

D.C Defenders Defeat St.Louis BattleHawks 16-9

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By Ricardo Johnson

WASHINGTON--After a costly interception in the first quarter, the D.C Defenders(2-2) came back to beat the BattleHawks(3-1) at home.

The old saying that a great defense and stable run game wins games came to be true as the Defenders ran for a total of 229 yards while the defense allowed zero touchdowns.

The change of pace came with eight minutes left in the first quarter when Defender's QB ,Chandler Jones, threw a pass intended for Pressley, but was picked off by Kenny Robinson. It was Jones' seventh interception this season and would get him benched for quarterback Tyree Jackson

This interception would put the BattleHawks on their own 30-yard line. Jones, Ford and Michael would then rush for a total of 61 yards before being stopped by the Defenders. A costly five yard penalty, followed by two rushes for no gain, would force the BattleHawks to go for a 35 yard field goal attempt to give them the three point lead.

Defenders would end the first quarter with the lead after Jackson connected with Lee for a sharp, nine yard slant touchdown pass. Jackson would miss the extra one-point conversion leaving the score 6-3 .

The BattleHawks would respond on their next drive with a 40-yard field goal by Russolino, tying the game 6-6 and leaving the Defenders with ten minutes left in the first half.

Towards the end of the quarter, the Defender's short passes and long runs would get them to a fourth and five, on their opponents 25-yard line. The Defenders would fail in taking the lead after a 40-yard field goal attempt by Rausa went to the far right.

With 50 seconds left in the first half, Defenders pass rusher Anthony Johnson sacked Ta'amu twice, forcing the BattleHawks to punt the ball leaving the score tied going into the second half.

BattleHawks would start the second half of the game as the sacks would continue. Ta'amu at one point was sacked and fumbled the ball but was able to recover it, forcing the team to punt on their first drive.

Defenders were then able to take advantage as their next drive would result in a 52-yard field goal by Rausa to give them the three point lead.

The following drive would see the BattleHawks fail to tie the game after Russolino missed a 38-yard field goal, his first miss of the day and his first miss all season.

With less than five minutes left in the third quarter, Jackson would throw a 27-yard pass to Cobbs where referees marked him down two yards shy of a touchdown. Unfortunately, the play was called back after a flag against the Defenders was thrown for an ineligible downfield pass. This would result in the Defenders having to go for a 50-yard field goal attempt, which Rausa nailed for the six point lead.

Towards the end of the third quarter/ start of the fourth, BattleHawks receiver, L'Damian Washington caught a beautiful 29-yard pass from Ta'amu, almost completely backwards, that would put them in perfect scoring position. Sadly, after three failed rush attempts, Ta'amu would attempt to rush for one yard for a fourth down conversion, only to be denied.

The Defenders would take up about seven minutes worth of time before punting the ball back to the BlackHawks, giving them around eight minutes to catch up.

All that time did not seem to help the BlackHawks as they would be shut down three times.

While punting the ball back to the Defenders, Defender's linebacker Jameer Thurman would squeeze right through the line and force a block on the kicker allowing teammate Jonathon Celestin to recover the ball and take it as far as St. Louis' four yard line before being stopped. The referress reviewed the tape as St. Louis called a timeout as their kicker needed help off the field.

The BattleHawks were able to prevent a touchdown, but a 22-yard field goal by Rausa would give the defenders a seven point lead.

With a little over three minutes left, the BlackHawks would have the ball one last time as they tried to force a game winning drive. Starting in the shotgun position, Ta'amu would start the drive with a 40-yard bomb to Washington on the outside, his longest pass all game.

With the clock running towards the two minute mark and now on their opponents side of the field, the BattleHawks would try to keep the game alive. Forced to a 4th down conversation, needing just one yard, Jones would fall short, giving the ball back to Defenders.

Defenders would go on to run the clock out to get their third overall win as they stay undefeated at home. The Defenders(3-2) are now set to face the Dallas Renegades(2-3) in DC while the BattleHawks(3-2) head to Florida to face the Tampa Bay Vipers (1-4) next week.