



Sherwood Park Northstars vs. Grande Prairie Broncos November 14, 2009

After a long bus ride the Stars took to the frozen field in Grande Prairie ready to take on the unknown Broncos. They quickly found out how the GP squad was up to this point undefeated.

A short kick to the Stars was recovered by the Broncos who took over on the Star's 22 yard line. A Bronco's fumbled pitch was recovered by the Broncos and an offside penalty by the Stars kept the GP drive alive. On a third down gamble, the Broncos scored their first touchdown. The convert was good and the score in the opening minutes was Stars 0, Broncos 7.

The Broncos kickoff left the Stars scrimmaging on their 27 yard line. With Colton Henderson in at quarterback, the offence began the game a little shaky. On their second down play, the ball was fumbled and the Broncos recovered. Three plays later, the Broncos had their second touchdown and a successful convert. The score was Stars 0, Broncos 14.

The Broncos again tried a short kick, but the Stars held on to start on the Bronco 50 yard line. In tough against a big, fast defensive line, the Star's O-line starters Zachary Creighton, Trysten Den Hartog, Michael Yuzyk, Ross McKay and Jordan Smith, worked hard to give Henderson and the offense time to execute plays to Grady Forsberg, Daniel Marshall and Alex Irving. With the additional yards from 2 Bronco offside penalties, the Stars were able to move the ball down field to the 1 yard line in 11 plays; including 2 successful third down gambles. On the 1 yard line, Forsberg broke through the middle for the Star's first major of the game. The Adam Loov convert was good, making the score Stars 7, Broncos 14.

The Bronco's kick return looked like it was headed to the end zone but a persistent pursuit by Marshall stopped the ball carrier on the Star's 11 yard line. The Star's defence then dug deep and was able to hold the Broncos, forcing them to attempt a 17 yard field goal. The kick was good and the score was Stars 7, Broncos 17.

The Northstars elected to scrimmage the ball from their 35 yard line. The Bronco's defense stopped the Stars from moving the ball and on third and 24, Loov punted.

The second quarter started with the Broncos on the Star's 40 yard line. On second down, the Broncos passed complete for another TD. The successful convert made the score Stars 7, Broncos 24.

The Northstar's kick return team took the field yet again, leaving the offence to start on their 37 yard line. Unable to put together a drive, the Stars turned the ball over on yards not gained. The Broncos started on the Star's 39 yard line and despite a holding penalty and then a procedure penalty, were able to pass for a touchdown. The convert was good and the score was Stars 7, Broncos 31.

After the kick return, Henderson attempted a pass on first down but it was picked off by the Broncos. The Broncos quickly scored a touchdown and nailed the convert for a 38 to 7 lead.

The Stars woes continued as the Broncos recovered their short kick. Another pass for a TD and a convert made the score Stars 7, Broncos 45.

The Star's next series had them starting at their 42 yard line. And thankfully, the offence was able to put together another drive. By alternating plays to Forsberg up the middle and Marshall to the outside, the Stars were able to sustain their drive for 6 plays. Then on a third and 3 gamble, Marshall and Irving ran a reverse that saw Irving sprint for 10 yards, putting them on the Bronco's 22 yard line. Irving again pushed through the middle for another 10 yards and a Bronco unnecessary roughness penalty brought the Stars to the 1 yard line. Forsberg plunged through for his second major of the game. Looov kicked the convert and the score was Stars 14, Broncos 45.

Finally some luck went the Star's way on the kick off. Aaron Chabaylo tackled the ball carrier, causing a Bronco fumble and then recovered the ball for the Stars. The offence took over near centre field and moved the ball 25 yards on a first down run by Marshall. However, the Broncos fought back and eventually forced the Stars to turn the ball over on yards not gained.

The Broncos started on their 25 yard line and despite incomplete passes and a pass knocked down by Henderson, the GP team was able to score in the dying seconds of the second quarter to make the score Stars 14, Broncos 52 at the half.

Head Coach Rob Mackenzie commented on his team's first half play, "We just didn't have it. It's tough when you turn the ball over at the beginning." Despite the Northstar's struggles, the team was able to come up with some plays that gave their fans something to cheer about.

The Broncos received the Star's kick in good field position and despite great pressure from Mark Risdon, the Bronco QB was able to pass complete for another Grande Prairie touchdown. The convert was good and the score was Stars 14, Broncos 59.

The Star's next offensive series saw them move the ball from their own 36 to the Broncos 26 yard line in 11 plays before a third down gamble came up short. The Star's defense was called on once again to defend their territory and this time tackles by Steven Budjak, Marshall and Loov forced the Broncos into a third and 22 punt.

The Star's scrimmaged on their 27 yard line with no success in their first 2 plays. Then on third and 18, Marshall was able to break free to the outside for an 81 yard gain that left the team on the Bronco's 10 yard line. An aggressive run up the middle by Forsberg gave him his third touchdown of the game. Loov was once again good and the score was Stars 21, Broncos 59.

The Stars tried a short kick but it went out of bounds without being touched by the Broncos and a procedure penalty was assessed to the Stars. The Broncos executed 1 play and scored a long 61 yard touchdown run and subsequent convert for a 21 to 66 lead.

After the kick return, the Stars showed that they could produce that same kind of big play as Alex Irving toughed it out up the middle and then outsprinted his pursuit for a 74 yard major. The convert made the score Stars 28, Broncos 66.

A short Northstar's kick was recovered by Mitch Friesen. The offence came up short though and turned the ball over on yards not gained. The Star's defense took over and in 3 plays had the Broncos punting.

Late in the fourth quarter, the Stars kept pushing forward. Starting on their 30 yard line, they ran 5 first down plays in a row, including a completed pass to Budjak. On the 6 yard line, Marshall was able to sneak around the outside for the fifth Northstar's touchdown. A 2 point conversion was attempted but was no good, leaving the score Stars 34, Broncos 66.

The Northstar's defense continued to hold the Broncos, forcing a fumble that was recovered by Corey Hicks who scampered 11 yards with it allowing the Star's offence to take to the field in the dying minutes of the game. A double reverse involving Marshall, Irving and Jacob Bennett, who then threw a completed pass to Loov gave the Star's fans one last thrill with seconds left on the clock. Fittingly, the final play of the season was an outside run by Marshall.

After the game, Head Coach Rob MacKenzie commented on his team's effort against a Grande Prairie squad that would probably be at the Tier II or III level in the Capital District. "Our offence was good. Defense has been our Achilles heel all year." With players moving on, Coach MacKenzie admitted that its "tough to say goodbye. I'm going to miss these kids." With a soft spot in his heart for his players, Coach Mackenzie summarized the relationship he has built with this year's Northstars. Simply put and with a smile he said, "I'm their coach."