

Ferguson sparks Golden Eagles past Seton Hill

CLARION — Clarion University’s football team clinched a winning season for the first time in a decade on Saturday afternoon, beating Seton Hill, 23-17, in a spirited Homecoming effort at Al Jacks Field. In a game where both teams committed turnovers and miscues, Clarion was the one to come out on top.

Clarion’s win came on the strength of a streak of 16 consecutive points in the second half, which turned a 10-7 deficit into a 23-10 advantage. The Golden Eagles’ defense was generally solid, though, the final numbers did not necessarily bear that out, limiting the Griffins to field-goal attempts while defending short fields.

Entering for an injured Anthony Guercio, quarterback Jase Ferguson helped to engineer four straight scoring drives in the second half. On 3rd-and-6 from the Seton Hill 44-

yard line, he fired a dart across the middle to Ray Jackson for 23 yards, eventually setting up a 37-yard field goal from Andrew Kurtas to tie the game at 10-10. On his first drive of the fourth quarter, he snuck a deep out to Holt Egan past the cornerback, with Egan sprinting 60 yards after the catch for an 81-yard TD reception to put Clarion up 17-10. The catch was his seventh touchdown of the season.

Special teams made its impact on the next Seton Hill drive. After forcing a fourth down at the 24-yard line, the Golden Eagles blocked the Griffins’ field goal attempt, with Jaylin Miller getting a hand on it and David Adams-Prince returning the loose change all the way back to Seton Hill territory. Ferguson then hit Egan on a deep pass down the sideline, setting up a chip shot for Kurtas to make it 20-10.

Emmanuel Ajayi blew up the next Griffin possession, picking off a pass in the flat. Kurtas made his third field goal of the day, this time from 38 yards, to give the Golden Eagles a 13-point edge. Seton Hill scored a touchdown with 33 seconds left to pull within 23-17, but the team’s on-side kick failed, allowing the Golden Eagles to kneel out the clock.

Guercio and Ferguson combined to complete just 10 of 23 passes, but the damage on explosive plays led to 236 yards and two touchdowns. Egan had his third 100-yard receiving game of the year, catching four passes for 142 yards. Guercio was the team’s leading rusher, attempting 17 runs for 88 yards. Griffin Buzzell totaled 10 tackles while Mathew McGregor had five tackles, 2.5 tackles for loss and a sack.

The Golden Eagles were the first

to light the scoreboard, scoring with under three minutes to go in the first quarter to take a 7-0 advantage. The play of the drive came with a 1st-and-10 at midfield, with Logan Kent bouncing off tacklers for a 35-yard gain down to the Seton Hill 15-yard line. Two plays later, Guercio hit Davon Jones on an underneath route, with Jones finding paydirt for his eighth touchdown of the season.

Unlike other games this season, where the Golden Eagle offense had been churning out yards and big plays, that stood as the lone score for Clarion until late in the third quarter. The Griffins forced a number of turnovers over the ensuing two quarters and change, including two forced fumbles and two interceptions to douse Golden Eagle drives.

Seton Hill finally scored with just over five minutes to go in the second

quarter, capping a 13-play, 83-yard drive with a two-yard touchdown rush from quarterback Boden St. Marie. The Golden Eagles marched down the field, including a 28-yard completion from Guercio to Jackson, but Demetri Whitehead picked off a pass to halt the drive. The next drive was halted when Guercio had the ball punched out by Ritchie McCormack near midfield, but the Clarion defense stood tall and kept the Griffins from breaking the 7-7 tie.

Another Clarion turnover led to Seton Hill points midway through the third quarter, when Khalon Simmons fumbled on the punt return after a successful defensive stand. That put the ball on Clarion’s 29-yard line but the Golden Eagles limited the Griffins to just four yards, and Rayyan Bataneh booted a 42-yard field goal to put Seton Hill ahead 10-7.

Byron outduels Blaney for victory at Martinsville

MARTINSVILLE, Va. (AP) — With a Championship 4 spot on the line Sunday, William Byron put the bumper to Ryan Blaney to win at Martinsville Speedway in the third-round finale of the NASCAR Cup Series playoffs.

Byron made his winning move with 43 laps remaining, seizing the bottom lane in Turn 1 and moving Blaney up the track by tagging him in the left rear.

The Hendrick Motorsports driver led the rest of the way and fended off Blaney on a restart with 11 laps remaining. Starting from the pole position, Byron led a race-high 304 of 500 laps for his third victory this season in the No. 24 Chevrolet.

“I thought William drove the race of his life,” said Hendrick vice chairman Jeff Gordon, a four-time Cup champion and nine-time winner at Martinsville himself.

It was the first win in 11 races since August at Iowa Speedway for Byron, who won the regular-season championship despite a six-month drought after opening the year with his second consecutive Daytona 500 victory.

