Alec Schmelebeck hugs the ball after taking a handoff from Andrew Peterson at Hancock Oct. 12. Ron Varney (5), Chasz Jonet (50) and Max Maloney (61) work to clear his path.

HANCOCK—A pair of long scoring drives plus a shut-down defense boosted West Iron's record back to .500 here Oct. 12, when the Wykons earned a 17-7 victory over the Bulldogs.

With a win over Bark River-Harris at home on Oct. 19, the Wykons would finish their season with a winning record. Going in, they are 4-4 overall and 3-3 in the West Pac Conference.

"Our defense played its responsibilities," said Coach Mike Berutti after the game. "The defensive line changed the line of scrimmage, and our linebackers filled well. It was good to see." __PUBLIC__

Big stop: Hancock made the first big play of the night when QB Tanner Kearly connected with Ross Michaels on a third down screen pass for 39 yards, to the Wykon 44.

But WIC's defense stopped them there and gave the ball to the offense, which drove 70 yards in 13 yards for a score on QB Andrew Peterson's keeper. Peterson's two passes to Joe Pisoni, a 17-yard pass to Alec Schmelebeck and a Hancock penalty on another Schmelebeck run all boosted the drive. Ryan Rogers' kick put the Wykons ahead 7-0.

West Iron had two chances to add to the lead in the first half. The first came when Peterson recovered a fumble at the Bulldog 45—a Hancock sack hurt that possession, and WIC lost the ball on downs.

Later, a 35-yard Peterson pass to Pisoni got WIC to midfield, and passes to Rogers and Pisoni moved them to the Hancock 28 before Peterson was intercepted in the last minute of the half. It was 7-0 at halftime.

Big Boot: Midway through the third quarter, the Wykons scored again, with Peterson passing to Rogers for 41 yards to the Hancock 18. The Bulldogs forced fourth down, but Rogers lined up for a 32-yard field goal—and drilled it. Wykons 10-0.

"Ryan really has a lot of ability," Berutti said. "In practice, he makes 50-yarders. We had the opportunity to use that, and it ended up being big for us."

The field goal became more important in the fourth quarter after Hancock's defense came up big. On 2nd and 10 at the Bulldog 40, Peterson was back to pass with Evan Huhta in pursuit. Peterson got the pass away—but Huhta stuffed it, gathered it in and ran it back about 55 yards for the score. The kick cut West Iron's lead to 10-7 with 8:31 still to play.

Two plays later, the Wykons fumbled, and Huhta recovered near midfield. Uh-ohh!

Big plays: But West Iron's defense, which allowed only three first downs in the first half, yielded just one after halftime. Hancock went three and out and punted to the WIC 12.

On the next play, Schmelebeck crashed through the middle, cut to the right and was only stopped after a 60-yard gain to the Hancock 28. Seven plays later, Peterson punched it over from the 1. Rogers' kick put the Wykons up 17-7 with 2:08 left.

From there, WIC's defense wrapped up the win. For the night, the D gave up only 112 total yards, with 52 on the ground—Bulldog senior Michaels never had a run longer than 12 yards. "I was real happy with how we contained him and bottled him up," Berutti said, "because he's a thousand-yard rusher plus."

The coach was still thinking about that 39-yard screen pass to Michaels in the opening minutes—WIC's coaches had known a screen was coming. "Things happen in a game. But that was 40 yards out of their 110."

Big numbers: On offense, the Wykon offense rolled for 367 yards, over 200 on the ground. Schmelebeck led the team with 118 yards. "He's just a sophomore," said Berutti, "so that makes it nice."

Coaches also switched Chasz Jonet from fullback to guard, though he still ran some plays out of the backfield. "He's a big, strong kid," Berutti said. "We needed some punch up front—that's what we've been lacking all year. He practiced there for just four days and did a pretty good job. "It just gives us that little extra burst up the middle."

Numbers: Team offense: WIC, 367 (9-17-154p, 41-213r), Han 112 (3-12-60p, 21-52r). First downs: WIC 16, Han 4.

Rushing: Alec Schmelebeck, 15-118; Chasz Jonet, 3-26; Adam Newby, 5-25; Ron Varney, 6-17. Receiving: Joe Pisoni, 4-65; Ryan Rogers, 3-60; Schmelebeck, 1-17; Newby, 1-12. Passing: Andrew Peterson, 9-17-154-2 int.

Defense: Tackles: Cody Desjardins, 7t-1a; Schmelebeck, 6t-2a; Andy Ridolphi, 4t-2a. Interception: Rogers. Fumble recovery: Peterson.

Coming up: The Wykons finish their season at home Oct. 19 against Bark River-Harris.

Many observers feel the Broncos will be a strong team before long. This year, though, they are 1-7, their only win coming over Munising in Week 7. They lost 20-6 at North Central Oct. 12.

Wykons	7	0	3	7	--	17
Bulldogs	0	0	0	7	--	7