

Pioneers Top UNC-C

Western Piedmont's Pioneers play football for fun, but they discovered this season that it's much more fun to win.

Down by seven points at halftime and battling to snap a two-game losing streak, the Pioneers caught fire in the third period and defeated UNC-Charlotte, 21-7, in a North Carolina Club Football Association contest at Shuey Park Saturday night.

Charlotte had taken a 7-0 lead in the second period on an eighty-yard run by Bob Schmidt and an extra point kick by Joe Sanders.

Western Piedmont's first-half efforts were hampered by mistakes — they fumbled four times and lost all four — but they got it all together in the second half.

They took the lead when quarterback Larry Banner threw a little sideline pass to Columbus Carpenter early in the third period and Carpenter streaked down the field on a 45-yard scoring play. Fullback Doug Golightly ran for a two-point conversion that put the Pioneers on the front end of an 8-7 score.

Western Piedmont increased the margin when Banner hit Bud Lowdermilk on a 35-yard pass on an almost identical play.

In the fourth period UNC-Charlotte was trying to catch up and went to the air from deep in its own territory. A Charlotte pass was intercepted by David Pritchard, who rambled 12 yards for the third touchdown.

Lowdermilk kicked the extra point for a 14-point lead with less than five minutes to go in the contest.

Western Piedmont is now 4-2 for the season with three games remaining. The Pioneers play at Winthrop College next Saturday night and then wind up with two straight games on their home field.

They play a Granite Falls team on November 17 and complete their first season with a game against a Lenoir team on November 24.

"We kept our cool," said player-coach Golightly of Saturday's victory. "We adjusted our defense and we played as a team in the second half."

Golightly said the team's from Granite Falls and Lenoir had wanted to officially belong to the league this fall, but had applied too late. "They'll probably join together next year in a combined team at Caldwell Tech."

Saturday's game also launched another kind of celebration; the Pioneers stayed healthy. "For the first time in three games, we didn't have a serious injury," said Golightly. "We started the season with 50

players and now we're dressing out 31. We got some of the guys back who had been hurt before. This is the first game where we played together for an entire game."

Western Piedmont's offense had 150 yards rushing and more than 200 passing.

The Pioneer defense was sparked by John Drury, who had two pass interceptions and by Carpenter, who picked off his eighth pass theft of the year.

Patterson broke away on a 77-yard jaunt early in the fourth period to put his team ahead by 18-13. He ran for a two-point conversion to make it 20-13.

Later in the quarter, Patterson got away again, this time on a 23-yard touchdown run that locked up the victory.

Although it was the final game for Drexel, all the underclassmen on the Wolverine team will be heard from again. Next year, they'll be at Eastern Burke High School, calling themselves Cavaliers.

Patterson the player still has another year at Patterson the school too.