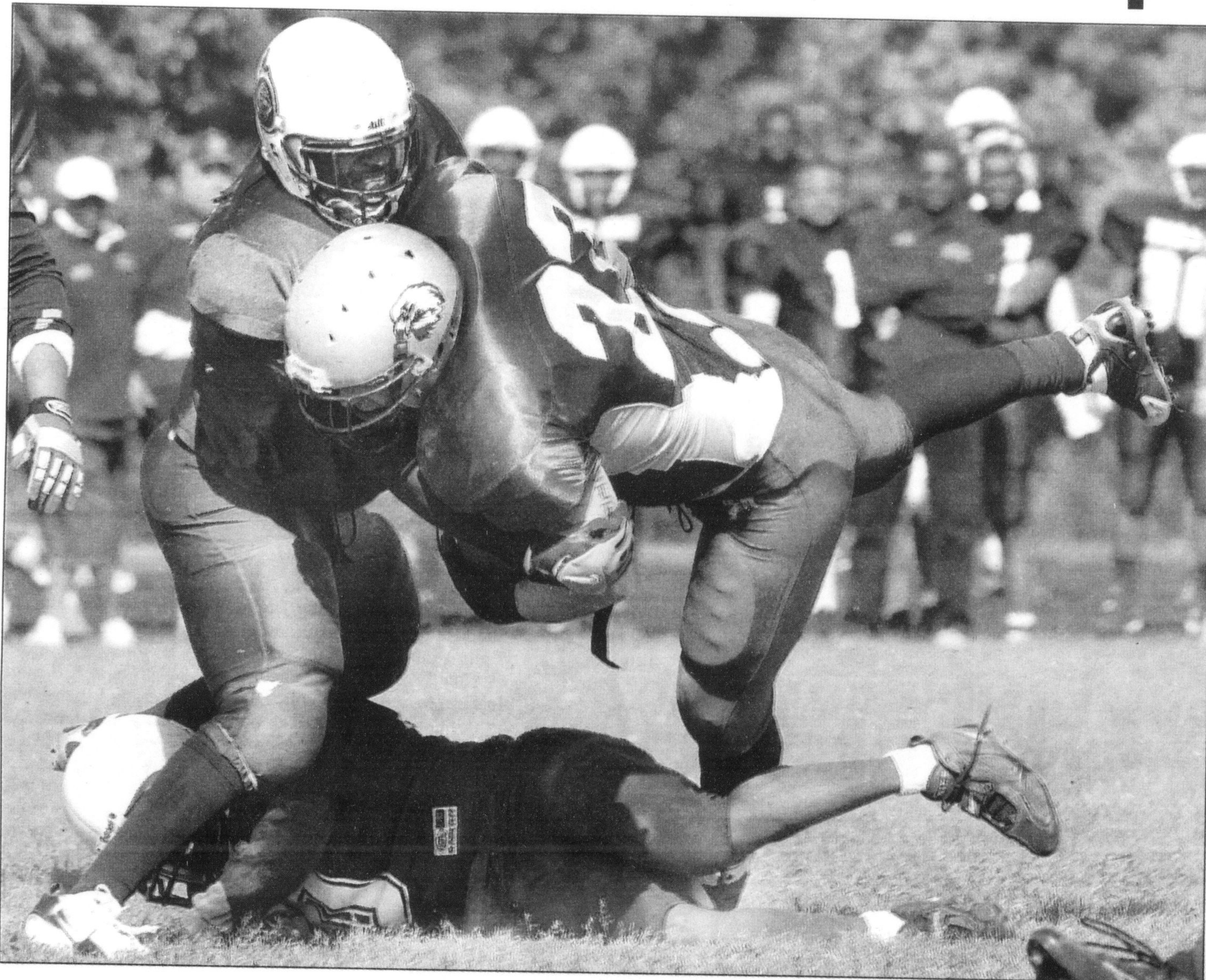


SPORTS

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Marauders eke out season-opening win



Milton dodges late bullet to edge Maddogs

By Murray Townsend
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Saturday's wind was nearly strong enough to knock over the defending Northern Football Conference regular season champion Marauders, but in the end they almost blew it themselves — in a narrow 10-8 season-opening win over the Toronto Maddogs at Milton District High School.

