

PEACHTREE RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL



Lions escape upset bid Two late Stanley TDs rescue Peachtree Ridge

Peachtree Ridge quarterback Nick Lombardo (13) reaches for the end zone over Kell's Nathan Lowman (73) during Friday night's playoff game.

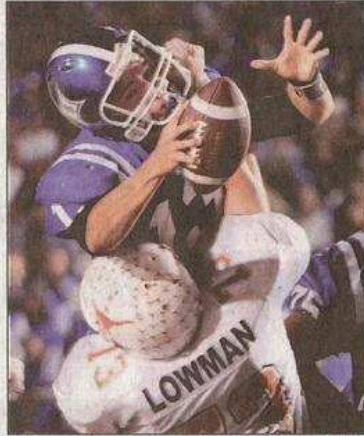


Photo: Kevin Hinton

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SUWANEE — The game's first six fumbles brought misery to Peachtree Ridge. The seventh was a life-saver.

Moments after the Lions had tied the game with a fourth-quarter touchdown, Eric Odonkor forced a Kell fumble on the ensuing kickoff and kicker Justin Watts recovered at the Longhorns' 33-yard line.

Seven plays later, Brandon

QUICK HIT

BUTTER FINGERS

Peachtree Ridge fumbled six times but overcame that to beat Kell in its playoff opener.

Stanley scored his second touchdown in the final 3 minutes, 19 seconds as Peachtree Ridge won 14-7 in a scary first-round matchup in the Class AAAAA playoffs. The Lions (9-2) got more good news afterward with Brookwood's upset over McEachern, giving them a home playoff game against the Broncos

next Friday.

"Most of the time if you do that (fumble six times), you lose the ball game," Peachtree Ridge head coach Bill Ballard said. "We won't be able to do that next week and win. I'm real proud of the offensive line, they kept plugging away every time (we fumbled) and the defense fought hard all game long."

Kell took advantage of one of those Peachtree Ridge fumbles, at its own 34, and turned it into a 7-0

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Photo: Kevin Hinton

Peachtree Ridge's Brandon Stanley (2) fumbles the football during Friday night's playoff game.

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first-quarter lead. Though the Lions' defense was stifling from that point on, it looked like the one score might be enough thanks to their sloppy offense.

The hosts lost three of their six fumbles, the most costly on a fourth-and-goal from the 1-yard line midway through the fourth quarter. That was the 17th play of a long drive that was kept alive by Watts, who scampered 15 yards for a first down when all the Kell defenders peeled back on a punt.

Peachtree Ridge got its first break on the next possession with a pass interference call on third-and-11 that angered the Kell coaches. Stanley, who rushed for 117 yards on 21 carries, scored on the next play, knotting it up at 7-7.

That score brought

PLAYOFFS

A look at next Friday's second-round high school football matchups:

- Class AAAAA**
Brookwood at Peachtree Ridge
Roswell at Grayson
South Gwinnett at Lassiter
Woodstock at North
- Class AAAA**
Marist at Apalachee
- Class AA**
Buford at Jefferson
- Class A**
Bowdon at Wesleyan

some relief, but the outcome was still in jeopardy until the game-deciding fumble on the kickoff. Odonkor made a great strip on the tackle and then Watts made his second major special teams play that didn't involve his usual specialty of kicking.

"We just didn't execute like we wanted to and we

didn't start like we wanted to, but we finished like we wanted to," said Peachtree Ridge senior fullback Chris Sawdey, who had 12 rushes for 77 yards. "And we had a strong comeback in the fourth quarter."

The Lions initially tried to rest injured starting quarterback Nick Lombardo, but he entered after his team's second series and played the remainder of the game. A few other injuries, one to leading tackler Tanner Botts, piled up as the game played out.

A.J. McDonald had two tackles for losses and Brad Roby had an interception and a key fourth-down pass breakup to lead the Peachtree Ridge defense.

"They showed their heart tonight," Ballard said of his players. "We've got a senior team and they just refused to lose because (Kell) played their butts off."

Rally

PEACHTREE RIDGE 14, KELL 7

Kell 7 0 0 0 — 7
Peachtree Ridge 0 0 0 14 — 14

FIRST QUARTER
Kell: Chris Gaines 5 run (Kyle Morris kick) 2:28

SECOND QUARTER
None

THIRD QUARTER
None

FOURTH QUARTER
Peachtree Ridge: Brandon Stanley 11 run (Justin Watts kick) 3:13
Peachtree Ridge: Stanley 4 run (Watts kick) 1:00

	KELL	RIDGE
First downs	9	15
Rushes-yards	30-105	50-217
Passing yards	50	44
Comp-Att-Int	7-12-1	5-8-0
Fumbles-lost	1-1	6-3
Penalties-yards	4-44	6-50

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING — Kell: Brian Randolph 15-52; Austin Patrick 6-27; Gaines 5-21; Jordan Chambers 4-5; Peachtree Ridge: Stanley 21-117; Chris Sawdey 12-77; Watts 1-15; Nick Lombardo 9-12; Tanner Mack 4-7; Steve Abwater 1-5; Brad Roby 1-(-5); Team 1-(-11).
PASSING — Kell: Patrick 7-12-1, 50; Peachtree Ridge: Lombardo 5-8-0, 44.
RECEIVING — Kell: Randolph 3-9; Cameron Carter 2-28; Hunter Marshall 1-7; Brandon Seasty 1-6.
Peachtree Ridge: Roby 3-22; Willie Udofo 1-9; Nasir Moore 1-6.

