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North Stars jump out to first 2-0 start

ST. CHARLES – Stringing together playoff berths builds only so much momentum. The St. Charles North football team would rather roll off a lengthy winning streak.

Two games officially clinches that feat, and the pair the North Stars have collected to begin the season puts them in elite company. Players smirked and slapped each other on the shoulder pads as Friday's 34-13 victory against McHenry wound down, sweating until they could officially boast the first 2-0 start in school history.

A giddy public address announcer informed anyone in the crowd that didn't know.

"Everybody's excited as can be about this season," senior defensive Conner Mohs said, "and we haven't always had that around here.

"Even during the past couple years, you could tell there was some dragging. Now, everyone can't wait to come to practice because we want to make more history."

The North Stars and Warriors (0-2) did their share of sloshing through a game that featured 24 penalties for 192 yards and started about 30 minutes after the scheduled kickoff.

North offensive linemen false-started on the unit's first two snaps, providing a sign of things to come. Though McHenry aided the hosts' opening drive with separate flags for running into the kicker and pass interference, the North Stars found their stride without the help of any flags.

Quarterback du jour Jake Bergren – one of three North signal-callers to see significant time Friday – capped the team's second drive with a 3-yard scoring run with 44 seconds to go in the first quarter.

As Warriors quarterback Thomas Rose worked to establish a rhythm with his receivers, North went up, 14-0, the next time it got the ball. With injured senior tailback Jordan Huxtable (ankle) watching from the sidelines, junior Ben Hodges scored on a 29-yard run early in the second quarter.

McHenry challenged North for the only time with 3:03 remaining in the second quarter, scoring on a 7-yard pass from Rose to Trevor Marunde after Jake Howe recovered a North Stars fumble.

"We felt like we had them against a corner there and could have built on that going into the half," Warriors coach Tim Beagle said. "But then you saw what happened."

North needed just 26 seconds to respond. Two plays after Mohs' 30-yard kickoff return, Bergren found Jeff Stolzenburg for a 40-yard touchdown on a fluky fade route. McHenry defensive back Anthony Orlando got crossed up just as Stolzenburg was tipping the ball to himself.

The North Stars built a 34-6 lead with 1:34 remaining in the third quarter, but the Warriors had become pass-happy by then. Making his second career start, Rose finished 28-for-41 for 255 yards, one touchdown and three interceptions.

North coach Mark Gould said he planned to decide on a quarterback by next week's Upstate Eight Conference opener at East Aurora. Bergren played the first half while Matt Shiltz (third quarter) and Connor McShane (fourth) followed.

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