

Viks from 1B

Thornton who, wide out, broke free and caught the ball for the Vikings' first touchdown of the game. Blankenship then handed off the ball to Skyler Loomis, who ran it in for a 2-point conversion.

Less than three minutes into the game, the Vikings were up 8-0.

On the next possession, the Eagles again struggled to gain any yards, turning the ball over on downs and putting the Vikings back on offense. From there, Blankenship ran 39 yards for a first down, then followed with a quick 20-yard pass to Lacouture to make it 14-0 with 6:30 left in the first quarter. In just four offensive plays, Siuslaw had already scored two touchdowns. On the conversion play, Thornton came in from the far side to take a handoff, cut inside and nab the conversion for a 16-point Siuslaw lead.

The Eagles continued to struggle against the Vikings' defense and, once again, turned the ball over on downs.

Back in the pocket, Blankenship nailed a 17-yard pass play to Thornton for another first down. Lacouture and Loomis each carried for five-yard gains, securing another first down. Blankenship then hit connected on another pass, this time to Isaac Garza, who got inside the six-yard line to make it first-and-goal. Lacouture carried to put Siuslaw on the one-yard line, with Blankenship finding Thornton on the far side for another TD and a kick for the extra point from Lacouture.

With 3:02 still remaining in the first quarter, the Vikings were up 23-0.

After holding the Eagles on the ensuing possession, Siuslaw took over with less than a minute remaining in the quarter.

On the first play of the possession, Beau Erickson

ran a handoff in for touchdown, only to have it called back for an illegal block on the Vikings. The penalty forced Siuslaw back to first and goal at the 15-yard line. Another flag for a holding penalty on the Vikings was called, pushing them back yet again — this time to the 30-yard line. Following an incomplete pass, Siuslaw ended up at second-and-30 as the quarter ended.

But the Vikings came out to begin the second period the same as they did the first, with Blankenship throwing for a 30-yard touchdown to Lacouture on the first play of the quarter. Lacouture's then kicked the PAT for 30-0 Siuslaw lead.

On Harrisburg's next possession, the Eagles fumbled on the second down, with Lacouture snatching it up and running it in for the score from the 20-yard line. Lacouture's kick sailed between the uprights for a 37-0 lead with 10:42 left in the half.

The Eagles first down of the game finally came on their next possession, on a 42-yard run from quarterback Chase Gallegos, who was brought down by Siuslaw's Erickson and Garza.

Harrisburg gained eight more yards on the next play and then, with 5:21 left in the half, scored their first touchdown. But the Viks stopped the conversion attempt, holding a 37-6 lead.

The Vikings scored again on their next possession, an a 27-yard reception by Thornton in the endzone. Lacouture kicked the extra point to put Siuslaw ahead 44-6 heading into the half.

With a healthy lead, Johnson opted to switch Erickson in at quarterback, where he remained for the entire second half.

Despite the penalty, the Vikings kept pushing the ball up the field on their possession, and a handoff to Hunter Petterson at 6:20 secured Siuslaw another touchdown. With his kicking game fully

on point, Lacouture scored another extra point, bringing the score to 51-6 and forcing the clock to run for the remainder of the game.

Both teams scored once more in the game, first on a pitch from Erickson to Petterson for a 19-yard run into the end zone, followed by the PAT from Lacouture with 6:20 remaining.

Then, with 1:21 left on the clock, the Eagles drove to within five yards of the endzone, and Gallegos ran it in from there for the final score, 58-12, and a resounding victory for Siuslaw.

"I think the high point for me was just watching our kids fly around finally and play with a chip on their shoulder," said Johnson. "Defensively, our kids played with a sense of urgency and were willing to do their jobs and trust the other 10 guys

on the field to do theirs."

Offensively, Johnson said he saw then players finally relaxed and trusting in each other to make plays. "Our line controlled the line of scrimmage and our skill position kids made plays," he said.

The Vikings have two games left in the season and, at this point, Johnson has been able to reflect on how far his players have come.

"So far this season, this group of young men have faced a tremendous amount of adversity and continued to put in the hard work," he said. "This group of young men are learning how to win on and off the field."

The Vikings play next at home against Sisters on Friday (March 26), beginning at 7 p.m.

Sailors from 1B

On its first possession, the Irish found themselves at third-and-4, when they connected on a short pass into the end zone. The Irish completed their conversion attempt, tying the game at 8-8 with 5:12 left in the first quarter.

Neece answered shortly after that, running more than 60 yards to the end zone with solid blocking from Ryan Bernhardt. The conversion put the Sailors back on top, 14-8.

On Waldport's next possession, the Irish fumbled, with the quick hands of AJ Moso snatching up the recovery and giving the Sailors possession with 2:23 remaining in the quarter. Moso completed a handoff to Neece, who ran for a touchdown and a 20-8 Sailors lead.

Mapleton was on fire, but their tenacity was met by Waldport as the Irish came back less than 20 seconds later to score a touchdown from outside the 50-yard line. Despite an unsportsman-like conduct penalty called on the Irish after the play, they pulled within a touchdown of the Sailors, 20-14.

On the next play, the Sailors' Jesse Hughes made

a clutch catch, but the ball was fumbled and picked up by Waldport with 1:25 left in quarter. From there, the Irish ran for a touchdown to tie the game once again, 20-20.

Waldport picked up its second 15-yard penalty, this time on a late hit against Neece. Despite the penalties, Waldport continued to break conduct rules, include face-masking and late hits.

The quarter ended in a 20-20 stalemate, with the Irish demonstrating they would literally pull no punches on defense.

In the beginning of the second quarter, with Mapleton still on offense, Waldport intercepted a pass thrown by Neece and dropped it, but then recovered the ball.

The Irish then went on to score the first touchdown of the quarter at 9:42, taking their first lead of the game.

The Sailors had a hard time pushing up the field, although Moso and Neece both had solid runs. But with 6:34 before the half, Mapleton turned the ball back over to Waldport on downs.

Waldport was issued its second face-mask penalty, followed by a false start call against the Sailors. With its momentum shaken, Mapleton ended up relinquishing

another touchdown to the Irish with 3:02 left in the half — with the conversion putting Waldport ahead 36-20.

Mapleton was back on offense and trying to find some traction. JJ Neece had a 14-yard gain with just over 2 minutes before the half. But two incomplete passes — and another false start penalty — took some of the wind out of their sails, leaving Mapleton trailing 36-20 at halftime.

In the third quarter, Waldport scored less than a min-

ute into the second half to move ahead 44-20.

A fumble on Mapleton's next possession led to another Waldport TD less than three minutes later, leaving the Sailors down 52-20.

From there, the Irish retained control of the game despite two more trips into the end zone for the Sailors.

Waldport went on to claim the win, 74-34.

Mapleton will be back on the gridiron this Friday, when the Sailors host Mohawk, beginning at 7 p.m.

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As we look to a new year, we're celebrating what connects us as a community, and what we can do to support our local businesses!

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jbartlett@thesiuslawnews.com
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