

# Upper Arlington 24, Gahanna 21 (OT)

Friday, August 31, 2007

**By ANDERS LARSON**

*ThisWeek Staff Writer*

- Offensive star: UA halfback Tommy Farwick, who ran for 148 yards and three touchdowns on 25 carries
- Defensive star: UA linebacker Phil Gross, who led a defense that slowed down Darius Reeves and limited the Lions to 67 yards passing
- Key play: Jared Sylvester kicked a 28-yard field goal to give the Golden Bears the win in overtime.
- Key stat: Upper Arlington outgained Gahanna 275-219, making up for three costly turnovers.
- Of note: UA was in position to close the game out with a potential go-ahead field goal in regulation when Farwick fumbled on the 11 with 37 seconds remaining.

Linebacker Kevin Guthrie of the Gahanna Lincoln High School football team said last week that “with a team like Upper Arlington, it’s always going to come down to the last play.”

Guthrie was dead on, but there’s no doubt he would have preferred a slightly different ending.

After Gahanna failed to score on its first overtime possession, senior kicker Jared Sylvester hit a 28-yard field goal in overtime to lift Upper Arlington to a 24-21 win on the road.

Sylvester sprinted joyously back toward the center of the field almost immediately after the ball left his foot.

“I could tell it was going in, and I just started running,” Sylvester said. “It was just adrenaline. It’s every kicker’s dream.”

Though it was just a non-conference game in week two, the crowd brought a playoff atmosphere from the outset, and the players matched that intensity. For much of the game, however, it appeared that Upper Arlington wasn’t going to let the game get close.

After forcing Gahanna into the first of four three-and-outs in the first half, Upper Arlington took the lead when Tommy Farwick broke through the middle for a 51-yard score on his team’s first play from scrimmage.

Farwick added another score late in the first quarter, and Upper Arlington went into halftime with a 14-0 lead.

Upper Arlington coach Mike Golden said that despite the history of close games between Gahanna and Upper Arlington, he wasn’t expecting things to tighten up in the second half.

“Actually, I’ll tell you what, we were pretty confident (at halftime),” Golden said. “But give Gahanna all the credit in the world. They have the kind of kids that can get back in the game, and they did.”

Gahanna got on the board early in the second half, capitalizing on a fumble by Farwick inside Upper Arlington’s 30. Darius Reeves outran the Upper Arlington secondary around the right sideline for a 27-yard touchdown, and Trevor Stewart’s extra point made the score 14-7.

After Farwick score his third touchdown on an 11-yard run on the ensuing possession, Gahanna responded two possessions later with a 19-yard touchdown pass from Blake Hickey to fullback Kevin Guthrie.

Gahanna’s defense continued to come up with stops, and with just under eight minutes remaining in the fourth quarter, Reeves scored his second touchdown of the game from two yards out. The score came one play after Hickey fit a ball between three defenders to Elliott Williams for a 19-yard gain.

“Even after (Upper Arlington) scored that third touchdown, our kids battled back,” Gahanna coach Mike Lanza said. “I’m just real proud of the way they played. I mean, this is game two. Our team did a lot of growing up tonight.”

But after Reeves’ score, Upper Arlington methodically marched down the field and looked to be on its way to closing things out in regulation. But with 37 seconds left, Farwick fumbled on his way down the 11 and Gahanna recovered.

After the clock ran out on regulation, Gahanna had the ball first in overtime, starting at the 20, but could not pick up a first down. A five-yard loss on a toss to Reeves on third down set the ball up at the 19, and Ryan Ballenger’s field goal attempt sailed wide left.

On its possession, Upper Arlington kept the ball on the ground with a, who finished with 148 yards on the ground, and Alex Drake before Sylvester hit the winner on fourth-and-1.