

NOV. 27, 2008

COMPLETION OF 10-0 SEASON

Game Report by Ed "Huck" Palmer

Malvern 34, SJ Prep 27

Last season, the Friars came into this Turkey Day game with an identical (9-0) record as this year's version. But last year the Hawks had their way with the Friars and headed to the post-game feast with a convincing 33-6 victory to ruin the Friars hopes of a perfect season. Today, it appeared very much so that we were in for more of the same. With 7:12 left in the second quarter, sr. QB **Mark Giubilato** took a keeper around the left end for a 17-yard touchdown, giving the Hawks a commanding 21-0 lead. Sr. OG **Mike Pinciotti** (6'3", 292 lbs), looking like a guy going after the last drumstick on grandma's dinner table, provided a devastating block in assisting Giubilato. This child abuse moment was a microcosm of how the game had gone to this point, as the Hawks were just having their way with the Friars. However, things would begin to change in favor of Malvern soon after, and before long they would be the ones sitting at the head of table. Hey, any time you can comeback from a 21-point deficit against a team of SJP's caliber, then there has to be a crucial, game-turning moment, right? You betcha! After the Hawks' third score, their defense forced a three-and-out and a punt. On the next play, SJP sr. RB/DB **Mike Yeager** took a handoff 60 yards to the Malvern 23-yard line. He was thrown out of bounds by Malvern sr. DB/RB **Neil Willis** in a rough manner. No flag was thrown (I'm not sure one was warranted), but afterwards Yeager was hit for a personal foul. I'm not positive if it was retaliatory or merely jawing at the official. Anyhow, this pushed the ball back to the 38-yard line. They still had a first-and-ten, but disaster struck with a fumble on the next play. Mammoth sr. DT **Sean Ferguson** (6'4", 340 lbs) did the forcing, while jr. DT **Joe DiTrolio** made the recovery. This was the second time that the Hawks turned the ball over right after a huge play. Earlier, sr. LB **Mike Pereira** returned an interception 56 yards to the Malvern 26-yard line. On the next play, sr. QB/DB **Billy Conners** made a pick at his 5 on a pass that was under thrown. After the fumble, Malvern would finally ignite the scoreboard, but they needed a gigantic play from Conners to do so. And as it turns out, this would be the first of many great plays by the scrappy, but athletic Conners in the game. Faced with a fourth-and-5, Conners sprinted to his left with the option to throw, but instead, held on to the ball and nicely cutback to his right at about the twenty. From here he easily found the end zone for a 34-yard score with 3:15 left in the half. You got the sense at this moment that the Friars weren't going to go away. It remained 21-7 Hawks into the third quarter. To begin the second half the Friars built upon the momentum they captured near the end of the opening half. It took them just a 1:40 to draw within 21-14 on a 17-yard pass from Conners to sr. TE/DE **CJ Mooney**. The score was set-up by a 35-yard run by sr. RB **James Connelly**. SJP's first series of the second half ended with another interception by Conners in the left flat. The ball was tipped by Mooney near the line scrimmage and deflected to Conners. Four plays later we had a tie ballgame, as Conners beautifully lofted a pass to the right flag to impressive sr. WR/DB **Joe Price** for a 40-yard strike. Earlier in the game the sure-handed Price had a ball slide off his fingertips that would have been a sure touchdown. This play gave him a little redemption, but he was far from finished in the redeeming area. Early in the fourth quarter, Malvern was faced with a third-and-six from their twenty-nine. The call was a simple hitch to Price to the left. He made the catch about yard pass the marker, but after the lone SJP defender failed on a tackle attempt it was clear sailing. Yes, 71 yards to paydirt! The point-after failed, but Malvern had just scored their 27th straight point to take the lead. Refusing to put their tails between their legs, or should I say have their wings clipped, the Hawks soared back. Their subsequent drive covered 76 yards on 12 plays. Yeager, playing the role of the workhorse, carried eight times for 50 yards on the drive, including a 15-yard capper. The Hawks also failed on the point-after and the tilt was tied with 5:48 left. Malvern's game-winning possession began at their 27-yard line. Showing a ton of poise, Conners calmly orchestrated his crew. Twice he converted third down chances. First, he connected for 14 yards to Price. Then, he used a sneak to gain two yards. The game-clinching play came via another Conners-to-Price hook-up. It covered 27 yards and came with 37.1 seconds left. To be honest with you, but the score was way too easy. How the Hawks allowed a player of Price's talents to get that much space was inexcusable. Afterwards, the Hawks had one last-ditch effort beginning at their 34-yard line. They reached Malvern's 49-yard line with 7 ticks left, but a final play, a screen to Yeager, netted just 8 yards. The unassuming, but effective Conners was brilliant, like he's been all year. He finished 15-for-23, for 268 yards. Included in this was an 8-for-8, 187-yard performance over the final 24 minutes.

