

## **Panthers drop Golden Bears from the unbeaten**

**\* UA knows it ran into one of the area's best, but its own mistakes proved problematic.**

**By BRIAN McLEAN**

Published: Thursday, September 27, 2007 9:26 AM EDT

It was a showdown between two of Central Ohio's top Division I football teams when Hilliard Darby hosted Upper Arlington Friday, Sept. 21.

For the past decade, games of this magnitude were played across town at Hilliard Davidson, but in this Week 5 matchup, Darby was ready for some football.

The Panthers didn't disappoint the capacity crowd. The offense blew the Golden Bears away in the first half and the defense took over in the second -- keeping Darby undefeated with a 22-7 victory.

"Give them credit, they beat us fair and square -- they're a very good football team," UA coach Mike Golden said. "We played 'em real well in the second half, but we didn't give ourselves a chance with a bunch of dumb mistakes."

It was the final non-conference game of the season for both teams.

The Panthers (5-0) play at Newark (3-2) at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 28. The Bears (4-1) host Hilliard Davidson (4-1) Friday.

Coincidentally, the only loss for both UA and Davidson came against Hilliard Darby.

Here's what happened at Darby Friday.

On both sides of the football, the Panthers punched the Bears in the mouth early.

Darby took its first possession on its own 21-yard line. On the first play from scrimmage, quarterback Jeremy Ebert rolled left and fired a 27-yard completion to wide receiver Richard Hammons in front of the Arlington bench.

The 5-foot, 7-inch Hammons was well covered by UA's Anthony Finissi, but Hammons was able to drag both feet to remain in bounds.

"That was an awesome catch," Ebert said. "He's just a little guy, but he makes big plays. I love having him out there."

The Panthers raced down the field in 10 plays and scored when Ebert ran in from 8 yards out.

They scored again with just under three minutes to play in the quarter on running back Jordan Richeson's 5-yard TD run.

On the point-after-touchdown attempt, holder Robbie Anzuini picked up the snap and ran in for the two-point conversion to put Darby up 15-0.

UA went three-and-out on its first two offensive series, but got a break when Jeremy Ball fumbled an Ebert pass.

The Bears recovered and took over on the Darby 43. Running back Gabe Krimm scored on a 1-

yard run to pull Arlington to 15-7.

"After they scored that touchdown, I told the guys we were going to shut them down," linebacker B.J. Machen said. "Everybody came together and we made it happen as a unit."

This was the Panthers' night, however, and the home team responded with a 13-play scoring drive to go ahead 22-7.

That drive appeared to stall on the UA 33, but on a fourth-and-11 play, Ebert connected with Anzuini for a 15-yard gain.

Four plays later, Richeson pounded it in from the 1.

"I tell you what, (Ebert's) not average," Golden said. "He's a difference-maker -- a special high school player. They're a fine team without him, but he is what's making them special."

UA evened the playing field in the second half.

The Bears drove to the Darby 20 on their first possession, but Brandon Von Voigt's 30-yard field goal was wide left.

In the fourth quarter, UA mounted another drive -- this time to the Darby 18. On third down, the Panthers blitzed and knocked the ball away from quarterback Braden Layer.

The Bears recovered, but on fourth-and-21, Layer's pass to Von Voigt was incomplete with less than four minutes to play.

It was UA's final scoring opportunity.

"We got it down in their end a couple times, but we couldn't convert," Golden said. "That was big. They're much better on defense than they've been in the past."

For Darby, it's the first 5-0 start in school history.

"We're in waters that have never been tread at Darby before -- and the waters are shark infested," coach Paul Jenne said. "We'll make sure we keep working hard. Newark is a very tough team -- there's no rest."