

# Massillon's "Black Swarm" Defense leads way in win over Perry

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MASSILLON Much has been made of Massillon's offensive capabilities. The Tigers boast a massive line and a deep pool of skill players.

Yet, somewhat quietly, they've also put together a defense that has a chance to be pretty good as well.

And Thursday night, it was that defense that helped set the tone for Massillon as it opened the season with a 35-7 win over neighboring rival Perry in front of a large crowd inside Paul Brown Tiger Stadium.

"We just read our guards, followed our keys and made plays," said Tiger junior linebacker Danny Robinson, whose 23-yard fumble return for a touchdown gave Massillon an 8-0 lead — following the two-point conversion — it would never relinquish.

The Tiger defense lived up to its "Black Swarm" monicker — even while clad in orange and white - by flying to the football on nearly every play. Massillon would limit Perry, which was making its debut in Keith Wakefield's second tenure as head coach, to just 205 total yard while forcing a pair of turnovers.

"Three fumbles, turnovers," Wakefield said. "Guys can't line up right. ... That (stuff) ends tomorrow."

Even on a night when the defense held the key to Massillon getting off to the fast start, the offense became the talk of the town thanks to the debut of not one new quarterback, but two. Andrew David earned the start after a preseason-long competition, and was 7-of-10 passing for 59 yards, including a 20-yard touchdown pass to Reggie Rogers that made it 22-7 with 2:13 remaining in the first half.

That score came just over two-and-a-half minutes after Perry's lone touchdown, a 5-yard Braxton Berry score that cut it to 15-7. That score came after the Tigers fumbled a punt at their own 11.

However, David would suffer a severe leg cramp right before attempting the second-half kickoff. That would open the door for highly-touted freshman Danny Clark to take the reins in the second half.

“We have confidence in all our quarterbacks who run our system,” Massillon coach Jason Hall said. “The offense didn’t change because Danny Clark came in the game.”

And on his first play as the Tiger quarterback, on his first pass, he lofted a perfect pass down the left sideline to Rogers, who ran for the rest of the way for a 59-yard touchdown and a back-breaking 28-7 Massillon lead midway through the third quarter.

“I can’t stop thinking about it,” said Clark, who was 4-of-5 in his debut for 76 passing yards, while adding a 25-yard run. “It was crazy. I wanted to go in there and just stay calm. That was my biggest thing, just staying calm.”

Staying calm may have been the Tigers’ biggest problem, especially early on. Massillon — despite finishing with 416 total yards, including 281 rushing yards, 120 by J.D. Crabtree — was hurt by nine penalties for 70 yards.

The Tigers turned the ball over twice. They also had a couple of misplayed kicks that could’ve been troublesome.

“I think offensively, we were just sporadic,” said Hall, whose team closed out the scoring with a 74-yard Crabtree run in the fourth quarter. “We shot ourselves in the foot with penalties. Then we had penalties and a muffed punt that didn’t. We really have to be more consistent going into next week.”

Massillon will play host to GlenOak next Thursday. Perry travels to Central Catholic next Friday.