

# Wolves get their revenge

## ■ Clarkston avenges a 38-7 loss to Romeo in last year's playoffs

By ROSS MAGHIELSE  
Special to The Oakland Press

CLARKSTON — Clarkston's football team entered Friday night's Division 1 district championship game with a perfect record and an angry attitude. A prime source of motivation for Clarkston was the lingering bitterness of a 38-7 loss to the Bulldogs in the playoffs

a year ago, a loss they made up for as the Wolves (11-0) trounced Romeo, 21-3.

"We came out and laid down last year," said Clarkston head coach Kurt Richardson. "We didn't play good, hard football and they embarrassed us. I talked to the seniors about what they went through last year and how bad it felt, and told them not to let it happen again. It was up on every bulletin board in there, the score and everything."

A key factor in this year's outcome, compared to last season, was the play of Romeo all-state running back Ben Brown. In the game last year, Brown ran all over Clarkston's defense and helped his team claim a 31-0 lead at halftime. Friday night, he was limited to 86 yards on 14 carries.

"He kicked our butt up front last year," Richardson said. "We were isolating on him and focusing on him, but I think the key to it was their turnovers. I think they turned the ball over three or four times and we didn't have any. That was huge for us."

Romeo finished the game

with three turnovers, including a fumble by Brown, and Clarkston did not turn the ball over.

Another striking difference in Friday's game compared to the previous matchup was Clarkston quarterback Tyler Scarlett's ability to efficiently move the Clarkston offense down the field. Scarlett completed 11 of 20 passes for 167 yards and three touchdowns. He also carried the ball 16

times for 88 yards on the ground.

## DIVISION 1 Clarkston 21 Romeo 3

The Wolves scored on their first two possessions of the

game, both long touchdown passes from Scarlett, and held a 14-0 lead with 28.2 seconds left in the first quarter. After the first two possessions, Scarlett was 4-for-4 with 110 yards.

"We started off good and had a couple of big plays," Scarlett said. "We weren't coming out thinking we needed to throw that much that early, but we had a couple of opportunities to do it and we took advantage of that. The offensive line played great and gave me time to the deliver the ball, and our receivers made some nice catches."

The first score of the game was a 40-yard touchdown pass from Scarlett to Derek Booker at the 7:05 mark of the first quarter. Scarlett delivered another TD on a 15-yard post rout to Dustin Gamble, giving the Wolves a 14-0 lead just before the end of the first quarter. Gamble finished with four catches for 73 yards.

Romeo got on the board with a 41-yard field goal with 6:04 left in the first half. The Bulldogs went into halftime trailing 14-3.

Clarkston scored its third



Journal Register News Service/RAY J. SKOWRONEK

**Romeo was no match for Dakota Bender (middle) and his Clarkston Wolves' teammates, as they ran over the Bulldogs, 21-3, in a Division 1 district championship game at Clarkston on Friday.**

touchdown of the game on a 4-yard pass to Dakota Bender, giving the Wolves a 21-3 lead at the 6:51 mark of the third quarter. Romeo drove the ball into Clarkston territory twice after that point.

The first possession ended with a fumble on Clarkston's 23-yard line, recovered by Gamble. With 5:27 left in the fourth quarter, Romeo's quarterback Jacob Alcini threw a fade route to the end zone, which got picked off by Gamble. After that play, the majority of Romeo's side of the stadium began to empty into the parking lot.

"I just read the quarterback's

eyes and adjusted to the pass, and was able to come down with it," Gamble said. "Once I had it, I was pretty confident our offense could move the ball down the field and finish the game."

The Wolves will move on to the regional finals where they will host Macomb Dakota Friday night.

"It's huge being at home," Richardson said. "We talked about that from game one. We said not only do we want to win games, but we wanted to look at the big picture and get home field advantage, because we know how much of a difference it makes."