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**Sports****Townies totally dominate Cranston West**By: **DAVID BORGES** , sports writer

09/26/2003

**EAST PROVIDENCE - The Battle of the Bands at halftime may have ended in a draw, but there was no doubt who the dominant team on the gridiron was on Friday night at Pierce Field.**

East Providence High had three touchdown runs of over 50 yards, an interception and a fumble recovery in its home opener last night. And then the second quarter began (appropriately enough, with another interception, which quickly led to yet another touchdown).

By the time halftime rolled around, the Townies owned a 40-7 lead over Cranston West, paced by five West turnovers and a trio of touchdowns by Jerome Blair. Falcon quarterback Kenny Evers had completed as many passes to EP defenders (three) as to his own receivers, making the halftime show between both schools' impressive marching bands and cheerleading crews a welcome respite.

EP wound up rolling to a 47-20 victory after a second half where the only drama was when the Falcons would take their starting unit off the field --- and when the Townies would follow suit.

"The kids really came out pumped up tonight," said EP coach Sandy Gorham.

"They were real excited about playing at home. Sizewise, we knew we could overmatch them because they're small upfront. The kids did a great job of running the offense. Jerome ran very well inside, but the thing about our offense is if you take the pitch away, we've got a quarterback (Sean Arlan), a fullback (Blair) and our passing game was real good."

Indeed, there was little the Townies could do wrong in the opening half, when they scored on touchdown runs of 57, 52 and 72 yards within their first nine plays from scrimmage. Even when EP messed up, things still turned out well. On an option pitch play midway through the opening quarter, Arlan was caught in his tracks by the Falcon defense for what seemed to be a loss. But the senior QB ill-advisedly pitched the ball back to Jorge DaGraca, who somehow managed to corral the toss, then sprint down the sidelines 52 yards to paydirt.

"Sean does that a lot," said Gorham. "When you get hit, you can't make that pitch. But we got lucky. The ball bounced up for Jorge, and he's a helluva player."

Blair's third touchdown made it 33-0 with 4:55 still left to play in the half, but the Falcons finally got on the scoreboard on the second play of their ensuing drive when Andrew Luna broke through a hole and ran 57 yards for a TD. EP quickly countered, however, when Arlan connected with Matt Phillips on a 65-yard scoring hook-up. And after Steve Lawrence picked off an Allen pass, Gorham unloaded his bench and second-string QB Justin Mooney took a knee to mercifully bring the game to halftime.

It seemed like the final 24 minutes would be little more than garbage time (even though EP surprisingly tried a fake punt play on its first possession), but the Falcons kept their first string in the game, got a 42-yard TD run from Chris Mallard, then tried an on-side kick (unsuccessfully) to indicate that they felt they still were in the game.

That prompted Gorham to insert his first unit offense back in the game, and Arlan & Co. marched 54 yards down the field in seven plays, capped by Blair's fourth scoring run (a 16-yarder) to cap their scoring for the night.



"We wanted to play more kids, but they kept on-side kicking it," said Gorham. "They kept their first unit in to score a touchdown, then he on-side kicks it again. It's disappointing because I couldn't get all the kids enough playing time." Even though the Falcons did manage another score (Kyle Vechiarino's 23-yard run) and did, indeed, try another on-side kick, Gorham kept his second squad in the game the rest of the way. Blair wound up with 140 yards rushing on just 14 carries and scored four times. Arlan rushed for 109 yards (including a 72-yard scoring romp) and threw for 101 more. Arlan, Lawrence and Tony Couitt had the interceptions for EP, which is now 3-0 overall and 2-0 in Division 1 and hosts West Warwick High on Friday at 7 p.m.

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