



## Hickman High stays upbeat during 66-7 loss

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COLUMBIA — At halftime, Hickman High School had almost as many xylophones as points.

On Saturday at Missouri's Faurot Field, Hickman's marching band wheeled six xylophones past the departing Kewpie football team, which had only managed to score seven points in the first two quarters. Their opponent, Christian Brothers College (St. Louis), had already scored 51. The Kewpies would go on to lose 66-7.

The game was strikingly similar to last year's season opener. In both games, quarterback Carter Nicoli scored the first Hickman touchdown. In both games, the first quarter was quickly tied 7-7. And in both games, once CBC started scoring, it couldn't be stopped.

"Helluva lot of talent" CBC fan and tailgater Joe Carrera said about CBC, the reigning Class 6 state champions. But their "defense is somewhat questionable."

He didn't need to worry. Nicoli's touchdown in the opening minutes was the last time the Kewpies would see the end zone. Fumbles, dropped balls, an offside punt and an interception to kick off the second quarter haunted the Kewpies throughout the game. When CBC wide receiver Kamryn Babb returned an early punt for 60 yards, he jogged into the end zone; nobody was even near him.

"We started out swinging," Hickman coach Arnel Monroe said. "We had some things go for us. (But) we hurt ourselves in a lot of ways. We're going to have to get over the mental aspect and come together and move forward."

Yet as the football team grew quiet, Hickman's fans didn't desert it.

"We're down 51 points!" yelled Thomas Semkin, a Hickman senior in the marching band. "It's hot! We want to go home! But we all love the game that we play!" His section erupted in cheers.

Semkin roamed the bleachers during the game, launching into motivational speeches like Mel Gibson in "Braveheart," even convincing his band mates to chant: "I believe that we can win!" deep into the fourth quarter.

"We need to not give up," said Hickman's mascot, the Kewpie, who would only identify himself as a sophomore. The Kewpie walked the sidelines throughout the game, his giant head bobbing up and down. At one point he crouched down to greet a toddler. The toddler screamed in terror.

Freshman Brad Nicklas and sophomore Ryan Dugan discussed what it would be like if the Kewpies were somehow able to win. "It would be the comeback of the century," Dugan said.

But even if their football team lost, several new students at Hickman were at least upbeat about starting high school.

"It's better than middle school!" freshman Alex Shultz said.

*Supervising editor is Greg Bowers.*