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LUCASVILLE, Ohio —The Valley Indians and the Portsmouth Trojans found themselves engaged in a back-and-forth affair Thursday night as both teams made crucial mistakes followed by highlight-reel plays.

But when the dust settled, Valley (1-0) survived the threat from Portsmouth (0-1), winning 41-40, to increase its current regular-season winning streak to 31 games. After allowing the go-ahead touchdown midway through the fourth quarter, the Indian offense was called upon to save the game and perhaps the season for Valley. Trailing 40-34 (Portsmouth missed the extra point), the Indians began their most important drive of the contest from their own 44-yard line.

After three consecutive rushing attempts, Valley held the ball on Portsmouth's 41-yard line. But its next rushing play was blown up in the backfield, costing the Indian offense three yards, leaving Rolfe and company a second and 13.

Like many times prior to this crucial moment, the Indians needed Rolfe's right shoulder to bail them out and he didn't disappoint. Rolfe found Derek Burk down the right sideline who caught the pass, made a couple of would-be Trojan tackles whiff and gave Valley a new set of downs on the Portsmouth 30-yard line.

After two Blake Howard runs, the Indians were inside the red zone at the 15-yard line when Alex Loop took the handoff from Rolfe. Once he found a small crease, Loop was celebrating with his teammates in the end zone.

But most of the damage for the Indian offense was fueled by the passing game, as Rolfe completed eight of his 14 passing attempts, throwing for 225 yards and four touchdowns.

Despite the winning touchdown coming on the ground, Valley head coach Darren Crabtree knew his team had to have a potent passing attack to pull off the victory.

"We thought we could throw the ball some, we knew we were going to have to throw the ball," Crabtree said. "After starting 12 games last year, he (Rolfe) is ready to take on more responsibility. He did a great job, not only throwing the ball, but being a leader out there for us. Romanello made some huge catches, Loop had some big runs. It was a combination. We thought our skilled kids were going to have to play awful well for us to have a chance and they did."

Three of Rolfe's touchdowns went to Bryce Romanello, who caught five passes on the night for 160 yards. All three of Romanello's scores came when the wideout found himself all alone in the Portsmouth secondary. According to Rolfe, the Indian offense found some kinks in the Trojan defense they thought they could exploit.

"We had watched film and we drew up some plays that we wanted to run tonight," Rolfe said. "We executed them pretty well and it ended up working out pretty well."

For Portsmouth, Sky Oliver led the way offensively with five touchdowns. The senior signal caller completed 12 of his 19 passes for 216 yards, three touchdowns and one interception. On the ground, No. 13 rushed for 85 yards on nine attempts and two more scores.

Crabtree wasn't happy with his defensive performance but understood the circumstances.

“We’re not happy with giving up 40 points but that offense is going to score a lot of points,” Crabtree said. “That’s a good football team we beat tonight.

“They made some plays and we missed some tackles. Oliver made a heck of a run on a scramble. We get Oliver on the option but he gets the pitch off and Robinson is down the sideline. Those are things you can’t coach, you can’t prepare for.”

The Trojan offense wasted little time showing the fans in attendance how potent they could be, as Portsmouth received the opening kickoff and scored in five plays, capped off by a 25-yard touchdown strike from Oliver to Luke Purdy.

All three of Oliver’s passing touchdowns landed in the hands of Purdy who caught six balls for 147 yards on the evening.

However, Valley made an early statement of their own as the Indians needed just one play to answer the Trojan scoring drive. Rolfe found Romanello running down the seam and the junior quarterback connected with No. 24 for a 46-yard touchdown answer, knotting the game up at six.

Midway through the first quarter, with the game still knotted at six, Rolfe found Romanello roaming free once again, this time teaming up for a 24-yard touchdown connection and one play later, Rolfe found his favorite receiver for the two-point conversion to give the Indians a 14-6 lead.

Turnovers plagued the Trojan offense after their initial start, but Oliver and company got their act together to tie the game midway through the second quarter as Oliver eluded a host of would-be Indian tacklers on his way to the end zone from 26 yards out. After a successful extra point, Portsmouth trailed 14-13. But Valley answered, and answered quickly.

The following drive, the Indians needed just four plays to extend their lead. With the ball sitting at the Portsmouth 45-yard line, Sam Basham scored a touchdown on his first rushing attempt of the night.

With Valley holding an eight-point lead, 21-13, the Trojans had one last attempt to draw closer before the intermission. Portsmouth promptly marched down the field, but ran into trouble when Austin Hollins was tackled for a nine-yard loss on a second-down run.

After an incompleting on third down and the ball resting on the Valley 44-yard line, the Trojans decided to take a gamble and attempt to pick up the first down. After eluding an oncoming rusher, Oliver found Purdy down the Valley sideline. After making a couple of Indian would-be tacklers whiff, Purdy gave Portsmouth new life with his first-down reception.

Three plays later, the Trojans held the ball on Valley’s two-yard line with eight seconds remaining in the first half and no timeouts. Portsmouth quickly snapped the ball. Oliver rolled to his left and found Purdy in the back of the endzone with no-time remaining.

Portsmouth trailed 21-19 at halftime.

After the break and a quick Valley score, the Trojans trailed 28-19 when Sky Oliver and Darrion Robinson teamed up on a unique rushing touchdown.

With the ball sitting at the Portsmouth 43-yard line, Oliver took the snap from the shotgun, with Robinson standing to his left, and he ran a speed option. Valley took away Robinson on the initial pitch, which forced Oliver to try and run the ball

himself. However, as Oliver was in the grasp of a Valley defender, he spotted Robinson open at the last moment, and pitched the ball to the tailback. Robinson raced down the left sideline, cutting back to the middle of the field, and outracing everyone to the endzone, scoring from 57 yards out. The improvised play cut the Indians' lead to two, 28-26.

After Valley failed to convert a fourth-down attempt, Portsmouth wasted little time reclaiming the lead — its first since the game was 7-0 in the first quarter.

It took three plays, capped off by an Oliver 41-yard touchdown run and a successful two-point conversion, to give the Trojans a 34-28 lead.

With the Indians trailing and their 30-game regular season win streak slipping away, Loop took matters into his own hands.

On a third-and-eight at midfield, Valley ran a screen pass. Portsmouth didn't bite on the play, and as Loop caught the Rolfe pass, the tailback had nowhere to go. So, he ran over the would-be Trojan tackler on his way to the end zone, tying the game at 34 and setting up Loop's game-winning run.

Loop finished the contest with 58 rushing yards on 16 attempts and one rushing touchdown, along with the aforementioned receiving score.

The missed tackle was the theme of the night for Portsmouth, which was a major-contributing factor in the defeat for the Trojans.

"Tackling is effort and we've got to get our kids to give more effort in that area during practice" said a dejected Jason Sparks, head coach of Portsmouth, after the game.

As devastated as Portsmouth was after the contest, Crabtree admitted his kids would have been the same way.

"This loss for us tonight would have been devastating just because of how hard the kids played," Crabtree said. "We didn't play the best game we could play, but to get that win versus a quality opponent in week one will propel us hopefully on down the road."

Portsmouth will look for its first victory when the Trojans travel to West next Friday while Valley will host Coal Grove.