

Sports



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Photos by Brad O'Neil

A special teams recovery of a loose ball by Forest Lake's Derrick Cardinal led to a rush touchdown by running back Grant Yearling early in the second quarter. The Rangers held the lead for most of the game following this sequence of events, but they were hit by a late touchdown and lost to Park 14-12.

Homecoming heartbreak: Rangers fall to late Park TD, 14-12

Brad O'Neil
Sports Editor

The Forest Lake football team felt a homecoming night victory slip through its fingers after Park receiver Kaden Johnson's fingertips pulled in an overthrown ball on a fourth-and-9 play late in the game, setting the stage for a 14-12 win for his Wolfpack team that pushed the Rangers' record to 1-4 on the year.

The game-winning score came with 7:09 showing on the fourth-quarter clock, so it was not immediately fatal to the Rangers' hopes. However, it was a major momentum swing that occurred after the Rangers had stood up running back Carson Kons for a 3-yard loss, forcing Park to burn a timeout to figure out a fourth-and-long plan. The Wolfpack went for it all, sending Johnson on a sprint to the corner while quarterback Jake Kuemmel let fly. The pass

was well out in front of its intended target, but Johnson hauled it in on the run with fully extended arms and a slight bobble before falling to the ground with the ball secured.

The touchdown and the ensuing kick pushed the Wolfpack ahead by the eventual final score, 14-12. The Rangers had plenty of time to strike back but wasted some of it after fumbling on first down following the score. The Rangers kept the Wolfpack in check and forced a punt on the following drive, but they found themselves starting from their own 4 with less than three minutes to play. A fourth-down link-up between Ranger quarterback Colton Trapp and running back Troy Pleski brought the ball as far as the Ranger 38, but the drive stalled after that, confirming the loss.

Second best

Park scored first as

well as last in the game, opening the scoring with a 48-yard touchdown run by Christopher Brewer. The Rangers responded quickly — such as it were — with a 12-play dink-and-dunk drive that covered 66 yards and carried over into the second quarter before Grant Yearling scored on a pitch play.

The Rangers missed the point after, leaving them down 7-6, but then pulled off what might be called an "accidental on-side kick." Josh Schlichting's kickoff went deep and angled sharply toward the sideline. The Park return man let the ball skip off the turf in the hope that it go out of bounds for an illegal procedure penalty that would give his team the ball in an advanced position. Instead, the ball took a strange bounce and stayed in the field of play. By the time the returner went for the ball, two Ranger gunners were

diving in with him, and Forest Lake's Derrick Cardinal was holding the ball when the pile was peeled back.

Cardinal's recovery set the Rangers up at the 16. Trapp passed to Quentin Evans for 8 yards and then scrambled for 7. A bobbled snap pushed the Rangers back to the 3, but that wasn't enough to prevent Yearling from collecting his second touchdown of the quarter.

The Rangers went for two, but Trapp was stopped short on a wide bootleg run — a Park stop that would prove absolutely vital, given the eventual final.

Pleski led the Rangers with 59 rushing yards, while Yearling picked up 49. Among the leading tacklers were Schlichting (5.5) Logan Swanson (4.5), Austin Nelson (4.5) and Gabe Brisbois (4).

The Rangers will try to get back in the win column when they visit



Photo by Hannah Davis

Forest Lake quarterback Colton Trapp gets off a pass to Quentin Evans despite absorbing a hit from Park's Max Giannini.

Irondale Friday at 7 p.m. having fallen to Coon The Knights are 2-3 on Rapids 38-0 and Robbin- sdale Armstrong 44-7 in two-game losing streak, recent showings.



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Left: Ranger Stadium was packed for the homecoming game on Sept. 27. Right: Head coach Sam Ferraro, a Forest Lake alum, lost his old Ranger memorabilia in a house fire eight years ago. Jill Green of Lakes Area TV, pictured with Ferraro, teamed up with the Ranger booster club to fund the purchase of a replacement class of 1990 letter jacket with Ferraro's football, hockey and track patches, and presented the new jacket to him in his classroom at the high school the morning of the homecoming game.

SPORTS GALLERY Homecoming Huskies will Dig Pink on Friday



Photos by Brad O'Neil

Junior Emma Crandell launches her serve.

This week's Sports Gallery provides your first look at the 2019 North Lakes Academy volleyball team. Photos are from a three-set defeat at the hands of Legacy Christian Academy on Sept. 17.

Since NLA does not have a football team, the volleyball squad traditionally hosts the homecoming game. The 2019 event is this Friday at 7:15 p.m. Math and Science Academy will provide the opposition.

The other big game on NLA's annual schedule has



Senior Jaedyn Thoma leans back to go on the attack.

been the Dig Pink fundraiser game, through which the Huskies raise money for the Side-Out Foundation supporting breast cancer awareness and research.

This year, the two events are combined into one: Friday's homecoming game is also Dig Pink Night. Fans can expect to see plenty of pink in the Husky Den and will have the opportunity to contribute to the effort through donations or purchases of food and other items throughout the game.



Junior Anna Povolny bumps the ball to pass to a teammate.