SPORTS

Falzon rushes for over 200, Owls rout Hawks 37-13

By Julian Markese
Sports Editor



PHOTO | WADE BARILLARO

Running back Kieran Falzon, a junior, during one of his explosive runs.

After their comeback victory against Pace University, the football team returned home to face the Hawks of Saint Anselm College on Saturday, Oct. 25. Saint Anselm was riding a four-game win streak.

The five previous matchups between the two teams were all decided by one score. The Owls put a stop to the Hawks' win streak and won by a large margin. The final score was 37-13.

"We rallied together. We played as one," linebacker Cooper Dayton, a graduate, said. "It was a phenomenal performance by everyone."

The game was frenetic to start. The teams traded touchdowns in the first quarter.

Quarterback John Giller, a freshman, took a deep drop, then one hitch, before throwing on a rope to wide receiver Divine Edwards, a senior, for a 57-yard touchdown.

The Hawks responded with a touchdown pass of their own. The Owls blocked the extra point, their sixth blocked extra point of the season, leaving Saint Anselm with 13 points in the first quarter.

The 13 points were the only points Saint Anselm scored all day. From the second quarter on, the Owls' defense was impenetrable.

"Around the second quarter, we knew they didn't really want to play," Dayton said. "We had to keep the pressure going, and we did."

Offensively, the pressure man was running back Kieran Falzon, a junior. With the Owls still trailing in the second quarter, Falzon burst through the line and ran for 33 yards up the middle to set up first and goal.

Falzon's run allowed Giller to throw for his second touchdown pass. From an empty set, with the defense expecting a run, Giller faded to his right and threw a jump pass to wide receiver Seth Westover, a senior.

The extra point gave the Owls a lead that they would not give up.

The rest of the game was ruled and defined by Falzon. Before the half was over, Falzon found paydirt. He ran five straight times inside the 20, finally plunging home on a one-yard run.

"We are a great rushing team. We believe that the best way to win a game is on the ground," Offensive Coordinator John Weiss said. "The guys put that into action today."

Linebacker LaRawn Robinson, a freshman, ignited the crowd and his teammates and punctuated the Owls' first half effort with the hardest hit of the game. He finished with a team-high seven tackles.

"It was a phenomenal game by him," Dayton said. "The young buck really stepped up."

After a field goal, the Owls led 24-13 at halftime.

The Owls stifled the Hawks' offense to start the second, then turned back to Falzon.

On just their second offensive play of the half, Falzon cut through the defensive line and galloped untouched for a 53-yard touchdown, giving the Owls an 18-point lead.

"It's a beautiful feeling to be able to run through and score touchdowns," Falzon said. "I just want to thank the offensive line."

It was part of a career day for Falzon. He finished with 204 yards on the ground, a personal best for him, and the most by an Owls running back since last season.

Falzon is in his third season with the team, but this year has been his first chance to lead the backfield. After an injury to fellow running back John Amaning, a graduate, Falzon has dominated. He rarely left the field against both Pace and Saint Anselm.

"He's a great kid and a hard worker. He has waited his turn over the last couple years, but he's had this ability since he's been here," Weiss said.

Feeling pressure, the Hawks turned away from their run game. They were plagued by penalties, dropped snaps and general miscues.

They muffed a punt in the third, which was recovered by defensive back Jason Hunt, a junior, and the Owls capitalized quickly.

With the entirety of the Hawks defense cued in on Falzon, Giller's fakes were highly effective. Giller was able to find running room himself, scampering for 17 yards down to the goal line, which set up Falzon to score his third touchdown of the game.

Falzon's touchdown made the final score 37-13.

Giller finished with over 100 yards both in the air and on the ground. It was his second win as the starting quarterback of the Owls.

In the fourth, defensive end Joe Garbowski, a graduate, squeezed the last dying breaths out of the Saint Anselm offense. He sacked the quarterback and rightfully blew a kiss to the crowd.

The Owls sustained a seven-minute drive to salt away the game.

"We put our heart and soul on the field every day, and we battle. And today, that battle took us to win," Falzon said.

The win positions the Owls well in the NE10. They currently sit third in the standings.

Their next test comes Saturday, Nov. 1 against Assumption University, who leads the conference with a 5-0 record.

A win against Assumption would put the Owls in clear contention for the NE10 title.

"Coach talks about playing meaningful games at the end of the season," Weiss said. "They just keep getting more and more meaningful."

Weekly Recap

Women's soccer: 3-8-3 (1-7-1)

W 2-1 vs. Pace University
L 4-2 vs. Franklin Pierce University

The team got their first NE10 win of the year against Pace University. With only one game remaining, they will not secure a spot in the NE10 Tournament.

Next: 10/31 vs. Molloy University, 4 p.m.

