Falcons Heading South: Fly Under Radar to Win 2nd Ctiy Title
Oct 28, 2008

With a 3A City Championship at stake and a trip to Moose Jaw for the Provincial 3A Semi Final on Saturday on the line, the #2 Marion Graham Falcons shocked the large crowd at Gordie Howe Bowl with a 23-15 victory over the #1 Centennial Chargers to claim their second consecutive 3A City Championship.

The Falcons flew under the radar of many football prognosticators, even regarded as a third or fourth seed in their own conference at the beginning of the season. Following their city title in 2007, they did lose some talented players to graduation and were thought to be in a rebuilding mode for 2008, but the young Falcons are not being overlooked any longer. The Falcons reclaimed the city crown in a very entertaining down to the wire contest which left the outcome of the game in doubt until the final seconds. It may be the Falcons experience in many close games over the course of the season and their "stick withitness" throughout the year which saw them hold on again in the championship game against the top seeded Charges, a team which had far fewer close contests in the season to help them prepare for the championship moment. The Falcons have made a habit of making the big play at the right time all season, and winning 3 of 4 close contests leading into the title game is proof that poise and patience is a strength of this team.

The Chargers opened the scoring with a great offensive drive which took 7 minutes off the clock and plunged into the endzone for the 7-0 lead. The Falcons used a nice balance of run and pass to match the Charger major and tied the game at 7 with a Matt Kopperud plunge from 4 yards out. A Charger turnover, their first of 6 on the night, led to another major from a nice pass to Joel Cone from Dylan Hart. The Falcons led 14-8 at the half. The third quarter turned out to be quite uneventful on the scoreboard, but several Charger miscues, fumbles and interceptions in the redzone kept them off the board. The Chargers pinned Marion Graham deep in their own end and were starting to win the battle of field position but, 4 major penalties, pass interference, rough play, face masking, and roughing the passer, helped the Falcons move the ball into field goal range. The Falcons were successful and took a 17-8 lead heading into the fourth quarter.

The Chargers remained determined and steadfast and finally in the fourth quarter after the defense had some solid play deep in Falcon territory, used some good field position and mounted a great drive. Solid hitch and hook passes and aggressive run offense helped them cross the line and get within 2 points of the Falcons 17-15 with only 6 minutes remaining in the game. The Falcons offense was held deep in their own territory and the Chargers looked to take the lead, appearing to wear down the Marion Graham defense by moving the ball into the redzone. Another Charger fumble, however, kept Centennial from taking the lead. The Chargers had another opportunity to secure the win with less than a minute remaining and the ball on the Falcon 30, a field goal with the potential to win it. With time winding down, one final hitch pass proved to be fatal, and the Falcon's Cossy Nachilobe stepped in front

of the pass and ran 80 yards for the game clinching score.

It was appropriate to see the Falcon's corner come up with the big play. The diminutive athete, short, lean, shut down corner and return specialist will be known around campus as "Little Big Man" Time after time all season Cossy Nachilobe has made the big play for the Falcons, a punt return touchdown, a kickoff return deep into the opposition's zone, an intercepion to clinch a victory - Nachilobe, is there. Again, in the championship game, he was the man when the game hung in the balance and the Chargers looked like they were ready to claim their first city title. In an ironic twist of fate or some "Cossmic" force at work perhaps, Cossy Nachilobe's jersey #85 even matched that of the jersey featured on the cover of the championship program. Maybe a better nickname would be "Cossmic Cossy." Great things come in small packages, and Nachilobe fits the bill for the Falcons.

In addition to the Falcons ability to wn another close contest, the story of the game as it typically is in the playoffs is the give away and take away turnover ratio. The Chargers had plenty of opportunities to take the lead, but untimely turnvovers had them miss out on scoring chances throughout the game. 3 fumbles and 3 interceptions will have the Chargers thinking about "what could have been." Credit still has to go to the opposition in these cases as well as the Falcons bend but don't break mentallity on defense was tested to the maximum and helped the Falcons preserve the victory and help dynasty triumph over destiny.

It has been an outstanding season by both teams. They provided the fans with some exceptionally entertaining football throughout the season and in the championship game. The young Falcons will now represent Saskatoon in the Provincial Semi Final on November 1 in Moose Jaw versus Moose Jaw Peacock - 1 PM at Guthridge Field.