



Friday, November 23, 2018 @US Bank Stadium...

Trojans Battle To Very End In State Title Game



With a few forced smiles, the Trojan football team poses with the State Class AA second place plaque. The Trojan faced the Caledonia Warriors at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis on Friday, November 23.

By: Tracy Hinsz

This team had been through this scenario for four straight weeks as the underdog to a more powerful or experienced team. It was once again billed as a David vs Goliath showdown.

Much like the week before in the semi-finals of the state football playoffs, the Trojans were given very little chance to win by anyone outside of their coaches, their players and their fans.

But, heart and preparation can change a lot of things and that is what this 2018 Barnesville Trojan football team was all about - Heart and Preparation!

The Trojans were facing a Caledonia Warriors team that has the longest winning streak in the United States in high school football and had won the last three state titles and eight out of the last 10. They are a dynasty! But everyone knows that dynasties will one day come to an end and the Trojan football team firmly believed that this was going to be that day.

A defensive showcase by both teams was put on display from the opening kickoff. Caledonia quickly found out that Barnesville was not going to be a push over. The Warriors had to fight for every inch to net a first down. Nothing was coming easy.

The Warriors opened up the game with the ball on their 44 yard line. They would use 13 plays netting a few first downs, before turning the ball over on downs to the Trojans at the eight yard line as Barnesville came up with a fantastic fourth down stop by linebacker Hunter Anderson.

Caledonia went to their whole playbook on the drive, but the Trojans would stand tall. A bend but don't break defensive stand.

As good as the Trojan defense was on their first series, the Warriors proved to be even better, as they held the Trojans to no yards on three carries, forcing a short punt and taking over the ball on the Trojans 25 yard line.

However, Barnesville's defense was up to the challenge as well, forcing another fourth down and

getting the ball back after Chase Brenner broke up a pass play in the end zone.

The Trojans would quickly net a first down after a short run by Brenner, ending the first quarter with the score tied at zero.

Barnesville started to move the ball, netting another first down and had a third and one play at the Warriors 48 yard line before a false start penalty backed the Trojans up five yards. The next play would be snuffed out by Caledonia forcing a Trojans punt with the Warriors taking over on their 29 yard line.

The Warriors went for a big play on first down and completed a pass, moving the ball into Trojan territory at the 37. After a pass play moved the ball to the 22 yard line, the Trojans defense would come up big again as linebacker, Preston Snobl intercepted a pass from Noah King, returning the ball back to the 22 yard line. Barnesville's defense was proving to be no slouch with their third stop of the game to get the ball back to the offense.

Caledonia's offense might not be as strong as it has been in year's past, but their defense was still as dominant as before, forcing the Trojan offense to fight for every yard they could get.

A Trojan miscue on second down saw the ball come loose with the Warriors the recipient of the recovery at the Trojan 23 yard line. Barnesville would quickly force a third down and long play with the Warriors running a pitch to running back Nick McCabe to the wide side of the field. He would find a seam and race to the end zone for a 22 yard touchdown run. The extra point by Ryan Wagner was good giving the Warriors a 7-0 lead with four minutes and 53 seconds remaining in the second quarter.

The Trojans knew that in order to win this game, they had to secure the ball and limit penalties. Both categories would hurt Barnesville in the first half and late in the game.

The offense started the next series at their 31 yard line and quickly rattled off a 15 yard run by

quarterback Adam Tonsfeldt. The Trojans were sitting at the Warrior's 49 yard line, facing a third and five play, when running back Nick Detloff broke off an 11 yard run. However, Barnesville was called for an illegal shift penalty to negate the first down. Barnesville's third down running play was snuffed out forcing another punt after a promising start.

The Trojans had a golden opportunity as Snobl's punt was muffed at the 30 yard line with a Barnesville player close to the ball, but he was not able to secure it as the Warriors picked it up and ramblled to the 37.

The defense came up with a great defensive play as Hunter Zenzen knocked away a pass intended for a Warriors receiver down the right sideline on second down, before the Trojans forced another punt with a defensive stop on third down.

But the Trojans would fumble the ball on their first carry on offense with Caledonia recovering at the 22 yard line late in the first half. Barnesville's defense had to make a stop or the game would get out of hand.

