

SPORTS

Despite Shutout Win over the Sarasota Millionaires, Bradenton Gladiators Not Satisfied

Criticism was rampant on both sidelines during and after undefeated Bradenton's 21-0 win over its Florida Football Alliance rival.

By **Chad Brockhoff** 5:57am

SARASOTA - Bradenton Gladiators head coach Wendell Faison doesn't want his team to lose sight of the big picture.

Faison was openly critical of his team's performance in the closing seconds of Saturday's night's 21-0 victory over the host Sarasota Millionaires at [Booker High School's](http://sarasota.patch.com/listings/booker-high-school) (<http://sarasota.patch.com/listings/booker-high-school>)Tornado Alley. He continued his lament to anyone who would listen as players from the two teams gathered to shake hands.

"We're garbage," Faison said. "This is garbage."

Faison clarified his remarks a little later.

"There were a lot of things that could have been done better," Faison said. "When you have to play the tougher teams, you have to be ready for situations. If you look at it, we just let them win the second half. To me as a head coach, that's a failure."

On a night where both teams had to contend with a consistent drizzle and wet footballs, the Gladiators moved to 3-0 in Florida Football Alliance play this season with their second shutout in as many weeks. All of Bradenton's points came within a span of 11:35 in the second quarter as Chauncey Jones scored on a 5-yard run and quarterback Nicholas Kirby threw scoring passes to Jeff Charlton and tight end Frankie Romo.

"The offensive line was all over it," Kirby said about the scoring spurt. "We were doing what we didn't do in the second half. We were executing, our receivers were running the right routes and the ball was good enough."

Kirby finished the game with 165 yards with two touchdowns and one interception on 9-of-28 passing. A 34-yard pass to Charlton, which was Kirby's second completion and fifth attempt, helped set up the game's first touchdown with 12:08 left.

Following a personal foul on the Millionaires, Charlton took a screen pass from Kirby and ran 37 yards to put his team up 14-0 with 9:56 left before halftime. Kirby had five of his completions, including a 23-yard scoring pass to Romo, on the Gladiators' final possession of the second quarter.

The Millionaires had an opportunity to score the game's first points, but Bradenton defensive tackle Aaron Hill burst through the line to block Ian Kitchell's 27-yard field goal attempt with 1:11 left in the first quarter. Sarasota was unable to capitalize on Antwan Graham's 33-yard punt return with 5:02 remaining in the second quarter and had to settle for a 42-yard attempt from Kitchell, which was partially blocked.

The Millionaires started the second half with a drive that consumed 8:41 off the clock. An illegal procedure penalty put them back at the Gladiators 9 before Mike Peterson was hit for an 11-yard loss on a third-down run and nailed for a 17-yard loss following a bad snap on what was to be a 30-yard field goal attempt for Kitchell.

"This team wants to get on the same page and block everything out," Bradenton linebacker Darian Platt, who was playing on his high school alma mater's home field for the first time in more than five years. "We still have a couple of nicks with the defense and the offense. A little lack of communication, too."

The Millionaires' frustration with a soon-to-be 0-3 start came to the surface in the fourth quarter. Players from a defensive unit, which got an interception in the end zone from Brandon Johnson and a fumble recovery from Zack Talkovic in the game's first eight minutes, criticized the decisions to punt twice in the period.

Following a boot by Kitchell that resulted in a devastating hit on Dylan Swarers, players lauded Swarers' courage while continuing to voice criticism. Wide receiver Gus Blanc, who caught two passes for 46 yards from quarterback Millard Dawson, believed he caught first-year head coach Carlos Yancy looking at his cellphone at one point.

"We're in the middle of a game, and you're looking at your phone," Blanc said to Yancy. "That's our head coach doing that."



PHOTOS (5)



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