Holding a 10-2 lead with time winding down, Milton lined up for a short chip shot field goal as the flag dropped, indicating it was the last play. The Marauders' bench tried to get the players on the field to call a timeout so they could be instructed to take a knee and end the game, but the plea wasn't heard and the field goal attempt went ahead.

The kick was blocked, and a Maddog player picked it up and went the length of the field for a touchdown. Fortunately for Milton, the resulting two-point conversion attempt went off the hands of a Maddog receiver — nixing the potential disaster.

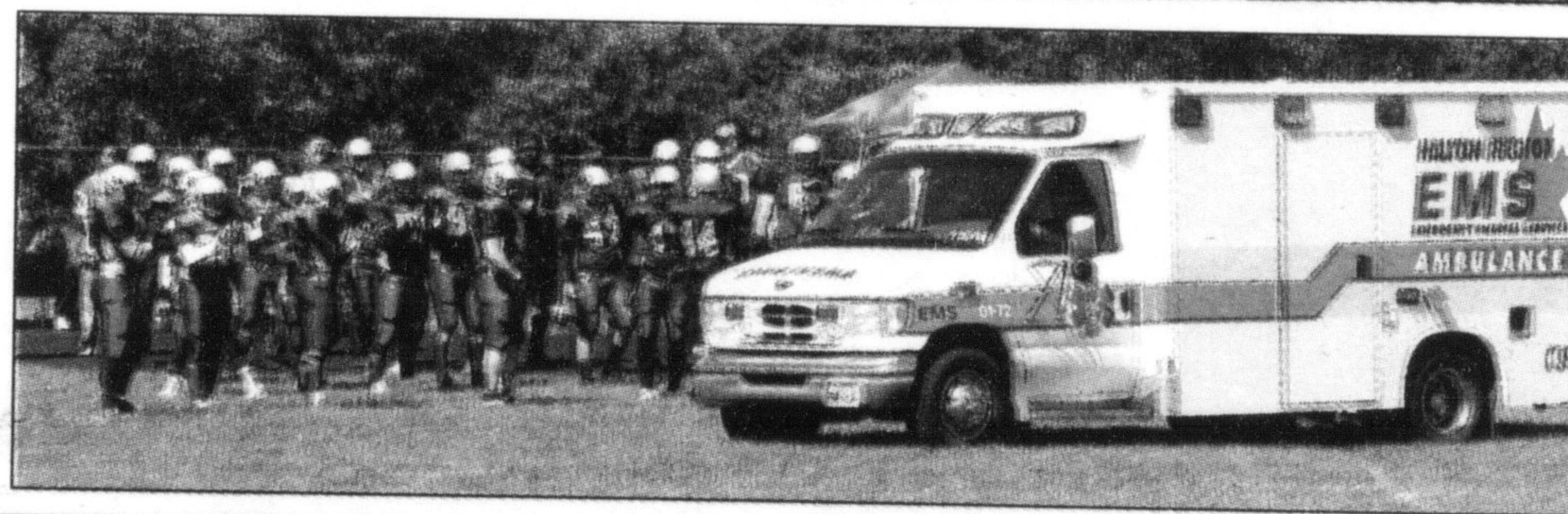
The wind caused havoc for both offences. The Marauders managed less than 20 yards of offense in the first half, and it wasn't until the third quarter that quarterback Neil Barthazaar started clicking with short passes to Jamie Radway, who used his speed to pull off some big gains.

Even the Maddog quarterback, Dean McLaren — one of the best passers in league history — couldn't get it going. He completed only three of 14 passes for a total of five yards. Balls into the wind sailed away, and balls against the wind hung up in the air.

It didn't help Milton's offense when

• see MILTON on page A19

THE RUN STOPS HERE: Above, Milton Marauders ball carrier Chad Kennedy gets brought down by a couple of Toronto Maddog defenders during season-opening play at Milton District High School Saturday afternoon. At right, An ambulance transporting Marauder Colin Grant to the hospital with a suspected spinal injury leaves the field, as teammates look on.



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