

Turnover-prone Attleboro falls to Mansfield

By Mark Farinella mfarinel@thesunchronicle.com

ATTLEBORO — Speed kills on the highways, and turnovers achieve the same result on the football field. “Especially with Mansfield, you can’t give them possession,” said Attleboro High coach Mike Strachan Friday night after his 2-4 Bombardiers lost four fumbles and basically handed the shorthanded Hornets a 31-7 triumph at Tozier-Cassidy Field.

“We had breaks, and we took advantage of them and got some points,” said Mansfield coach Mike Redding, whose 5-1 Hornets were playing without injured lead back Dan DeGirolamo. “That shortened the field, and we needed the breaks tonight. We were a little banged up coming in.

“They’re a good team,” Redding added of the Bombardiers, who had a two-game winning streak snapped. “They just had a bad night.”

The teams battled through a scoreless first quarter, but Mansfield had the ball for 13 plays and 8:25 without scoring, limiting Attleboro to just five offensive snaps in the first quarter.

One of those was a fumble by Cam Furtado recovered by Mansfield’s Chris Graham at the Attleboro 10. Four plays later, Mike DeBolt booted a 26-yard field goal to put Mansfield up 3-0 with 9:05 left in the first half.

Two plays later, the ball was swatted out of Joe Llanos’ hands at the end of a 10-yard gain. Mansfield’s Aidan Sacco scooped it up and raced 27 yards to paydirt, DeBolt adding the kick for a 10-0 lead with 8:02 left.

DeBolt has already made a name for himself as a sophomore kicker for the Hornets, but he added a new dimension to his skill-set later in the quarter.

Two plays after Chris Copponi recovered the third Attleboro fumble at the Hornets’ 47, DeBolt lined up as a receiver and sprinted into the clear, catching Damani Scott’s 53-yard TD pass with 1:50 left in the half. DeBolt added the extra point.

“That was the first catch of his life,” Redding said.

By halftime, Scott had completed all four of his passes for 93 yards, and Mansfield held a whopping possession edge, 14:43 to 7:17.

“I thought we had played pretty well defensively,” said Strachan, whose pass defense had successfully stymied talented wide receiver Hunter Ferreira in the first half. “But if you give them a short field, the next thing you know, it’s 17-0.”

Furtado was sacked and fumbled on Attleboro’s first possession of the second half, giving Mansfield the ball on the AHS 23. Six plays later, Ferreira fought off outstanding coverage by Elvin Sam in the left corner of the end zone to pull in an 18-yard scoring pass.

The Hornets added one last score, as a 43-yard toss by Scott (6-8, 154 yards) to Kristian Conner set up Sacco’s 2-yard sweep on the first play of the fourth quarter.

The Bombardiers spoiled the shutout on their last possession, covering 55 yards in three plays leading to Llanos' 14-yard TD run with 57 seconds left. Llanos finished with 89 yards on nine carries. Attleboro, now 2-2 in the Hockomock Kelley-Rex, entertains Franklin on Friday, while Mansfield (3-1) entertains Oliver Ames.