

H.S. Football: Highland tops Tallmadge 28-7

[John Urchek](#)

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GRANGER TWP. — Friday night was all about earning its stripes for the Highland football team as it topped Tallmadge 28-7 in a Suburban League American Conference contest.

First, there was senior wide receiver Johnny Siliko, who scored his first touchdown of the season to earn a black stripe that the Hornets award to players for special achievements.

“I wanted to score and got my chance for it,” he said. “I reached out for it. I was obviously excited to score my first one of the year. It was definitely nice doing that and hopefully there’s more. Most important, it was definitely nice getting the win.”

Then there was the Hornets defense, which earned more than a few stripes in a redemptive performance in the team’s second home game of the season.

Highland opened the season by giving up an uncharacteristic 35 points to Hudson in its only loss. Since then, the Hornets have allowed only 42 points during a four-game winning streak.

Highland held the Blue Devils to just 217 yards, 33 on the ground, and prevented Tallmadge from scoring until the fourth quarter.

“After Week 1, we needed a dub on our home field,” cornerback Matt Ciryak said. “It feels great to come back to our community, being home and getting a win for everyone. After (Hudson), we’ve really had a drive for everything, especially defensively. Giving up that many points is not us and we had to come back and do something about it.”

Senior quarterback Peyton Janickas caught fire in the first half and led the team in rushing with 79 yards on eight carries and a 15-yard touchdown on an option keeper with 11:05 left in the first half. He also completed eight of his first 10 passes for 106 yards and the 43-yard touchdown pass to Siliko with 6:55 left in the first half.

His 11th pass came on fourth-and-12 from the Tallmadge 21-yard line with 11 seconds left in the half. Janickas tried to connect with Ciryak but was intercepted by Constantine Detorakis to end the half.

Janickas finished with 87 rushing yards on 12 attempts and was 9-for-14 through the air for 108 yards.

“I thought he did a phenomenal job,” Siliko said. “There were some plays, but he really came back and did a really good job. He ran the ball really well, ran through some kids. It was nice seeing him do that.”

Five of Janickas's completions went to Siliko, who led all receivers with 85 yards. It was a connection that the pair worked on this week in practice.

“I told him before the game, I’m getting him a touchdown tonight,” Janickas said. “We connected on that pass. It was amazing.

“We’ve been putting in a lot of work after practices to get the passing game going, because we started off pretty slow in the beginning of the year.”

Right before Highland’s last drive of the first half, the Hornets made a goal-line stand when they crashed through the line on fourth down to stop Tallmadge fullback Cooper Jones on a dive from the 1-yard line. The stop preserved a 14-0 lead.

“Anytime you can stop a good team like Tallmadge on fourth down, it’s a game changer,” Ciryak said. “That’s what we did.”

Ciryak added his first interception of the season when he picked off Tallmadge quarterback Ryan Loveless (19-34, 182 yards) midway through the third quarter. That set up running back Casey Myser's 3-yard TD for a 21-0 lead.

After Tallmadge scored on a 14-yard run by Brayndon Sturm, Myser (18 carries, 113 yards) scored again from 25 yards on a three-play drive. The previous plays were 13- and 30-yard runs by Evan Grant (5, 57).

Behind Carson Noonan, Brodie Davis, Ben Coyne, Brady Bendau and Ben Fearn, Highland rushed for 293 yards on 41 carries.

“This entire game we’ve got to owe to our offensive line,” Janickas said. “I had all day to throw the ball and we were running all over them. The line was doing everything right. The line was stellar tonight.”

The run by Sturm was the longest of the night for the Blue Devils and it was intended to be a swing pass, but traveled backward. No one else for Tallmadge had more than 8 rushing yards.

Contact John Urchek at jurchek@medina-gazette.com.

Highland 28, Tallmadge 7

TALLMADGE 0 0 0 7 — 7

HIGHLAND 0 14 7 7 — 28

Second

H — Peyton Janickas 15 run (Carson Kwiatkowski kick), 11:05.

H — Johnny Siliko 43 pass from Janickas (Kwiatkowski kick), 6:55.

Third

H — Casey Myser 3 run (Kwiatkowski kick), 2:41.

Fourth

T — Braydon Sturm 14 run (Cameron Carvaines kick), 9:57.

H — Myser 25 run (Kwiatkowski kick), 8:56.

T H

First downs 14 21

Rushing 22/33 41/293

Rushing average 1.5 7.1

Passing 19/34 9/14

Passing yards 184 108

Total offense 56/217 55/401

Punting 5/35.2 2/37.5

Penalties 4/25 4/35

Fumbles 0/0 0/0

RUSHING: Tallmadge — Sturm 1-14, Noah Robinson 3-8, Ricky Maclean 9-8, Ryan Loveless 5-4, Tracey Franklin 2-0, Cooper Jones 1-(-1), Team 1-0. Highland — Myser 18-113, Jankickas 12-87, Evan Grant 5-57, Matt Ciryak 2-32, Siliko 1-4, Tommy Turk 1-0, Team 3-0.

PASSING: Tallmadge — Loveless 19-34-184-1. Highland — Janickas 9-14-108-1.

RECEIVING: Tallmadge — Constantine Detorakis 7-73, Caleb Reifsnyder 2-47, Robinson 3-30, Sturm 4-22, Zach Vanko 3-12. Highland — Siliko 5-85, Turk 2-16, Myser 2-7.

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