

## **Slow start, turnovers problematic for Dexter in 42-15 loss to Adrian**

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At times, the flashes of offensive brilliance were evident. But not nearly enough.

A Dexter High School aerial attack that accounted for 268 yards finally worked its way into a groove, but not until after it was much too late. Throw in a trio of costly turnovers and the results weren't difficult to figure out.

It's a scenario that Tom Barbieri saw for a second straight week as the Dreadnaughts put themselves in a deep hole early en route to a 42-15 loss to visiting Adrian on Friday night.

Adrian needed less than 10 minutes to put the game out of reach. The Maples scored on their first four possessions, turning two Dexter turnovers into a pair of scoring drives - each of which lasted only two plays.

And by the time the first-quarter clock expired, Dexter (1-2, 0-1 Southeastern Conference) trailed by four touchdowns. (Boxscore)

And when Adrian turned an Alex McMurray interception into a 35-0 lead early in the second quarter - again on a 2-play scoring drive - the Dreadnaughts found themselves in a world of hurt.

"A couple of fumbles, points off turnovers, an interception - it killed us," said McMurray, who threw for 268 yards on 27-of-34 passing. "It killed our spirits for a little bit, but we started coming back a little bit.

"We had our hopes up and we were ready to come back." It never happened.

The Dreadnaughts ended their scoreless drought with 1:10 remaining in the first half when McMurray and Jay Lewis connected on a 16-yard touchdown pass. And when Dexter blocked a late Adrian field goal attempt just before the half, it appeared the Dreadnaughts had something to build off of.

But while the Dexter defense did its job of keeping the Maples out of the end zone through the third quarter, the offense struggled to make a dent in the lead.

And when another crucial mistake - this time a roughing the punter penalty - extended an Adrian drive early in the fourth quarter, the Maples wasted little time in taking advantage. Adrian again needed two plays before quarterback Drew Collins scored for the second time on a 65-yard touchdown run.

Collins covered 147 yards on only nine carries, running for two touchdowns while throwing for two more.

"When you get in a hole, it's hard to come back," Barbieri said. "If we could get a spark to ignite us, we could be good. This is a good team with good kids and we're not that far away from being good."

Despite Dexter's ability to move the ball at times, Barbieri chose to try and control the clock to keep his defense from being on the field continually. The Dreadnaughts, who finished with 304 yards of total offense, reached the end zone with just under 5 minutes to play on a McMurray 5-yard run.

And although the early mistakes ended up proving too much for Dexter to overcome, Barbieri believes good things could be coming. And with an offense that proved it has the weapons to set up scoring chances, the Dreadnaughts know that without turnovers, their chances at success greatly improve.

"You saw us drive down the field and once we get our momentum going, it's pretty hard to stop us," tailback Sequoyah Burke-Combs said. "We've got to come out intense and we just come out wanting to hit (opponents) in the mouth.

"We just have to bring that intensity the whole game and know what we can truly do as a team. We've played two of the best teams in the league (Pioneer and Adrian) and if we take our best moments and our worst moments out of that, we'll be able to come together."