

Bulldogs get out early, never look back

By Ross Maghielse

Journal Register News Service

There was a college-like atmosphere on hand at Barnabo Stadium Saturday afternoon,

Romeo 38
Clarkston 7

as a capacity crowd filed in to

watch the Romeo Bulldogs take on the Clarkston Wolves in a Division 1 pre-district football game.

The Bulldogs were able to match the energy of their fans and came away with a decisive 38-7 victory.

Leading the charge for Romeo was halfback Ben Brown, who totaled 223 yards and two touchdowns on 21 carries.

"I just kept my legs moving," Brown said. "I tried to read off of my offensive line, the guys did a great job opening things up for me."

The Bulldogs dominated both sides of the ball in the first half, and held a commanding 31-0 lead after two

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quarters. Clarkston's offense was held to a total of 87 yards in the first half, while Romeo piled up 386 yards offensively.

"All year, our mindset has been to focus on us and what we do well, and not worry about who we're playing," Romeo co-head coach Curt Rienas said.

Clarkston tried to spark its offense using an aggressive passing attack early on. However, the Wolves couldn't find any rhythm through the air, and quarterback

Tyler Scarlett finished the day completing 7 of 27 passes for 67 yards.

Ricky Roth also had a big game for Romeo at quarterback. Roth, who was dealing with an arm injury all week, completed 18 of 26 passes for 248 yards and three touchdowns.

"He's such a fierce competitor, there was no way anybody could have stopped him from playing today" Rienas said.

Romeo (8-2 overall) took a 14-0 lead after the first quarter with two scores coming in the final

minutes. The Bulldogs struck first with a 35-yard touchdown pass from Roth to Tyler Brynaert (five catches, 77 yards) with 3:17 remaining, and then scored again with 47 seconds left on a 33-yard run from Brown.

Three more scores were put on the board by Romeo in the second quarter, including another run from Brown, and another touchdown pass from Roth to Brynaert. The last touchdown came with 53 seconds left in the half, on a 17-yard pass to Jason Schirmer, who had a total of

eight catches for 100 yards.

With Romeo leading 38-0, Clarkston (6-4) finally broke up the shutout with 10:53 remaining in the fourth quarter. Scarlett ran 13 yards into the end zone, giving Clarkston its only score of the day.

This was the first playoff win in the five years Rienas and fellow co-coach Jason Couch have worked together.

"It feels good to get that weight off our shoulders," Couch said. "I brought in an empty trophy case to the locker room today, and we're going to have everybody sign the game ball and put it on

display."

Romeo travels to Lake Orion Friday night for a chance at a district championship. The Dragons have knocked the Bulldogs out of the playoffs two of the last three seasons, including a 24-21 win in the first round last season.

"We're starting to form our own little rivalry with them, because we've run into each other a few times in the playoffs," Rienas said. "We're looking forward to a rematch."

Mark Bacci and John Bacci (sack) each had seven tackles for Romeo.