

A must win

Masina makes the game's biggest play and keeps Brighton in contention for playoffs



By Bruce Smith
For the Deseret News

Uaea Masina reverted to an old Little League football trick to keep the Brighton Bengals in contention for the 5A playoffs.

Early in the third quarter, Masina ripped the ball away from the West Jordan running back near the end of a nice run. He ran it back to set up a touchdown that lifted Brighton to a tough 20-14 Region 3 win Friday over the Jaguars.

"All game long, they (the Jaguars) kept running away from me and my brother (Osa Masina)," he said. "I don't think he saw me and I just ripped it away. I did that a lot in Little League."

The "fumble" led to a 2-yard run by Masina that extended Brighton's 10-7 halftime lead. The Bengals eventually took a 20-7 advantage and that proved important as West Jordan rallied and almost ruined Brighton's "Senior Night" activities.

"That's a good team," Brighton coach Ryan Bullett said of the Jaguars. "They came in 2-0 and we were 0-2 (in region). They knew that if they win this, they're in the playoffs. They played Bingham and Hurricane and those guys didn't score much on them. They play tough."



Jackson Barton puts a block on a West Jordan defender.

In the end, though, Brighton ended up being the tougher team. Masina rushed 20 times for 84 yards and scored twice on offense. Freshman quarterback Drew Jensen added 79 yards on 11 carries and completed 4 of 6 passes for 115 yards.

"We never had the feeling that we were going to lose this game," Masina said. "The last two weeks, we lost the fourth quarter and we didn't want to see that happen tonight."

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BRIGHTON FOOTBALL: Bengals 20, West Jordan 14



GAME SUMMARY

West Jordan	0	7	0	7	- 14
Brighton	0	10	10	0	- 20

B - Uaea Masina 3 run (Hunter Dall kick)
WJ - Landon McMorris 5 run (Brandon Naylor kick)
B - FG Dall 32
B - Uaea Masina 2 run (Dall kick)
B - FG Dall 21
WJ - Chinedu Ahononu 8 run (Naylor kick)

TEAM STATISTICS

	WJ	B
First downs	15	17
Rushes-yards	42-100	45-216
Passing yards	90	115
Passes	10-19-0	4-6-0
Fumbles-lost	3-2	2-1
Penalties	4-30	7-75
Punts	1-39.0	2-28.5

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING - West Jordan: Kaden Maddox 13-51, Chinedu Ahononu 7-29, McMorris 8-21, Colton Michaelson 14-(-1). Brighton: Uaea Masina 20-84, Drew Jensen 11-79, Osa Masina 5-25, Josh Thompson 6-21, Keko Kane 2-5, Brady McCloyn 1-(-1).

PASSING - West Jordan - Michaelson 10-19-1-90 yards. Brighton - Jensen 4-6-0-115 yards.

RECEIVING - West Jordan - Jarmaya Omar 2-48, Diego Barajas 2-10, Tristan Tai 4-21 Maddox 1-5, Tyler Seewer 1-3. Brighton - Isaiah Kaufusi 2-95, Brad Wallace 1-10, Osa Masina 1-10.



TOP: Alec McArdle catches up and makes a tackle on a West Jordan receiver.

LOWER LEFT: Isaiah Kaufusi makes a nice reception and falls to the ground.

LOWER MIDDLE: Stephen Young

LOWER RIGHT: Assistant coach Knute Rockne

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What saved the Bengals is they didn't commit a turnover and improved their record to 6-2 overall and 1-2 in region. With two games remaining - at Jordan and then Copper Hills - Brighton must win at least one game to reach the playoffs, then the Bengals can worry about the first-round matchup from a representative from Region 4.

West Jordan dropped to 2-5 overall, but still 2-1 in region. The Jaguars still have a good chance to make the postseason, but finish the year against powers Alta and Jordan.

Bullett acknowledged that Masina's defensive play was the difference-maker. Later, the Bengals extended the margin on a 22-yard field by goal by Hunter Dall, his second of the night.

Those plays were important because the Jaguars rallied behind the hard-nosed running of Kaden Maddox, who had 51 yards on 13 carries, and a well-executed on-sides kick by Brandon Naylor. The recovery had had Brighton fans on edge until Brady McCloyn broke up a pair of passes by Jags quarterback Colton Michaelson.

West Jordan had just 190 total yards, but seemed to make the most of them. The Jags also were hurt when they failed twice to score deep in Brighton territory.

In the first quarter, they were stopped on downs at the Bengal 3-yard line, and then Alec McArdle ended another drive with a one-handed interception in the end zone.