He had one top-five finish (a third at New Hampshire Motor Speedway) in the previous eight playoff races and opened the third round with a 36th at Las Vegas Motor Speedway and a 25th at Talladega Superspeedway that left him in a win-or-else position to make his third consecutive Championship 4 appearance.

Byron delivered with his 16th career Cup victory — his first in a playoff elimination race and third at Martinsville.

“Damn, I got a lot to say,” Byron said. “Things have a way of working out. God really tests your resilience a lot of times. We’ve been tested. Just unbelievable. We just worked

so hard, and you put everything into Sundays. Sometimes you don’t get anything in return. That’s been the last couple of weeks and honestly throughout the year. But sometimes life is that way. You just got to keep being resilient. We were. Just feels damn good.”

Blaney also was in a must-win situation to advance to the championship round. Trying to win his third consecutive playoff race at Martinsville, came up one spot short despite qualifying 31st and leading 177 laps on the 0.526-mile oval.

There were no hard feelings afterward as Blaney congratulated Byron in victory lane.

“That’s just two guys going for it. I don’t blame him for taking that,” Blaney said about the contact with Byron on the pass for the lead. “I would have done the same thing. I knew it was going to be tight. I tried

to crowd him as much as I could. Just proud of the effort from the team. They gave 100% of what they had, and that’s all you can ask. Wasn’t quite enough.”

Kyle Larson, Byron’s Hendrick Motorsports teammate, captured the final championship-eligible berth in the season finale with a fourth-place finish that put him seven points ahead of Christopher Bell, who was seventh.

“What a performance by William,” Larson said. “Happy for Hendrick Motorsports. This win is as good as it could have been for us to score more points than Christopher then have William win, too. Hopefully one of us can win it.”

Bell again was the first driver left out of the Championship 4, but he could live with the outcome more than last year’s race when he was bounced by Byron in a finish tainted

by manipulation.

“I feel content with the results,” Bell said. “The four are legitimate contenders. Whoever the champion is, it’s going to be well-deserving.”

Byron and Larson advanced to face Denny Hamlin and Chase Briscoe in the title round Nov. 2 at Phoenix Raceway. The championship will be awarded to the driver with the best finish of the four drivers who are split evenly between Joe Gibbs Racing (Briscoe and Hamlin) and Hendrick Motorsports (Byron and Larson).

Along with Bell and Blaney, third-place finisher Chase Elliott and defending series champion Joey Logano (eighth) also were eliminated from the playoffs.

With Blaney and Logano locked out of the Phoenix title race, Team Penske’s streak of three consecutive Cup championships was snapped.

Blue Jackets pick up rare victory in Pittsburgh, 5-4

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Kent Johnson, Adam Fantilli and Kirill Marchenko scored in the shootout to lift the Columbus Blue Jackets past the Pittsburgh Penguins, 5-4 on Saturday night.

The Blue Jackets won for just the second time in their last 18 trips to Pittsburgh when Penguins star Evgeni Malkin fired wide of the net and goaltender Elvis Merzlikins in the final round of the shootout.

Dmitri Voronkov scored twice for Columbus. His second of the night 4:54 into the third period put the Blue Jackets up two and put Columbus in position to beat the Pen-

guins in regulation in Pittsburgh for the first time since November 2015.

Pittsburgh rallied to force the extra session when Kris Letang and Bryan Rust scored their first goals of the season two minutes apart late in the third period.

Mirzlikins finished with 24 saves, including a sprawling save of Malkin in overtime in which he stopped the shot with his glove only to see it flutter over him toward the Columbus net before a teammate knocked it out of harm’s way.

Yegor Chinakhov and Charlie Coyle scored their first goals of the season for Columbus, which

bounced back from a 5-1 loss to Washington on Friday night by carrying play for long stretches against the Penguins.

Letang and Anthony Mantha had a goal and an assist for Pittsburgh. Ryan Shea scored his first of the season for the Penguins. Malkin finished with two assists to boost his career point total to 1,360 and move him past Hall of Famer Mike Modano and into 10th on the NHL’s list for most points by a player with one franchise.

The 39-year-old Malkin now has 14 points through nine games for Pittsburgh, which saw its four-game winning streak come to an end. Ar-

turs Silovs made 36 saves but failed to stop any of Columbus’ three shootout attempts.

The result put a small damper on a night in which the Penguins honored former coaches Scotty Bowman and Eddie Johnston and forwards Kevin Stevens and Ron Francis by inducting them into the club’s revamped Hall of Fame.

Rakell to miss 6-8 weeks

PITTSBURGH — The Pittsburgh Penguins will have to try to keep their hot start goin without forward Rickard Rakell.

