

Attleboro breaks into win column

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TAUNTON — With a lot of healthy bodies back on the field, the Attleboro High School football team got a glimpse of all it can be Friday night.

Five former members of the walking wounded were back in action, and the Bombardiers (1-3) outgained previously unbeaten Taunton by a 411-159 margin in the process of pinning a 45-21 whipping on the host Tigers at Tiger Stadium.

"Getting back some of our senior leadership, it's a big difference having those guys around," said AHS coach Mike Strachan, whose Bombardiers improved to 1-1 in the Hockomock Kelley-Rex race. "I'm really proud of our kids tonight."

The game didn't start as a rout; Attleboro drove to the Taunton 14 on the opening possession before penalties stalled the march, and the Tigers roared back to take a 7-0 lead on Antonio Mendes' 53-yard run with 6:23 left in the quarter.

But the Bombardiers responded with an 11-play, 73-yard march, all but one of the plays on the ground. But that one passing play was an example of how much the Bombardiers had missed the injured James Weir, as the senior tight end caught a 7-yard TD pass from Cam Furtado with 44 seconds left in the quarter, and Justin Cote followed with a conversion catch to put AHS in front, 8-7.

Nate Barboza's interception and 20-yard return to the Taunton 8 on the Tigers' first play set up two rushed by Furtado, one of 2 yards and the touchdown from 6 out on the first play of the second quarter, Furtado also running for the two-point conversion and 16-7 lead.

Furtado carried 14 times for 94 yards, completed eight of 13 passes for 161 yards, threw for two touchdown passes and scored on the run in his best all-around performance of the season.

"He had great poise tonight," Strachan said. "He handled things, getting guys lined up, and that was really important for him. He's had a good year for us, and he's had to do it with not the full cast of characters."

Taunton snuck back within two points, 16-14, on Noah Leonard's 21-yard touchdown pass to Collin Hunter with 9:43 left in the half. Attleboro, however, got the ball back with 6:42 left and took 15 plays to cover 49 yards and go up 24-14 on Furtado's 13-yard pass to Elvin Sam and a gritty finish of the conversion pass play by Cote.

During the march, the Bombardiers got the ball back on a punt play when a running-into-the-kicker call gave them first-down yardage. Furtado's fourth-and-5 pass to Barboza kept the drive alive at the Taunton 15, and then the oddest save of all — a personal foul against the Tiger sideline when an official ran into an assistant coach on a fourth-and-21 incompletion, giving AHS a first down at the Taunton 13.

Alex Rodriguez (eight carries, 73 yards) scored on a 7-yard run with 9:01 left in the third quarter, but Taunton's Brayden Merrill matched the score two minutes later on a 41-yard screen pass.

But Attleboro broke the game open when Furtado's 50-yard pass to Josh Therrien set up Cote's 1-yard run with 1:54 left in the third. Barboza then wrapped up a 10-play, 81-yard march with a 1-yard run with 6:43 left to play.

The Bombardiers entertain Oliver Ames on Friday.