

## FOOTBALL

# Darby's fourth-quarter flurry buries UA

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The first time the Hilliard Darby and Upper Arlington high school football teams met this season, Darby quarterback Jeremy Ebert showed off his arm.

In the rematch in a Division I regional quarterfinal last Saturday at Darby, the Northwestern University recruit's legs were on display, as he rushed for 214 yards and three touchdowns on 22 carries to lead the Panthers to a 35-10 win in their first playoff appearance in their 11-year history.

Darby, ranked sixth in the final state poll and the top seed in Region 3, improved to 10-1 and advanced to play fifth-seeded Groveport in a regional semifinal at 7 p.m. Saturday at Upper Arlington.

The Cruisers defeated fourth-seeded Brookhaven 41-27 in a regional quarterfinal last Saturday. They handed Darby its only loss of the season, winning 34-17 on Oct. 26 as the Panthers had eight turnovers.

"Ebert's an outstanding player," said UA coach Mike Golden, whose team finished 8-3. "You can't give him too many opportunities. ... He's just really, really tough. If he gets a crack, he can go the distance. He's done that many, many times this year."

In the team's first meeting -- a 22-7 Darby victory on Sept. 21 -- Ebert completed 15 of 20 passes for 165 yards.

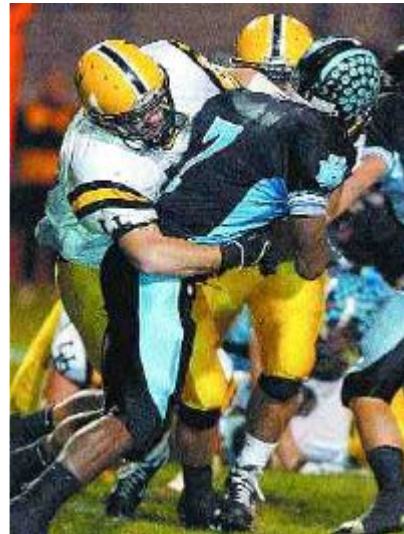
UA, seeded eighth, controlled play in the first half, racking up 137 yards on offense and holding the Panthers to just 33, but led only 3-0.

"We missed too many opportunities in the first half, and I was worried that would come back to haunt us," Golden said. "We wanted to get ahead and have a cushion against (a team) like



BY CHRIS PARKER/THISWEEK

**The disappointment mounts on the Upper Arlington sideline last Saturday after Hilliard Darby scored one of its four touchdowns in the fourth quarter of a 35-10 victory in the first round of the Division I playoffs.**



BY JARED DORT/THISWEEK

**The Golden Bears' Eric Rieser wraps up Darby's Jordan Richeson last Saturday. Richeson rushed 16 times for 92 yards and scored two touchdowns.**



BY CHRIS PARKER/THISWEEK

this because they can blow it up. They have some great football players. And they exploded in the fourth quarter."

After being held to 10 yards on nine carries in the first half, Ebert got loose in the second half. He scored on a 73-yard run on the first play from scrimmage in the third quarter to give the Panthers a 7-3 lead.

"We've been slumping on offense, and I pretty much just jump-started our offense for the rest of the game," Ebert said.

The touchdown marked the first points UA had allowed in 15 quarters.

The Bears had posted shutouts in their final three regular-season games, outscoring their opponents 119-0.

UA answered two possessions later with a 38-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Braden Layer to wide receiver Jared Sylvester to take a 10-7 lead, but Darby controlled the rest of the game.

The Panthers went ahead 14-10 on a 74-yard touchdown run by Ebert with 9 minutes, 19 seconds to play and stretched their lead to 21-10 on a 39-yard touchdown run by running back Jordan Richeson. Ebert scored again on a 29-yard run to make it 28-10 before Richeson ended the fourth-quarter flurry with a 2-yard touchdown run with 4:26 to play.

What had been a close game quickly became a lopsided contest, as Darby scored 28 points in a five-minute span on four consecutive possessions.

"It didn't turn into the score it was until probably five minutes to go in the game," Darby coach Paul Jenne said.

"When we got up 21-10, you could feel that that's when the wind went out of (UA's) sails and we were able to capitalize on some things."

Richeson finished with 92 yards and two touchdowns on 16 carries. The Panthers had 314 total yards, including 281 in the second half. Only eight of those yards came through the air, as Ebert attempted only three passes with one completion.

UA's offense was led by fullback Tommy Farwick, who rushed for 99 yards on 21 carries. Running back Alex Drake added 92 yards on 17 carries, and Layer completed 11 of 30 passes for 115 yards with a touchdown and three interceptions.

"Our defense played lights out in the first half," Jenne said. "To hold them to three points in the first half was huge. We even said at halftime that we were lucky to be down by only three. Our defense kept us in the game.

"Coach (Mike) Owens and the rest of the offensive coaches did a great job at halftime making the adjustments and changing some formations and, defensively, I can't say enough about our defensive staff and how they did. They just kept adjusting and getting kids in the right spots to make plays."

### **At a glance**

DARBY 35, UPPER ARLINGTON 10

Star: Darby quarterback Jeremy Ebert, who finished with 214 yards rushing and three touchdowns after just 10 yards rushing in the first half

Key play: A 39-yard touchdown run by running back Jordan Richeson gave the Panthers a 21-10 lead with 6:59 to play.

Key stats: Darby had just 33 total yards in the first half. ... UA more than doubled Darby in time of possession: 33 minutes, 3 seconds to 14:57.