

Lions rally to knock off Canby

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After a first half where it seemed like West Linn had no answer for Canby's offense, the Lions shut out the Cougars in the third and fourth quarter to rally for a 31-27 win on Friday.

Last year West Linn lost by one point to Canby in a season plagued by special team's miscues. But this year, special teams plays were one of its keys to a victory over the Cougars.

Canby scored quickly, getting a 31-yard catch from Andrew Welch to set up Brady Thompson's three-yard scoring run.

The Lions would answer immediately when Mason Finnerty returned the next kick-off 88 yards for a score.

Canby nearly did the same thing on the ensuing kickoff with Stephen Doman returning the ball down to the five-yard line, leading to a one-yard touchdown by Noah Able.

Again West Linn answered. A 37-yard run from Finnerty got the Lions into the red zone and he would finish the drive with a nine-yard score, knotting the game at 14.

Canby got good field positioning again on its next drive after a personal foul on the Lions and Thompson would find the end zone again, this time from one yard out.

The Cougars then recovered an onsidies kick but penalties hindered that drive.

Late in the half, quarterback Evan Sanders hit Andrew Evans down the sideline for a 53-yard touchdown that put the Cougars firmly in control. The extra point was missed making it 27-14 at the half.

Canby started the third quarter with the ball and looked to tighten the screws on the Lions but it was West Linn that came up with a game-changing play.

Elijah Eaton picked off Sanders and returned the ball 25 yards for a touchdown.

West Linn's defense then forced the Cougars to punt and, four plays later, Rhett Olmstead scored on a 23-yard jaunt. Ryan Harman's extra point gave West Linn its first lead of the evening.

The teams then traded stops defensively until the Lions were pinned back at their four-yard line late in the third quarter. West Linn steadily moved down the field, converting on a pair of fourth-and-inches plays with quarterback sneaks.

The Lions were finally stopped on Canby's 25-yard line but Harman came in and booted a 42-yard field goal to up the lead to 31-27. The drive lasted 20 plays and took more than 10 minutes off the clock.

Canby took over with 3:20 to play at its own 22-yard line. The Cougars moved into West Linn territory but an offensive pass interference call set them back.

With less than a minute to play Sanders threw deep down the sideline again but Olmstead came up with a juggling interception to seal the game for the Lions.

West Linn travels to Oregon City next week while Canby will play at Lake Oswego.