



## Sherwood Park Northstars vs St. Albert 49er's October 10, 2009

There are many ways to achieve a win. It appears that the Northstars prefer to do it the hard way.

The first quarter opened on a cold and dreary field in St. Albert. After the 49er's offence failed to gain a first down, and the Star's offence took over around centre field, it quickly became apparent that the 49er's defence had done their homework. Two backfield tackles in two plays left the Stars punting on third and long. The 49er's quarterback, despite the cold, would later go on to attempt a total of 14 passes on the day, completing 6 of them. His second pass of the day, however, resulted in the first of two majors. It was a lateral that the receiver ran in for a 57 yard touchdown. The Stars were then able to block the convert attempt, leaving the score Stars 0 and the 49ers 6.

A strong 49er kick-off sailed over the heads of the return team, forcing the Star's offence to scrimmage on their own 2 yard line. After 2 first downs taken up the outside of the field followed by 2 first downs through the middle, the 49ers defence put a momentary end to 2 more outside attempts and the Stars gave the ball back on yards not gained.

The first of several turnovers went to the Stars as the 49ers bobbled the snap. However, that big outside play the Stars were looking for was still denied by the 49er defence and the Stars, once again, gave up the ball. The Stars defence held the 49ers with tackles by Aaron Chabaylo and Logan Schlamp, who once again had very strong performances for the Stars.

In the second quarter the Star's Adam Loov forced the 49ers into deep scrimmages with some outstanding third down punts, one resulting in a 2 point safety. With the score, Stars 2 and the 49ers 6, the Stars fumbled the ball and the 49ers recovered. Fortunately, the D line was able to contain the offence and the 49ers were forced to punt. The Stars and 49ers turned the ball back and forth on yards not gained before the end of the half without anyone moving terribly far from centre field.

The third quarter started much as the first ended, with both teams unable to put together any kind of offensive drive. With both defences playing strong, the 49ers quarterback once again attempted a pass. This time the Star's Colton Henderson intercepted it, successfully giving the Stars some welcome momentum, and what was later identified as the game-breaking moment. The first Star's offensive play saw the outside finally open up as Daniel Marshall was able to run a long 18 yards for a first

down. With the 49er's defence still sensitive to Marshall's yardage on the outside, Grady Forsberg was able to carry the ball 7 yards up the middle and then again, on the first play of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, Forsberg scampered through a nice hole created by the Star's O-line, for 19 yards and the Star's first major. The convert was missed, but the Stars were ahead 8 to 6.

With nowhere for the 49er's offence to go, the Star's defence kept the team's momentum going by blocking the 49ers next third-down punt. The Stars took over on the 49er 32 yard line and then two quarterback keepers by Shaun O'Neill, the first a 27 yard boot, and the second a five yard push through traffic, gave the Stars their second touchdown of the game. The convert was successful making the score Stars 15 and the 49ers 6.

The Star's defence had a momentary lull and a hungry 49er offence was able to put together a drive with 3 first downs in a row before the Star's defence stopped them, turning the ball over on yards not gained. The Stars couldn't move the ball on their next attempt and they were once again forced to punt.

With time running out, the 49ers scrimmaged on their own 26 yard line with a beautiful pass straight up the middle and into the hands of a wide-open 49er receiver, who then ran the remainder of the field to score what would be the final major of the game. The convert was good, pulling the 49ers within 2, Stars 15 and the 49ers 13.

A group of cold and anxious 49er and Star's fans moved to the edge of their seats as the 49ers set up a valiant attempt at victory in the dying seconds of the game. A short kick by the 49ers was recovered, not by the 49ers however, but by the Stars return team and O'Neill was able to take a knee to close out the final play of the game.

"It was a good comeback," said Head Coach Rob MacKenzie. Speaking about the 49ers, MacKenzie said, "They were prepared. They knew who to look for. They defended us well." The slow start for the Northstars continues to be a concern for the coach but he was pleased with how the defensive line played and sited the Henderson interception as the turning point of the game. In the end, MacKenzie said, "we leave here with a smile."