

Missed opportunities spell doom for Bears in loss

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Published: Tuesday, November 6, 2007 3:06 PM EST

Not long after Hilliard Darby had defeated visiting Upper Arlington 35-10 in a Division I Region 3 football contest Saturday, Nov. 3, the Panthers defense received a barrage of accolades for its first-half effort.

The Golden Bears (8-4) dominated those first 24 minutes, but when the bands played at halftime, they held a slim 3-0 lead.

Darby (10-1) scored three touchdowns in the fourth quarter to turn a close game into a blow-out.

Although the defense did make some key plays in the first half -- senior linebacker B. J. Machen stuffed junior fullback Tommy Farwick for a 5-yard loss on the opening drive -- more often than not it was the Bears that stopped themselves.

The good news was UA ran 37 offensive plays to Darby's 16 and was a plus-two in turnovers.

The bad news was the Bears were penalized four times for illegal procedure; worse were the eight passes that were either dropped, or an open receiver was just overthrown.

It isn't a reach to say Arlington should have led by anywhere from 17-to-24 points at the half.

"We just missed too many opportunities in the first half," Bears coach Mike Golden said. "I was worried that would come back to haunt us.

"We wanted to get ahead and get a cushion against a team like this because they can blow it up quick -- and they did."

The Bears woes began on their second possession.

On a fourth-and-12 from the Panthers 25, Farwick had a step on Machen on a pass route, but senior quarterback Braden Layer's pass sailed just over Farwick's outstretched arms near the goal line.

After UA had recovered a muffed punt on the Darby 33 in the second quarter. Golden called for a halfback option, but junior Alex Drake's pass was also too long for junior receiver Blake Annen -- who appeared to have a clear path for a touchdown.

On the same drive, Annen and senior receiver Kyle Shockley both dropped passes in the end zone.

After taking a 3-0 lead, the Bears had one more possession before the half.

They drove to the Panthers 35, but Annen dropped a Layer pass on third down and Farwick let one slip through his hands on fourth-and-five to end the half.