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Junior Rebels fall on last-second field goal

First trip to league final in 31 years turns sour as Aldershot wins 23-20

It had been 31 years since the Georgetown Rebels learned the right to play in a Halton football final at Ivor Wynne Stadium. And if it takes another three decades to get back, the Rebels provided enough thrills—and heart-break—to last.

The Rebels scored a game-

tying touchdown with 1:09 to play in Tuesday's Halton Division II junior boys football final only to have their hopes dashed on a 28-yard Aldershot field goal with three seconds to play.

"It was horrible," Rebels quarterback Simon Treviranus said of the feeling of watching

the game-winning field that gave the Aldershot Lions a 23-20 victory. "We had an awesome team. The championship just wasn't meant to be."

But despite the sting of coming so close to the Halton title, Rebel coach Randy Marinangelli called it the highlight of his 18-year coaching career.

"There's always going to be disappointment when you lose a game like that," he said. "But these kids worked real, real hard to get here. I don't know if people on the outside looking in can see how hard these guys worked to come this far in one year."

One person who might be able to relate is Aldershot coach Lou Magyar.

"There was no quit in either one of us. Georgetown took us right to the end. Three seconds to go, you can't get any closer," he said. "They were good, the best team we played all season and they never gave up. On the other hand, we didn't either."

The teams entered the final quarter deadlocked at 14 and it stayed that way until Aldershot struck for a 53-yard pass that put them ahead 20-14 with 3:52 remaining. A booming kick-off had the Rebels starting their crucial drive on their own 19.

"We knew it was going to be tough but we weren't going to give up that easily," said Liam Harland, who got the drive rolling with a 12-yard reception while lying on his back after slipping.

The Rebels followed with a 10-yard run by Robert Cutting and a 41-yard pass from Treviranus to Harland. When Jody Stemberger barreled his way to the Aldershot 11, the Rebels had covered 84 yards in four plays and 61 seconds.

Two plays later, Harland spun away from his tacklers and broke into the end zone to tie the game. Aldershot blocked the



Georgetown Rebel running back John Leckie tries to shake free of Aldershot's Justin Springer during Tuesday's Halton junior boys division II football final at Ivor Wynne Stadium. Aldershot won 23-20.

Photo by Herb Garbutt

extra point to keep the game tied, though.

Getting the ball back at their own 47, Aldershot used three consecutive passes to move to the Rebel 24.

Two plays later, the Lions brought on the kicking team and Lucas Van Beek slipped the winning field goal just inside the right upright as the Rebel players slumped to the turf.

"I couldn't believe that it was all going to end like this," said Dan Kearns, who played a big role in the Rebels' first comeback of the game.

Aldershot scored on its first two possessions to take a 14-0 lead but the Rebels rallied. Harland broke through for a 16-yard TD to cut the lead in half and the Rebel defence came up big in the second quarter.

After an Aldershot interception, the Rebel D forced a punt after just three plays. Kearns rushed in to block the punt and recovered it at the Lions' 29. A 21-yard run by Cutting set up

John Leckie's four-yard TD run. Treviranus then hit Kearns with a pass for the two-point conversion to tie the game.

The Rebels had their chances to take the lead into the half. Randy Marinangeli Jr. forced a fumble and recovered it at the Lions' 40. But a promising drive was snuffed out when a 25-yard run by Leckie that would have put the Rebels inside the 10, was called back by a holding penalty.

Kearns and Dan Biggin forced two more fumbles before the half but the Lions defence held.

"The end of the second quarter, that's where we should have made some points. We had those turnovers and we didn't capitalize on them," Marinangeli said. "When they went up 14-0, you're thinking this could be a rout but the kids sucked it up and came back. And you have to give (Aldershot) credit. They're a good football team. They made some clutch plays and so did we."

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer



Georgetown's Darren Pezzack prevents Aldershot's Sean Donnell from breaking free for a touchdown but two plays later Aldershot kicked a field goal to win Tuesday's Halton championship 23-20.

Photo by Herb Garbutt

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