

## Dexter buries Garden City, 43-0, in football opener

*Kaleb Roedel | AnnArbor.com, August 29, 2009 1:21 a.m.*

What was called in as a pass play turned into a analogous scoring run.

With seconds remaining in the first half, and his team leading 22-0, Dexter High School quarterback Alex McMurray scrambled 10 yards up the field before pitching to Sequoyah Burke-Combs, who galloped in a 20-yard touchdown as time expired on the half.

It seems that even a busted plays worked out just perfectly for the Dreadnaughts in a 43-0 win over visiting Garden City Friday night.

"It was good that my fullback (Combs) -- he worked his butt off to get all the way over by me -- screamed my name," said McMurray, a senior. "And I looked over, saw him, and went for it."

Like any head coach, Dexter's Tom Barbieri doesn't like to see broken plays, but he was more than pleased with the outcome this time.

"I said to him (McMurray), 'You be careful,'" Barbieri said. "He said, 'I knew what I was doing, coach.'"

"That was a big momentum play for us," he added.

The Dreadnaughts, in fact, held the momentum from the opening kick. After missing a 33-yard field goal in its opening possession, Dexter quickly took back the ball on a fumble recovery at the 5-minute mark. One play later, Burke-Combs took a handoff 34 yards into the end zone. The point-after was blocked and Dexter was up 6-0 early.

A mere 23 seconds ticked before the Dreadnaughts forced and recovered another fumble. It was clear the rainy weather was affecting the Cougars. Dexter, however, paid no mind to the weather, widening the gap to 14-0 after McMurray snuck in a two-yard touchdown and Travis Chaffee pounded in the two-point conversion.

"I was worried that the elements were going to play into it but they didn't -- the kids overcame," said Barbieri.

Just like the rain, Dexter didn't hold up in the second quarter, orchestrating a 2:12 scoring-drive, capped by a 68-yard touchdown run from McMurray. A two-point pass was added, making it 22-0 at 7:38.

The two teams traded possessions before the Dreadnaughts put their exclamation point on the half - and game - in the second quarter's waning seconds, where McMurray made the most of a broken play, pitching to Burke-Combs for the touchdown.

The second half mirrored the first, with the Dreadnaughts drawing their third fumble recovery of the game five minutes in. This led to McMurray hooking up with Chaffee for a 46-yard touchdown pass, pushing it to 36-0 after Kyle Karagitz's point-after.

On Garden City's ensuing punt, Chaffee took the return 44 yards to the seven-yard line, setting up an end zone trot from Mark Wajda at 3:48. The point-after split the uprights, rounding out Dexter's 43-0 tally.

"We went into the game knowing that we had to do four things," said Barbieri, whose team finished with 404 offensive yards to Garden City's 108. "We had to tackle, we had to block, we had to execute and we had to cut down on mistakes. And I think we did all four of those."

"We wanted to make an impact," said McMurray, who finished with a game-high 158 rushing yards, adding 76 passing yards on 5-for-7 throwing. "Last year, after a 1-8 season and not scoring over 21 points, we knew that we had a lot to overcome."

Putting up 43 [points] meant a lot to this team."

Dexter (1-0) travels to Ann Arbor to take on Pioneer for a SEC showdown at 7 p.m. on Thursday.