Men's soccer: 7-3-4 (4-1-3)

L 2-1 @ Adelphi University
W 4-1 @ Saint Anselm College

Midfielder Jeremy Martin, a graduate, scored twice against Saint Anselm College. The team finally saw their unbeaten streak end against Adelphi University. They are strongly positioned in the NE10.

Next: 10/28 vs. Dominican University, 7 p.m.
11/1 vs. Bentley University, 4 p.m.

Field hockey: 8-8 (5-5)

W 7-1 @ Molloy University
L 2-0 @ Southern New Hampshire University

Six Owls scored against Molloy University. The team's five conference wins are the most they have had since 2012. They have a chance to reach NE10 tournament play for the first time since 2013.

Next: 10/28 vs. Pace University, 4 p.m.
11/1 vs. Franklin Pierce University, 1 p.m.

Volleyball: 12-5 (3-1)

W 3-2 @ Pace University
L 3-0 @ Post University

The team is halfway through their NE10 schedule. They are fourth in the standings. Right side hitter Sydney Bennett, a senior, has played well. She is second on the team with 159 kills.

Next: 10/28 @ Franklin Pierce University, 6 p.m.
11/1 vs. Southern New Hampshire University, 12 p.m.

Women's basketball takes on UConn in Hartford

By Julian Markese
Sports Editor

The women's basketball team traveled to Hartford to play an exhibition game against the undisputed women's basketball champions of the world, the University of Connecticut Huskies.

The Sunday, Oct. 26 matchup was the second in three years between the two teams and the first at PeoplesBank Arena. The scoreline was predictable but did not detract from the lessons learned and memories made by the Owls.

"Every little girl's dream is to end up playing for UConn," guard Maya Henry, a senior, said. "So, to be able to be in the same gym and have the experience to go against some of the best players in the country is just really amazing."

Henry was born-and-raised in Connecticut. She and fellow nutmegger, guard Jillian Martin, a graduate, have both had a chance to play Connecticut twice. For them, the moment was even more special.

"I've watched these guys play since I can remember," Martin said. "My parents brought me to multiple games at Gampel Pavilion and the XL Center."

The team had no time to be starstruck; they had a game to play. For most of the players, it was their first time taking the court in such a large arena.

The crowd was made up of about 7,000. The Huskies' student section sold out in less than an hour; they were raucous and present throughout.

The Owls scored the first points of the game and briefly held the lead. Before too long, the disparity in talent became apparent.

"They're big; they're strong; they're athletic," Henry said.

The team kept pace. There was no inkling of discouragement from the bench, the coaches nor the players on the court. After suffering a bit, the team rallied at half and put on a performance that the whole university could be proud of.

"Once they got into a little bit of a rhythm, they had a pretty good idea of what they wanted to do," University of Connecticut Head Coach Geno Auriemma said. "And you know, you can tell a lot about a team by what they are trying to do."

Several Owls submitted individual performances of note.

Guard Iyanna Cotten, a sophomore, appeared to be the most eager to take the Huskies on. She demanded the ball and was more than willing to shoot. Cotten finished with two three pointers and eight points on nine shots.

Forward Jada Williams, a graduate, fought tooth and nail for every board, refusing to shy away from contact. She finished with four rebounds, tied with guard Hope Fox, a senior, for the team lead.

Guard Taeya Steinauer, a sophomore, led both teams in minutes and shots taken. She finished with a team-high 10 points.

Every Owl got to touch the court. The team continued to rally together until the final whistle. After the game, the team cheered Head Coach Kate Lynch when she entered the locker room.

"I told the team, 'If we can do those types of things against UConn, think about what we can do at our level,'" Lynch said.

Lynch is familiar with the Huskies' brand of basketball, having played against them her senior season as a player for the Owls. She used her on-court experience to prepare her team for what was to come.

"I got my stuff blocked by Tina Charles like 10 times in a row," Lynch said. "That's just what comes with it, but to be able to step on the court with this level of players and play hard against them is a great opportunity for our team."

The game was an unforgettable memory for each player to cherish together.

"It means a lot for my basketball career. I think it's a cool milestone that I can say that I have experienced," Martin said. "And I got to do it with the people that I love: my teammates, my coaches."

The game also gave the players a glimpse into how they may fare against more even competition. The verdict? They are ready.

"We're gonna be really, really good in the NE10," Martin said.

Auriemma agreed with Martin.

"What they were trying to do is gonna really, really work against other teams that they play," Auriemma said.

The relentless mentality displayed by the team and their ability to stick with the toughest opponent of all was proof of the culture Lynch has built at the university.

"I'm insanely proud to see everyone keep their heads high, keep working, keep pushing through," Henry said. "Forget about the score. We didn't worry about what everyone else was thinking or what the fans were saying. We really stayed together. Everyone is keeping with the culture."



PHOTO | JULIAN MARKESE

The women's basketball team huddles together after a timeout during the exhibition match.

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