Forest Park players jubilantly race off the field after the final horn of their upset win over Hurley Sept. 7. From left: Carlton Isaacson, Brett Hietala, Derek Aberly, Mac Phillips, Zach Painter and Steven Hallmann.

CRYSTAL FALLS—Crazy game, football.

On a night when its offense was outgained by a 2.5 to 1 ratio, Forest Park's defense made all the big plays in the second half to steal a 13-12 win over Hurley Sept. 7 at Dick Mettlach Field.

"This was a game we didn't have any business winning," Coach Bill Santilli said after it was all over. "Our kids just fed off so much emotion and started believing.

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"What a classic football game! We are so fortunate to win this one!"

It was Hurley's first regular season loss since the Midgets' 2010 visit to Crystal Falls. The Trojans are now 3-0 overall, 1-0 in Great Western Conference action.

Turning point: Midway through the third quarter, Hurley led 12-6 and was going for more. Starting from their 35, they had 1st and 10 at the Trojan 21.

QB James Sukanen went back to pass but Trojans Dennis Mongar rushed hard and hit him as he threw. The ball fluttered to the right, into Derek Aberly's arms at the 15.

Aberly dashed down the sideline, sidestepped a pair of Midget tacklers near midfield and ran it back 85 yards for a score that tied it 12-12. Moments later, Jeff Johnson's extra point kick put FP up 13-12.

A quarter and a half still remained. Hurley went to work on offense, earning four first downs before getting stopped on downs at the Trojan 17. They got it back at their 35 with six minutes left.

More chances: By now, the Midget ground game was slowing down. After converting a 4th and 5, Hurley faced 4th and 10 at their 45 with 2:28 left--but struck gold when Mike Henning broke around the right side and into the clear. Speedy Austin Snell saved the touchdown by chasing Henning down at the FP 2 after a 53-yard gain.

But Hurley never got those final two yards. On 1st and goal, the ball came loose, and FP's Taylor Nocerini fell on it. Trojan ball at their 2 with two minutes to play.

Plenty of time for more plot twists. Forest Park's offense quickly faced 4th and 5 at the 7. The punt was horrid—shanked out of bounds. Hurley ball at the Trojan 18, 1:40 to go.

On fumes: Both teams were worn out, but Forest Park was running on emotion. Jarret Rhenlund, who charged through the Trojans earlier in the game, ran twice but was held to almost nothing. A third down pass was underthrown. On fourth down, Raymond Tomasik and Steve Hallmann broke through the Hurley line and sacked Sukanen.

Two kneel-downs later, the Trojans celebrated their incredible win ... and Hurley's players just looked incredulous. The Midgets rarely lose, especially when they outplay their opponents so thoroughly.

Earlier: Hurley scored on its first possession, when Sukanen passed to Roman Lupino for a

79-yard score on 3rd and 12. Carlton Isaacson, Aberly, and Zach Painter stopped Rhenlund on the two-pointer. Hurley led 6-0, with 7:36 left in the first.

The Midgets' second score capped a 14-play, 77-yard drive, marked by Henning's 44-yard dash to the Trojan 36. Lupino scored from the 4, but Henning slipped on the convert, and Aberly was all over him. That kept it 12-0 with 7:10 left till halftime.

Two plays later, FP got one back: QB Jeff Johnson faked to Tomasik up the middle then passed to Snell down the right side. Snell outraced the Hurley secondary for a 46-yard TD. The kick missed: Hurley 12-6, 6:22 till halftime.

After scoring on their first two possessions, the Midgets never scored again—even though they moved the ball very well: 45 yards to the FP 21; 14 yards to the FP 39; 44 yards to the FP 21 (Aberly's interception); 46 yards to the FP 17; 63 yards to the FP 2 (lost fumble). The short punt gave them one final chance from the FP 18.

Three Hurley red zone possessions in the fourth quarter. Zero points. Take a bow, Forest Park defense!

Dynamic D: In the long list of big plays, don't overlook those two Hurley conversions that Forest Park stopped. Of course, Johnson's kick supplied the winning point.

Santilli said Aberly was FP's defensive leader with 13 tackles, four assists and the interception return. "He was all over the place. He played a monster game at safety for us." Painter and Tomasik also put up big defensive stats.

In fact, there were many heroes for the Trojans. "Every play meant something at every point in the game."

Santilli also cited Assistant Coach Dave Graff for putting together a blitz package during halftime featuring Mongar and Nocerini. "They just kept creating havoc by their quickness."

Meanwhile, the Trojans' offense never crossed midfield after the TD pass to Snell in the second quarter.

Crazy game, football.

Numbers: Offense: Forest Park, 172 total yards (29-108r, 64 p); Hurley, 430 yds (49-318r, 112p). First downs: FP 7, Hur 16.

Rushing: Raymond Tomasik, 12-44; Dennis Mongar, 7-40; Austin Snell, 3-21. Receiving: Snell, 1-46, TD; Derek Aberly, 2-18. Hurley rushing: Mike Henning, 16-161; Jarret Rhenlund, 23-116. Receiving: Roman Lupino, 1-81, TD; Jake Colassaco, 2-31.

Defense: Aberly, 13t-4a; Zach Painter, 8t-6a; Tomasik, 9t-4a. Interception: Aberly. Fumble recovery: Taylor Nocerini. QB hurries: Mongar 2, Nocerini. Tackles for loss: 6.

Coming up: The Trojans visit Ontonagon Sept. 14. The Gladiators are 0-3 after a 45-6 loss to L'Anse on Sept. 7.

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