

## Sherwood Park Northstars vs Camrose Buffaloes

The rematch between the Stars and Buffaloes was much anticipated after the Stars narrowly lost to the Camrose team by a mere 2 points on a cold, wet day that saw both teams struggle to hold onto the ball.

The Stars kicked off to open the Tier 3 semi final. The coverage team made sure there was no return and the Buffaloes' offense started from their own 29 yard line. The Stars defence was put to the test early as the speedy outside run of the Buffaloes meant the Stars had to really work at containment. After a couple of first downs, the Stars were able to stop the Buffaloes, who completed a fake punt and pass play but ended up short of the first down marker.

The Stars' offense took over on the Camrose 48 yard line, lined up in a double wing formation that was successful in the first meeting of these teams. The Stars only had the ball for a short while as on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7, they fumbled and Camrose recovered. It only took 3 plays then for the Buffaloes to score their first major on a 12 yard outside run. The kicked convert was good and the score was Stars 0, Buffaloes 7.

The Stars started in good field position at their own 51 yard line after a 21 yard kick return by Grady Forsberg. However, the offense continued to struggle. Plays up the middle to Chris Nattrass and outside to Andrew Russell only resulted in short gains. The Stars punted on 3<sup>rd</sup> and long. The Buffaloes gave the ball right back, though, as the Stars' defence held their ground causing the ball to be turned over on yards not gained.

Starting at centre field, the Stars had yet to complete a first down. Their third series looked to be no different. On 3<sup>rd</sup> and 12, the Star's punter, Forsberg, elected to run, reaching the first down marker to keep the drive alive. As the second quarter began, plays to Forsberg and Russell got the ball to the Camrose 1 yard line. Quarterback Adam Horne plunged through into the end zone for the Star's first points of the game. The 2 point convert was no good, leaving the score Stars 6, Buffaloes 7.

After the kick off, the Buffaloes scrimmaged from their own 40 yard line. On first and 10, they broke outside for their second TD but an offside penalty brought the ball back. Unable to sustain their drive, they tried an onside punt on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 22 but the Camrose player who recovered the ball was deemed offside and the Stars got the ball back on the Buffalo 31 yard line. The Stars drive ended with a pass interception. Two plays later, the Buffaloes had their touchdown; this time a 95 yard run to the outside. The convert was missed. Stars 6, Buffaloes 13.

After the kick return the Stars scrimmaged on their own 37 yard line. Unable to move the ball, they punted on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 12. A great punt return was stopped from going all the way by the Stars's Forsberg, who was the leading tackler on the day with 7. It was all for naught though as the Buffaloes scored anyway on a subsequent 19 yard outside run. The convert was good making the score Stars 6, Buffaloes 20.

The Buffaloes tried a short kick but it was recovered by the Stars. The Star's offense eventually gave the ball back on yards not gained. The Buffaloes fared no better and eventually punted on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17 after Half Back Wayne Phillips, who was in on 6 tackles for the day, was able to help momentarily shut down the Camrose outside run.

The Stars scrimmaged from their own 53 yard line but after 5 plays turned the ball back to the Buffaloes on yards not gained. As time ran out in the half, the Buffaloes moved the ball downfield close enough to kick an 18 yard field goal making the score Stars 6, Buffaloes 23.

Camrose tried another short kick to start the third quarter but it was recovered by the Stars, who then scrimmaged from their own 52 yard line. The Star's offense, now lining up in the formation that they had been using in their last few games, went to Forsberg up the gut for a first down. A Buffalo unnecessary roughness penalty coupled with an offside penalty moved the ball to the Camrose 29 yard line. From there it was all Forsberg, who trudged his way through traffic for 6 plays to the Buffalo 1 yard line. Horne took the ball over for his second major of the game. The 2 point convert was unsuccessful and the score was now Stars 12, Buffaloes 23.

After the kick return, the Buffaloes scrimmaged from their own 40 yard line. On first and 10 they were able to break out side again for a TD that was, again, called back due to an offside penalty. On the next play, they fumbled the ball and it was recovered by the Star's Cameron Stainton.

The Stars' offense started from the Camrose 31 yard line. Plays to Forsberg and Russell and another unnecessary roughness penalty to the Buffaloes, again put the ball on the 1 yard line. This time it was Forsberg who broke through the line into the end zone to close the gap in the score. The 2 point convert was no good and the score remained Stars 18, Buffaloes 23.

That was as close as it would get as after the kick off the Buffaloes scrimmaged from their own 52 yard line. Two plays later they had another touchdown and kicked convert. Stars 18, Buffaloes 30.

There was no return on the kick off and the Stars scrimmaged from their own 46 yard line. As the fourth quarter started, they were unable to keep their drive alive and had to turn the ball back to the Buffaloes on yards not gained. The Buffaloes scrimmaged from their own 45 yard line but were unable to move the ball due to 4 penalties in a row called against them including an unsportsmans-like conduct. Then on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 25, Forsberg intercepted a Buffalo pass. It was a short-lived possession for the Stars though as a broken offensive play resulted in the ball being stripped right into the hands of a Camrose player.

The Camrose team continued to show a lack of discipline as they took another 3 penalties in a row, eventually forcing them to punt on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 24. With the Stars on their own 18 yard line and with time running out in the fourth quarter, Forsberg came in as quarterback. On 1<sup>st</sup> and 10, his pass was intercepted by the Buffaloes, who took over on the Stars 45 yard line. On 1<sup>st</sup> and 10, another long TD run and kicked convert made the score Stars 18, Buffaloes 37.

The Camrose short kick was recovered by the Stars and they scrimmaged on their own 52 yard line. With Horne back in as QB, he completed a 22 yard pass to Jordan Derkach and then a short 3 yarder to Russell. The final play of the game saw Andrew Russell take it outside all the way to the Buffalo 15 yard line for a 27 yard gain, the longest Northstars run of the day. The final score was Stars 18, Buffaloes 37.

Head Coach Rob MacKenzie was disappointed with the outcome in the game. "We did lose to a better team. They have game-breakers and we don't." The speed on the edge was a problem all day for the Northstars. There were some good moments but it's "very difficult to maintain that intensity for the whole time." Noting the play of Grady Forsberg, MacKenzie commented, "Grady's our go to guy. He had to shine and he did." On a personal level with this being the last game in which Rob MacKenzie was the Head Coach, he expressed that he had no regrets. "I hope that I have passed on knowledge to these kids to make them better ball players and even better persons."

On behalf of the players and parents of the 2010 Sherwood Park Northstars, I would like to wish Rob MacKenzie all the best. Thank you for the time and effort that you have put into coaching and investing in our children. It is greatly appreciated and not taken for granted. May you always find a place for your coach's' heart to reside.