

Sherwood Park Northstars vs St. Albert Fury

August 22, 2010

The opening game of the season is always exciting with the hopeful anticipation of the fans and the players ready to match their own personal and team grit against their opponents. This game was to be memorable for an unexpected reason.

The Northstars kicked to the Fury, giving the St. Albert team the first offensive possession. The Star's defence played tight led by some good tackling from Adam Loov and Jacob Bennett. With the ball turned over on downs, the Star's offense began its 2010 season on their own 41 yard line. The position of quarterback was shared between first year bantam, Adam Horne and veteran, Kyle Fraser. Plays executed through the middle to Grady Forsberg resulted in only small gains and those going outside to Loov were only slightly more successful. Unable to gain the necessary yardage, Loov delivered a nice punt to drive the Fury back. The punt, although bobbled by the player was returned all the way downfield for a Fury major. Good luck for the Fury and bad luck for the Star's saw the convert bounce off the uprights and then up and through for the extra point. Stars 0, Fury 7.

The second quarter started well for the Fury with a nice pass and run play that resulted in their second touchdown of the game. With the successful convert the score was Stars 0, Fury 14. The kickoff was recovered by the Fury but they turned the ball over on yards not gained. The Stars next offensive chance ended with another fumble that was recovered by the Fury. This time the Fury were able to capitalize with another touchdown pass and convert. Stars 0, Fury 21.

A good kick return by Forsberg and an outside 20 yard run by Loov were negated by a Star's penalty. The Fury offense took over again, but with just over a minute left in the half, Adam Loov intercepted a Fury pass and sprinted over 50 yards down the sideline looking to score the Star's first major of the game. Unfortunately, Loov was caught from behind at the Fury 30 yard line with an illegal tackle. The unnecessary roughness penalty was small consolation as Loov went down hard, and had to be tended to by the team trainer, then the local paramedics. Loov was eventually removed from the field by ambulance having sustained fractures to both bones in one of his legs. Fans and players showed their appreciation with heartfelt clapping and cheering for Adam Loov who up until the illegal tackle had been having an absolutely outstanding game.

The game eventually resumed with 1:02 to play in the first half. The Stars scrimmaged from the Fury 15 yard line but were unable to get past the St. Albert defence. The half ended but play resumed immediately with the start of the third quarter.

The Stars were able to move the ball downfield but had their drive cut short with a fumble that was recovered by the Fury. The Fury then returned the favour by fumbling the ball on the very next play. Chris Natrass pounced on the loose ball and the Star's offense took to the field again. The Fury defence came up big and forced the Stars into a punting situation. With the injury to Loov, Forsberg went in as the punter. A high snap allowed the Fury to get the ball on the Star's 8 yard line. They completed another pass for a touchdown. With the convert the score was now Stars 0, Fury 28.

Another Northstar fumble gave the Fury the ball back in Star territory. However, a pass interception by Jordan Derkach gave possession back to the Stars. Another fumble by the Stars left the Fury with possession on the Star's 19 yard line. On first and 10, they punched it in for the 6 points. With a missed convert the score was Stars 0, Fury 34.

The fourth quarter began with a good snap and punt by Forsberg. The Fury offense took to the field again. Despite a TD stopping tackle by Logan Brower and Jordan Derkach, the Fury were able to turn the next play into another major. The missed convert left the score at Stars 0, Fury 40

After 2 plays, the Stars were deep in their own territory. They elected to concede a safety and kick to the Fury. Unfortunately, the return team were able to run the ball back all the way for another Fury major. The convert was successful and the score was now Stars 0, Fury 49.

A 27 yard kick return by Forsberg, put the Stars at their own 49 yard line. On second down, Cameron Stainton broke free of his tackles and scampered 43 yards downfield before being brought down. Forsberg then drove up the middle but was stopped short at the 1 yard line. Penalties on both sides of the ball brought the Stars back out to the Fury 10 yard line. On first and goal, Forsberg drove through the line to score the major. The 2 point convert attempt was unsuccessful. With the ball again the Fury offence chose to run out the clock making the final score Stars 6, Fury 49.

Despite the setbacks, especially the injury to Loov, Head Coach Rob MacKenzie was able to see some positives in the game. "Everybody played. They didn't quit," he said. In reference to the injury to Loov and to others he stated, "It's a domino effect. Players get moved here and there." In the final analysis Coach MacKenzie remains encouraged. "We learned a lot about the players. This game will help for playing in the future."