

Maller's Rideout Storm Final 51-27

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By by Tom Wilkins

GDFL Remains undefeated against all other leagues

Albany,NY-The Albany Metro Mallers defeated the Lehigh Valley Storm 51 – 27 while playing at home in their last regular season game.

This was a matchup between the GDFL and the MLF (Major League Football) where the Lehigh Valley Storm had a #3 national

The Lehigh Valley Storm of the MLF (Major League Football) dominated opponents for the first 3 weeks of the season. On Saturday night in Albany, they were on the wrong side of domination.

In their regular season finale and led by QB CJ Tarver, the Albany Metro Mallers of the GDFL (Gridiron Developmental Football League) succeeded in their 'dress rehearsal' for their league playoffs with a convincing 51-27 interleague friendly win over the Lehigh Valley Storm this past Saturday night at Bob Ford Field on the University of Albany campus.

Following a 34 yard FG by Kelly Palmer on the Mallers' opening drive, the tone of the evening for the Storm was set. On the very first Storm play from scrimmage, RB Raheem Ridley fumbled. Maller LB Dwayne Murdoch picked the ball up and ran it back 27 yards for a defensive score, making it 10-0 Albany. The Storm gave up more points on those 2 plays in less than a minute than in the previous 3 games combined, as they outscored their opponents 131-9 going into this game.

The Storm retaliated as QB Jimmy Lahue launched a TD pass to Devaughn Gordon (6-92, TD) from 11 yards out on the first play of the 2nd quarter. A botched extra point snap resulted in a 10-6 Albany lead. However, right back came Albany as Tarver made a couple of nifty moves and exploded for a 57 yard TD run to make it 17-6. Tarver not only finished with 110 yards rushing, but finished with stellar passing (18-23, 266 yds., 3 TDs, 1 INT).

Following a rushing TD by Mallers RB Lowell Robinson, the Storm drove down the field (thanks to a couple of Maller penalties) late in the 1st half as Jimmy Lahue snuck in on his 2nd TD run of the year to make it 24-13. But then, the Storm got presented an unexpected opportunity. Defender Mike Caruso yanked the ball away from Tarver with under a minute left until the half. The Storm, however, could not capitalize as WR Jaleel Clark fumbled a completion inside the Mallers 10 and Albany recovered.

In the 2nd half, the Storm came out fired up and ready to roll...and did they ever on only 3 plays. Lahue found receiver Yusef Reddick from 21 yards out for his 2nd TD pass of the game (12 on the season) to cut the deficit to 24-20, then Mike Caruso recovered his 2nd fumble of the game on the ensuing Albany possession.

Lahue finished his day going 18 out of 37 for 257 yards...with 2 TDs and an interception.

Then came the turning point of the game. The Storm could not drive down the field and went to settle for a 44 yard FG by Bobby Eppelman. But Bobby missed wide right, and everything went downhill rather quickly for the Storm. On Albany's next possession, they quickly drove down the field thanks to major Storm penalties (including 30 on one play), a key 3rd and 10 conversion, and got a 3 yard TD shovel pass to Justin Hardwick, making it 31-20.

The backbreaker came on Albany's next possession. It only took one play for Tarver to throw a swing pass to Robinson. Thanks to one block, and essentially a carbon copy of a play that went for a score from Lahue to RB Michael Thomas over the last two games, Robinson ran this one all the way 90 yards for a score, putting the game away at 38-20.

But the explosiveness did not end for Albany. What looked to be a forward pass from Lahue to Reddick was ruled a lateral and the Mallers recovered. One play later, Hardwick (rushing 12-101, TD; receiving 2-16, TD) dashed up the middle for an 80 yard score and that was pretty much that. The Storm did score late as backup QB Caleb Fick threw a short 3 yard TD pass to Art Sanders, but one more Albany TD caught by Rondell Antoine (with a missed extra point) sealed the deal at 51-27 and gave the Metro Mallers their 6th straight win.