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Rookies lead Lions to win over Bucs

By Harry Atkins
The Associated Press

PONTIAC, Mich. — The rookies wanted to show they belonged. The Detroit Lions just wanted a win.

Everybody got their wish Monday night as rookie defensive back Terry Fair returned a kickoff 105 yards for a touchdown, rookie quarterback Charlie Batch scored on a sneak and the Lions beat the Tampa Bay Buccaneers 27-6.

Fair's kickoff return that broke the game open in the fourth quarter was the longest touchdown in the history of the Lions.

"You want to feel accepted out there by the older guys," Fair said. "You want to play to their level. When you get into the game, you

don't want to let those guys down." Batch, in his second start, was 14-of-23 for 115 yards and scored on a 1-yard sneak in the third quarter.

He also rushed for 39 yards on eight carries as the Lions won for the first time in four games.

"We believe that we can play in this league, or we wouldn't be here," Batch said. "Tonight, we showed that we belong."

Batch's total offense was 154 yards. Tampa Bay's total was 133.

"It's very disappointing to come in and have so much on the line and not play very well," Bucs coach Tony Dungy said. "It's three

times in a row that we've been on the road against a division opponent and really have not come close to getting the job done.

"Right now we're not playing good football. I think we could be a good football team, but right now, at 1-3, we're not."

Bryant Westbrook scored on a 34-yard interception return, and Jason Hanson, who had to assume punting duties when John Jett was injured, kicked field goals of 27 and 25 yards for the Lions.

Michael Husted kicked field goals of 43 and 47 yards for the Bucs (1-3), whose playoff hopes might also be in jeopardy because Green Bay and Minnesota, both 4-0, also are in the NFC Central.

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