Things did not look good as a second down run by King put the ball at the Trojans four yard line with 50 seconds to play in the half. But Barnesville would get a break as the shot gun snap by Caledonia was low and went through the legs of King. A scramble ensued with Anderson taking King out of the play and Zenzen cleaning up the fumble with a recovery at the 26 yard line. The Trojans would run two plays before the clock wound down, sending both teams into halftime with Caledonia leading 7-0.

Barnesville's defense was fantastic in the first half as they forced two fourth down stops, intercepted a pass and recovered a fumble. Take away the one rushing touchdown, and the Trojans had kept Goliath at bay.

However, the Warriors defense was equally as good if not better in the first half as they forced a pair of fumbles and a handful of punts. They were controlling the line of scrimmage and not allowing the Trojan's running game to get any opportunity as Snobl's punt was muffed at the 30 yard line with a Barnesville player close to the ball, but he was not able to secure it as the Warriors picked it up and ramblled to the 37.

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Quarterback Adam Tonsfeldt #5 hands the ball to Chase Brenner #30 while teammates Nick Detloff #43, Kellen Hinsz #10 and Jackson Poepping #53 block out the Warrior defense.

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Barnesville would open the second half with the ball. A promising start saw the Trojans face a third and one play at the 44 yard line, but Caledonia would blow the play up for a loss and force a punt. The Warriors would muff another punt, but the ball would bounce right back to them as they took over on the 29 yard line.

The Trojan defense was once again up to the task as a chop block penalty moved Caledonia deep into their own territory.

Facing a third and 16 play, the Warriors competed a bubble screen pass that looked to gain yardage. But safety Kellen Hinsz came flying up to make a hard tackle while the pursuit of linebacker, Zenzen brought down the receiver four yards short of a first down, forcing another punt.

The Trojans defense was playing outstanding football. They played fast, physical and were not intimidated by anything Caledonia

was throwing at them.

Barnesville would take over at the 32 yard line and the first play from scrimmage saw Detloff rip off a run of 19 yards, moving the ball into Caledonia territory.

After a penalty brought back an eight yard run, Tonsfeldt would play Houdini on his next carry as he made four or five Warrior players miss tackles on his 29 yard scamper that took the ball down to the 25 yard line.

Caledonia would force a fourth down play and the Trojans looked to have something big happen, but Tonsfeldt's pass found two Trojans in the same area and neither player could corral the ball turning it over on downs and negating Barnesville's best scoring chance of the game.

The Trojans defense would stay rock solid as nose guard Jackson Poepping stuffed a first down run with the Warriors being penalized with illegal touching, loss of down on their next play. The third down play was stopped as Hinsz and Brenner made the tackle short of the first down to force another punt.

Barnesville looked to have great field position again as Brenner returned the punt to the Warrior 49 yard line, but another penalty would back the Trojans up.

Tonsfeldt would get the first two carries with Anderson netting the first down run to move the ball to the 46 yard line. Hinsz would take the next carry for a 10 yard gain to move the chains again.

Detloff would take the next carry for a five yard gain with Tonsfeldt adding a nine yard run and a Trojan first down at the Warriors 30 yard line as the third quarter came to a close. David was going to the fourth quarter trailing Goliath by a score

of 7-0 with the ball deep in their territory. A story book ending was looking possible.

The offense was beginning to move the ball, wearing down the Warriors defense. But, Caledonia would find their second wind and force a fourth down play.

The play called for a pass that looked to have some big play capability.

The Warrior defender, McCabe got a finger on the ball, causing it to change direction slightly, bouncing off the finger tips of Detloff. Detloff almost had another chance at it, but the defender tackled him as the ball fell to the turf incomplete. A great defensive play negated another Trojan rally, keeping them out of the end zone.

Caledonia decided to go to the ground and pound game with McCabe taking the first carry up the middle, breaking three tackles and racing 24 yards to the Trojans 46 before Tonsfeldt made the tackle.

McCabe took the next carry nine yards before breaking through on his third carry for 19 yards to the 19 yard line, before Hinsz made a touchdown saving tackle.

Barnesville's defense was on their heels, somewhat tired, and the Warriors could sense this as they kept pounding the ball with McCabe, who was running through tacklers, netting big yards. Caledonia had finally found something they could be successful with and they kept running the ball between the tackles.

Two plays later the Warriors had another first down, when they decided to change up their play calling. This helped the Trojans as they held them to a short gain on first down and almost caused a big

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Sophomore Joey Mark #81 stops the ball runner from Caledonia as Senior Preston Snobl #2 comes in for the assist.

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