat for a 9-yard touchdown. Foley rolled right then threw back across his body to an open Rob Fay for the two point conversion and a 35-27 lead.

Mansfield punched it in on third down on a carry from sophomore Cincere Gill (12 carries, 104 yards) from three yards out to make it 35-33. Gill dove into the pylon on the two-point attempt but Mansfield was called for holding and had to attempt the two-point conversion from the 13-yard line.

Junior quarterback Jack Mousette (11-for-20, 82 yards, one touchdown) nearly connected with a receiver but a nice tackle forced the pass incomplete and Foxboro held on for the win. In the first overtime, Foley dodged some pressure to connect with Brian Derba for a 10-yard touchdown on third down but the two-point rush failed. Mansfield tied the game on its first play with Aidan Sacco (10 carries, 86 yards) using a QB option to keep it himself for a 10-yard score. After a delay of game, Mansfield's two-point attempt from the 8-yard line was shut down.

Foxboro had a chance to win it in the second overtime, but similar to Mansfield in the opening extra period, the defense came up big. Mansfield elected to pass on a 23-yard field goal (with starting kicker Michael DeBolt out hurt) and went for it on 4th and goal from the 6. Mousette hit Danny Rapoza right at the 1-yard line but Foxboro's Shayne Kerrigan made a terrific leaping tackle to prevent the ball from crossing the goal line.

Foxboro ran it twice before trotting its field goal unit out on third down for a 23-yard attempt. But Russell Neale's attempt at a walk-off win at Fenway was denied by sophomore TJ Guy, who jumped high into the air and blocked the kick, leading to the third OT where Foxboro ended up winning.

"I couldn't have written a script any better for the seniors," Martinelli said. "They were resilient, they hung tough. Even when it looked like momentum had swung a little bit, they came up and made some plays for us. I couldn't be prouder of a bunch of kids than what I saw tonight.

Before the teams got to overtime, Foxboro nearly had the game won in regulation. The Warriors stopped Mansfield inside the red zone (with the Hornet drive hampered by a bad snap and Pat Stapleton coming up with a big hit on fourth down) and had the chance to kill the block. Facing a 4th and inches from their own 40 yard line, Foley went back and tried to hand the ball off to each of his backs but instead pulled it back in for a bootleg run to the left side and converted.

Three plays later, on a third and 9 play from the 43 yard line, Kerrigan came in motion and Foley faked the handoff on the jet sweep. The senior quarterback looked back to his right to get the defense to move in that direction and turned back to his left and lofted a pass to Kerrigan out on the sideline on a wheel route. Kerrigan did the rest, racing to a 57-yard score and a 21-13 lead with 2:32 to play.

"I never could have imagined a game like that," Foley said after being named MVP for the game. "We knew coming in we were playing a really good team in Mansfield so this is unbelievable. We knew we had to play the best we could and I think everybody gave everything they could tonight."

With just one timeout, Mansfield responded and marched 63 yards to tie the game. Joe Plath, who took over tailback duties with Vinnie Holmes, Michael DeBolt, and Nick Marciano sidelined and was named Hornet MVP, had an eight yard run to convert an early 4th and two

from the Mansfield 45-yard line, and four plays later, with the Hornets staring at 4th and 7, Mousette used his legs to get 16 yards and a first.

Another run from Plath on third down (3rd and 1 from the 19) got Mansfield inside the red zone with less than 30 seconds to play. On third and goal from the 5 yard line, Mousette lofted one to Khristian Conner on the right side and Conner made a terrific catch while going to the ground for the touchdown.

Mansfield went back to the ground for the two-point conversion with Gill taking the sweep left and cutting up the middle to tie the game 21-21 with just two seconds left.

The Hornets took a 6-0 lead in the first half on a five-yard plunge from Plath, but had two turnovers in the opening frame to stop them from padding the lead. Hunter Williams forced an errant throw that Martin McIlroy hauled in for an interception and Anton George fell on a loose ball after a bad handoff exchange. Mike Sheehan had a fumble recovery in the second half for Foxboro.

“Way too many turnovers for us,” Redding said. “It probably should have been 21-0 at half but it’s only 6-0 and [Foxboro] has a game, which is what they wanted. They started believing a little bit and we couldn’t shake them. We kept answering but we just let them hang around. And when a call doesn’t go your way, it changes the game and we had a lot them not go our away.”

Foxboro tied the contest 6-6 on its opening drive of the second half. Foley orchestrated a nine-play, 78 yard drive that included a 40-yard pass and (terrific leaping) catch from Fay. Luong capped it with a 1-yard score.

The game was tied for just 21 seconds though. On the first play of Mansfield’s ensuing drive, Sacco used a QB option to keep the ball and darted up the middle for a 68-yard score and a 13-6 lead after Gill hit the extra point.

The Warriors pulled ahead early in the fourth quarter. Foxboro’s pass was incomplete on 4th and 4 from the six but Mansfield was whistled for offside, and then two straight unsportsmanlike conduct calls after that. Foxboro capitalized with Luong plunging in from 2 yards out. Luong also got the two-point conversion, albeit a little help from the offensive line with a big push after the Hornets had the original stop, to give Foxboro a 14-13 lead early in the fourth quarter.

Foxboro football finishes the season 5-6 while Mansfield closes out the 2018 campaign with a 8-3 record.