He accounted for all five Malvern scores with 4 passes and one rush. He also added 42 yards on 8 carries. Price (7-172) was held to just one snag for seven yards in the first half, but exploded for 6 catches for 165 yards. What a terrific player! For those of you who haven't seen him I'd say he's in the mold of former Wood great **Chirs Lorditch**, but probably is a little stronger than Lorditch was at this stage. Connelly (13-87) and Willis (11-42, 78 yards on 5 returns) were the primary rushers for the Friars. Sr. WB **Rob McCabe** made 5 catches for 64 yards. All total, the Friars posted 440 yards of offense. Great job by the guys in the trenches! Leading the way were: sr. C **Matt Devlin**, G's sr. **Mike McCorkle** and Ditroilio, T's sr. **Bobby Panchisin** (6'2", 280 lbs) and sr. **Dave Umile**, and Mooney (6'4", 235 lbs) at tight end. On defense, Mooney (sack, 7 tackles), sr. DB **Tom Keefer** (seven, 6 solos), McCorkle (seven, 6 solos), DiTrolio (7 tackles), Ferguson (five), and Willis (five) were headliners. For the Prep, Yeager played extremely well with 193 yards on 28 carries and 2 TD's (Also, 7-yarder). He also added 70 yards on 4 returns. Giubilato had 154 yards of passing (4-for-14, 62 yards) and rushing (11-92). His best toss of the game came on a 34-yard touchdown to sr. WR **Dan Turner**. The Hawks also eclipsed the 400-yard plateau in the game with 407 total yards. If I had a complaint with the Hawks' offense it was that, in my opinion, they put the ball in the air 6-to-8 too many times. I believe that the power attack, with a few more Giubilato keepers, could have been more of an effective path. Defensively, jr. FB **Stephen O'Hara** (6 tackles) forced a fumble, recovery by jr. DE **Bill Mancini**. Yeager and sr. DB **Dan Casey** each made seven tackles, with many of them being tag-team efforts. Jr. RB/LB **Garrett Compton** was next with 5 tackles. For the game, the teams combined for 847 yards of offense and 1,106 yards, counting returns. It remains to be seen if this will be the last hurrah for Malvern's legendary Head Coach **Gamp Pellegrini**. He was non-committal to yours truly afterwards on that issue. Either way he's had a tremendous career, and arguably this year's team was his finest ever. For the Hawks, it was a season of near misses. Their four losses all came to excellent teams and for the most part they were in all of these games, but only to come up just short in each. Many quality seniors graduate on both clubs, so next season should be interesting to see who can reload the quickest.

**Gamp's Record
Year by Year
Overall**

St. Thomas More

1967	4	6	0
1968	3	6	0
1969	2	8	0
Totals: 9-20-0			

St. Joseph's Prep

1970	6	4	0
1971	8	3	0
1972	3	7	0
1973	5	6	0
1974	7	4	0
1975	7	4	1
1976	4	7	0
1977	*10	3	0
Totals: 50-38-1			

Malvern Prep

1978	*8	2	0
1979	*8	1	0
1980	*10	0	0
1981	5	4	0

1982	4	3	2
1983	7	3	0
1984	*8	2	0
1985	#8	1	1
1986	*9	1	0
1987	*9	1	0
1988	6	2	2
1989	*5	4	1
1990	2	8	0
1991	*6	4	1
1992	5	6	0
1993	4	7	0
1994	*7	3	1
1995	*10	0	0
1996	#6	4	0
1997	*9	2	0
1998	4	6	0
1999	#9	1	0
2000	*6	4	0
2001	*9	0	0
2002	7	3	0
2003	#8	2	0
2004	3	8	0
2005	*10	1	0
2006	8	2	0
2007	*9	1	0
2008	*10	0	0

Totals: 219-86-8
Overall: 278-144-9
*-Outright Title
#-Shared Title

**Gamp's Record
Year by Year
League**

St. Thomas More

1967	2	5	0
1968	2	5	0
1969	1	7	0
Totals:	5	17	0

St. Joseph's Prep

1970	4	4	0
1971	6	1	0

1972	2	5	0
1973	4	3	0
1974	5	2	0
1975	5	2	0
1976	3	4	0
1977	7	0	0
Totals: 36-21-0			

Malvern Prep

1978	4	0	0
1979	4	0	0
1980	4	0	0
1981	-	-	-
1982	2	1	1
1983	1	3	0
1984	4	0	0
1985	3	0	1
1986	4	0	0
1987	4	0	0
1988	2	1	1
1989	3	0	1
1990	0	4	0
1991	3	0	1
1992	1	3	0
1993	2	2	0
1994	4	0	0
1995	4	0	0
1996	3	1	0
1997	4	0	0
1998	2	2	0
1999	3	1	0
2000	4	0	0
2001	4	0	0
2002	3	1	0
2003	3	1	0
2004	1	3	0
2005	4	0	0
2006	4	1	0
2007	5	0	0
2008	5	0	0

Totals: 97-25-5

Overall: 138-63-5