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Eagles In A Hole

Chances Dimmer After 28-14 Loss

MATTHEW STOSS, Daily News-Record

HAMPDEN-SYDNEY - The Bridgewater College football team put itself in position to win its Old Dominion Athletic Conference opener at Hampden-Sydney on Saturday. The Eagles dictated tempo and had the ball for almost 10 minutes more than Sydney, thus keeping the Tigers' mega-potent, no-huddle offense where it could do no damage: on the sideline.

But two turnovers undercut BC's best effort and negated a sturdy defensive showing, as the Tigers won 28-14 in front of 7,239 fans to extend their win streak over the Eagles to five games.

"It's definitely frustrating," BC senior wide receiver Julius Delbridge said. "I feel like we still have a good team. Hampden-Sydney's always been a good team. I definitely give it to them overall. Stuff happens. You've got to go on to the next games."

Which are now much more important.

If Bridgewater (3-2 overall, 0-1 in the ODAC) loses another game, its hopes of winning its first conference title since 2005 are likely done. It's the fifth straight season the Eagles have opened conference play with a loss.

"Personally, it's frustrating, but there's still a lot of football left," said BC senior defensive end Dominic Jeter, who had five tackles. "It's not the end of the world. Honestly, it's the start of the season. It's a rough start. No margin for error. Just go out and win out."

The Eagles had opportunities to win Saturday.

With Hampden-Sydney (5-1, 2-0) ahead 7-0, Bridgewater put together a 68-yard drive at the end of the first half but couldn't finish it. Junior quarterback Carlos Gonzalez completed an 11-yard pass to sophomore wide receiver Cliff Woodard, but Woodard fumbled at the goal line, and the Tigers recovered with 33 seconds left in the half.

The Eagles' second turnover came two minutes into the fourth quarter, when Gonzalez, after scrambling to his right, forced a pass along the BC sideline. He threw it into traffic, and H-SC freshman safety John Moore picked it off.

The Tigers scored on the ensuing drive to make it 21-7 with 12:48 to play.

"We left plays on the field. We left points on the field," Gonzalez said. "I felt responsible for that one drive, and they came back and scored points off of my turnover. I tried to make something happen on the scramble drill and couldn't get enough under the ball to lob it over ... and the guy made a play, and they scored off of it."

Said Bridgewater coach Michael Clark: "Our two turnovers were critical. They cost us seven and set them up for seven."

Gonzalez went 21-of-38 for 205 yards with the interception. He also threw a pretty 28-yard pass to Delbridge in the back corner of the end zone midway through the third quarter, but the H-SC defensive back made a great play to break it up, costing Gonzalez a TD pass.

Sydney's star quarterback, Travis Lane, completed 22 of 32 passes for 215 yards and two touchdowns. He had no picks, and the Tigers had no turnovers. Senior running back Kirk Rohle also had a big game, accounting for 181 yards combined rushing and receiving. He scored two touchdowns.

But Bridgewater, for the most part, limited the Tigers' high-powered offense. Only once did H-SC score on a big play - a 51-yard pass from Lane to senior wide receiver Kyle Vance in the third quarter to make it 14-7.

BC scored its first touchdown on a shovel pass from Gonzalez to Delbridge that went for 7 yards to make it 7-7 at the

10:52 mark in the third quarter. The Eagles' second and last touchdown came on a 13-yard run by senior tailback Darrin McKenzie - then wearing No. 26 after his normal No. 8 got ripped in half earlier in the game - to make it 21-14 with 8:05 left.

Bridgewater got the ball back, trailing 28-14, with 2:40 to play but couldn't sustain what started as a promising drive - although, barring a miracle, the game was over at that point anyway. Gonzalez drove the Eagles from their 20-yard line to the H-SC 43 but couldn't complete a pass on fourth-and-5. That ended the game.

Also contributing to the Eagles' woes were a stuffed run on a fourth-and-1 from the Sydney 27 with 8:47 left in the second quarter and a missed 24-yard field goal at the 3:02 mark in the third.

"It's not a game of statistics. It's a game of points," said Clark, whose team had 415 yards of total offense, including a 47-yard run by Tyler Staton on a fake punt. "But, as I mentioned, we left cards on the table. ... You're on the road and you're playing a team that's won as much as Hampden-Sydney has, and when you get a chance to do something to make the scoreboard change, you better do it."

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