Gogebic's Taylor Smith keeps his eyes on the ball after FP's Brett Hietala (44) swats at it in second quarter action. Smith made the catch and completed a 24-yard touchdown.

WAKEFIELD—The dank, gloomy weather that hovered over Cardinal Field here Oct. 13 was mirrored perfectly by Forest Park's fans, as they watched their Trojans absorb a 46-15 beating in their first-ever game against the Gogebic Miners.

It's a costly late-season loss. Not only was it FP's worst defeat in years, but it also gives the Miners a berth in the Division 8 playoffs plus a share of the Great Western Conference title.

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The weather was ugly, and so was the Trojans' play. For Gogebic, it was a beautiful day. FP is now 6-2 overall and 3-1 in the GWC.

Coach Bill Santilli later said he saw danger signs during pre-game warm-ups. "I told those guys in the locker room before we went out, it just seems that we're not ready to play a game today."

Good start: It didn't seem so early. The Trojans took the opening kickoff and drove 51 yards to score on Derek Aberly's three-yard run, set up by Jeff Johnson's 19-yard pass to Austin Snell and Johnson's 15-yard keeper on fourth down. Johnson's kick put FP in front 7-0.

Gogebic punted on its first possession but got the ball back when 6-3 senior Eric Lane intercepted a Trojan pass at the Forest Park 39. Two plays later, Lane, Gogebic's QB, passed to Jess Mazzon for a 30-yard TD. Caleb Winkler's two-point run put the Speedboys—oops—Miners ahead 8-7.

Midway through the half, the Trojans ground downfield on an 80-yard scoring drive, marked by a 17-yard pass to Brett Hietala and Aberly's 24-yard run into the Miners' turf. FP went back in front on Johnson's 17-yard TD pass to Aberly, and Chris Hilberg's catch added two more; 15-8.

Quick strike: But Winkler ran back the kickoff 40 yards and scored three plays later on a 32-yard run. "We gave up the long score on nothing but a routine running play," Santilli sighed. Winkler ran in the convert for a 16-15 Miners lead, and they never trailed again.

Gogebic got another TD before halftime on a play that symbolized Forest Park's frustrating day. Lane passed deep to 6-2 senior Taylor Smith, who was well covered by Hietala. Hietala batted the ball, but Smith caught it on the way down and completed a 24-yard TD. Lane's two-pointer put Gogebic up 24-15.

Late in the half, Aberly crashed in to block a Gogebic punt deep in its end: Trojan ball at the Miners 10 with 23 seconds left. But Mazzon intercepted Johnson's third down pass as the half ended.

Miners roll on: Early in the second half, Lane dialed Mazzon long distance for a 74-yard TD. Winkler's run made it 32-15.

A Trojan punt backed the Miners to their 19, but two first downs got them to midfield. From there, Winkler took a handoff around the right side, cut to the middle and dashed away for another TD. 38-15.

Johnson ended the third quarter by running a quarterback keeper 41 yards to the Miners 19.

But the clouds darkened for Red and Black again two plays later when Winkler intercepted a pass and returned it 85 yards for the final score of the game. Lane's two-pointer made it 46-15.

In the final minutes, with the reserves on the field, FP drove from its 13 to the Miners 3 before losing the ball on downs.

Too many problems: What went wrong? Start with 12 Trojan penalties (10 accepted), including many pre-snap infractions like false start and procedure that sapped the offense's momentum.

FP had prepared for what Gogebic did on the field. But "We didn't execute," said Santilli. "We couldn't get the job done up front."

Like the loss to North Dickinson, once they fell behind by more than one score, the Trojans had to abandon their time-honored, methodical ground game. "That's the style of team we love to have."

This year's Trojans, said the coach, "struggle against teams that can physically hold their ground up front, that are fast and against quarterbacks that can throw."

FP has been able to get over those hurdles in the past due to the players' physical strength and not giving up big running plays. "This year, we're getting run all over the place."

At least the Trojans held Gogebic to five first downs: The Miners only needed two, three, six, two and six plays on their scoring drives.

Numbers: Team offense: FP 388 (54-287r, 9-20-101p), Gog 325 (32-182r, 4-6-143p). First downs: FP 13, Gog 5.

Rushing: Derek Aberly, 22-104; Jeff Johnson, 6-63; Billy Ragio, 11-36; Colton LaChapelle, 3-44. Receiving, Brett Hietala, 3-31; Lance Mongar, 2-26; Aberly, 3-24; Austin Snell, 1-21. Passing: Johnson, 9-20-101, 1 TD, 2 ints. Gogebic rushing: Caleb Winkler, 12-121; Alex Coubal, 8-64. Gogebic receiving: Jess Mazzon, 2-104; Taylor Smith, 2-39. QB Eric Lane, 4-6-143, 3 TDs.

Defense: Tackles: Aberly, 9t-1a; Raymond Tomasik, 6t-3a; Hietala, 3t-2a; Taylor Nocerini, 3t-2a; Adam Hilberg, 4t. Sack: Aberly-Johnson.

Coming up: The Trojans finish the regular season at home Oct. 19 against Lake Linden-Hubbell. The Lakes are 4-4 this year and lost at home 48-16 to North Dickinson Oct. 13. An earlier loss to Hancock likely dealt a death blow to their playoff hopes.

Trojans	7	8	0	0	--	15
Miners	8	16	14	8	--	46