The team announced Sunday that the 14-year veteran will be out 6-8

weeks after undergoing hand surgery. Rickard sustained the injury while blocking a shot in the third period of a shootout loss to Columbus on Saturday night.

Rakell has three goals and five assists in nine games this season for Pittsburgh, which is off to a 6-2-1 start under first-year coach Dan Muse. The injury means Rakell won’t be able to play when the Penguins and Nashville Predators play a pair of games in his native Sweden next month.

Pittsburgh recalled forward Ville Koivunen from its AHL affiliate in Wilkes-Barre/Scranton to take Rakell’s spot on the roster.

THE DAILY SCOREBOARD

NFL STANDINGS						
AMERICAN CONFERENCE						
East						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	6	2	0	.750	213	146
Buffalo	5	2	0	.714	207	146
Miami	2	6	0	.250	174	215
N.Y. Jets	1	7	0	.125	168	221
South						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Indianapolis	6	1	0	.857	232	140
Jacksonville	4	3	0	.571	146	155
Houston	3	4	0	.429	153	103
Tennessee	1	6	0	.143	96	192
North						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Pittsburgh	4	2	0	.667	150	140
Cincinnati	3	5	0	.375	174	253
Baltimore	2	5	0	.286	174	210
Cleveland	2	6	0	.250	126	184
West						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Denver	5	2	0	.714	163	127
L.A. Chargers	5	3	0	.625	188	173
Kansas City	4	3	0	.571	186	124

Las Vegas	2	2	0	.286	105	180
NATIONAL CONFERENCE						
East						
Phila.	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	6	2	0	.750	208	185
Washington	3	3	1	.500	222	206
N.Y. Giants	3	4	0	.429	180	170
	2	6	0	.250	173	215
South						
Tampa Bay	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Carolina	5	2	0	.714	174	175
Atlanta	4	4	0	.500	154	192
New Orleans	3	4	0	.429	120	154
	1	6	0	.143	125	186
North						
Green Bay	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Detroit	4	1	1	.750	158	125
Chicago	5	2	0	.714	215	151
Minnesota	4	3	0	.571	168	185
	3	4	0	.429	155	162
West						
Seattle	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
L.A. Rams	5	2	0	.714	193	136
San Francisco	5	2	0	.714	175	117
Arizona	5	3	0	.625	160	164
	2	5	0	.286	153	154
Thursday's Games						
L.A. Chargers 37, Minnesota 10						
Sunday's Games						
Baltimore 30, Chicago 16						
Buffalo 40, Carolina 9						
Houston 26, San Francisco 15						
Miami 34, Atlanta 10						
N.Y. Jets 39, Cincinnati 38						
New England 32, Cleveland 13						
Phila. 38, N.Y. Giants 20						
Tampa Bay 23, New Orleans 3						
Denver 44, Dallas 24						
Indianapolis 38, Tennessee 14						
Green Bay at Pittsburgh, late						
Open: Jacksonville, Las Vegas, Arizona, Detroit,						
L.A. Rams, Seattle						

NHL STANDINGS										
EASTERN CONFERENCE										
Atlantic	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA			
Montreal	10	7	3	0	14	36	30			
Detroit	9	6	3	0	12	30	29			
Florida	10	5	5	0	10	25	28			
Buffalo	9	4	4	1	9	27	27			
Ottawa	9	4	4	1	9	31	35			
Toronto	9	4	4	1	9	31	33			
Tampa Bay	9	3	4	2	8	24	28			
Boston	10	4	6	0	8	32	35			
Metropolitan	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA			
New Jersey	9	8	1	0	16	35	22			
Pittsburgh	9	6	2	1	13	32	24			
Carolina	8	6	2	0	12	31	22			
Washington	9	6	3	0	12	27	21			
N.Y. Islanders	8	4	3	1	9	30	28			
Philadelphia	8	4	3	1	9	25	21			
Columbus	8	4	4	0	8	23	25			
N.Y. Rangers	9	3	4	2	8	21	21			
WESTERN CONFERENCE										
Central	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA			
Utah	10	8	2	0	16	37	24			
Colorado	10	5	4	1	11	33	29			
Winnipeg	9	6	3	0	12	30	22			
Dallas	9	5	3	1	11	28	30			
Chicago	9	4	3	2	10	26	23			
Nashville	10	4	4	2	10	26	32			
Minnesota	10	3	5	2	8	28	39			
St. Louis	8	3	4	1	7	24	33			
Pacific	GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA			
Vegas	9	5	1	3	13	31	25			
Seattle	9	5	2	2	12	25	25			
Los Angeles	10	4	3	3	11	29	33			
Anaheim	8	4	3	1	9	29	29			
Edmonton	9	4	4	1	9	26	28			
Vancouver	9	4	5	0	8	25	28			
San Jose	9	2	5	2	6	19	42			
Calgary	9	1	7	1	3	16	34			