

The HBL Defense Has Officially Arrived! 52 Minutes Before First Touchdown is Scored; Final in OT: 49 – 42

What a game. That was the sentiment echoed by most as both teams carried themselves off the field after an epic Game 3, which ended in overtime with Manuel, Aaron, Macky, Steve, and Jay pulling out a win over Eric, Earl, Rich, John, and Daniel. Edwin alternated between teams throughout the game. Most striking was the 1-hour first half, in that not a single touchdown was scored until Manuel hooked up with Aaron for the long pass with only 8 minutes to play. According to Eric, this performance came on the heels of last weeks *HBL News*, in which the *Defensively Speaking* column may have stoked the defensive fires of everyone playing in Game 3. In an unprecedented performance, nearly every series included a 4th down play. Some were converted, others were not—but the field was stretched as offenses were made to work for their first downs like never before, and for 52 minutes, nobody could find daylight.

The entire game was a true testament to the level of defensive play that the league has achieved, as there was nothing wrong with the offense, either. "Passes were completed, and everyone was doing their job on offense—there was just a lot of good containment going on out there," Rich pointed out. Eric was at his best at QB, looking more mobile than ever. With solid pass rushing by Jay and Macky, he had to be on his toes. He showed no hesitation at taking off out of the pocket, and easily racked up 50–60 yards rushing by scrambling alone. But on this day of defense, even this was not enough as Macky scored an HBL record two consecutive sacks on both John and Eric to shut down an otherwise threatening drive.

It would prove to be a big day for Macky—in addition to the sacks, he had another interception this week, this time for a touchdown. He also had a beautifully defended pass as well as a crucial long touchdown catch that gave his team the lead late in the contest.

Still feeling the brunt of the flu, Aaron had a few uncharacteristically dropped passes—albeit passes that were difficult to catch at best. But when it comes to the reigning League MVP, the circus catch has come to be expected! Aaron would not yield, however, and went on to catch 10 passes for 225 yards and 4 touchdowns, two of which came on the patented Manuel-to-Aaron long bomb, beating Daniel for the score.

Manuel continued to put up impressive numbers both on offense and defense, passing for 300 yards and 6 touchdowns—giving him a QB rating of 108.33! On the other side of the ball, Manuel pulled in another big interception this week.

In a familiar scenario, Eric's team found themselves down by 3 touchdowns heading into the final quarter of play. Good hustle and smart play calling brought them back one score at a time, and once again we had a tie game with only seconds to play. When the buzzer sounded, Manuel had tried to get a play off approaching midfield, but would settle for overtime instead.

Overtime would not be without its share of controversy, and who better to be at the center of it than Steve. Eric had won the toss, and he and John had begun marching the team downfield when the defense stiffened and prepared for a big 3rd down play. As Earl began his route, he was met by Steve's physical blocking at the line of scrimmage. So forceful was the jamming, that Earl was thrown into someone else on the line! Meanwhile, John's pass—intended for Rich—was overthrown. Earl questioned the bumping on the line, and the offer was made to replay the down. Call it generosity, call it confusion in the heat of battle, call it what you will—Eric's team decided to allow it this one last time, and proceeded to 4th down. Predictably, the conversion failed. Taking over on downs, it would require only two plays before Manuel banked on the long pass to Aaron, and it paid off as the big man rolled past an underplaying Daniel for the touchdown and overtime victory.

Game 3 also marked a special time in HBL history, as it became the first game ever played with official HBL Football jerseys! Some donned their old high school numbers, others the numbers of past and present NFL heroes; but these jerseys were distinctively HBL, with names like "Pillsbury" and "Slo Man" gracing their shoulders! Unquestionably, the game was more fun with this additional element. The success of the jerseys may have created a monster, as the question has now become "Is one jersey enough?" Early reports show that most players are interested in purchasing an additional jersey of an alternate color, which would solve the age-old problem of color coding teams.

With jerseys in place, the HBL has taken yet another giant leap in the realm of privately organized football leagues. An older gentleman, watching the McLean Mustangs youth team play at Lewinsville, summed it up best as he cautiously approached Eric, Manuel and Rich as they surveyed the game: "Who do you guys play for?"

Perhaps this week, that gentleman will watch HBL Football instead...

PLAY of the Game Macky Lopez

For the first time ever, it was actually the combination of *two* consecutive plays that made up this week's Play of the Game.

Macky Lopez came up with two crucial sacks in a row—on both John and Eric—to stop the offense cold. During a drive that threatened to break a tie game, Mack Daddy shut it down completely, allowing his team to take over and regain the lead.

It was the first two consecutive sacks in HBL history.

SIDENOTE

We will no longer be featuring the single-game MVP award. In its place will be the Play of the Game, which everyone will have an opportunity to vote on each week. More importantly, it focuses on the one play that makes a significant impact on the game in some way or another—it literally can happen at any point in the game, and it can happen to anyone! Be prepared!

We will, of course, vote on this season's League MVP award immediately following HBL Bowl III.

Coach Espejo? Coach Friend? HBL Founders Offered Head Coaching Jobs With Youth Club

After battling it out in Game 3, Eric, Rich and Manuel made the trek up to the main field at Lewinsville to watch some of the McLean Mustangs youth football action. Anyone who has either played or watched peewee football knows that some of the larger squads can certainly put on a good show.

Within minutes, curiosity got the most of one particular spectator, undoubtedly drawn by the unfamiliar jerseys worn by the HBL stars. (Who wouldn't be intrigued by jerseys with the names "Freedom", "Dr. Evil", and "Pillsbury" on them?) When asked, the HBL contingent delivered the low-down on how their games are constructed, and the man finally introduced himself as being part of the the McLean youth club. He proceeded to admit that the club could use the help of "enthusiastic new head coaches" for next season, and asked that the guys keep in touch if interested in dedicating three nights a week to "a lot of whistle-blowing and play-calling."

Eric and Rich—both having considered coaching peewees for years—considered it once and for all in an official HBL Commissioners meeting. The meeting hadn't lasted two minutes when both their wives pointed out, "Wouldn't that mean no more HBL Football on Saturdays?" Both contemplated that thought for a moment and came back with the same reply: "F--- that!"

Both Eric and Rich say they have no plans to coach in the immediate future.

GAME 3 NOTES

Aaron scored the first touchdown of the game for the 3rd straight week

Macky became the first player to make two sacks in a row

Earl had another interception, and has had one in each game so far

Aaron played despite lingering flu symptoms, and scored the game-winning touchdown in overtime

Rich reinjured his knee after a fall, bringing his active injury total to 3 (ankle and finger sprains still not 100%)

Eric gained 50+ yards scrambling

HBL Poll of the Week
WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN PURCHASING A WHITE JERSEY, IN ADDITION TO YOUR BLUE ONE?

RESULTS:
5 out of 6 responses so far say YES, they would like a second jersey!

ASSORTED STATS

Some of the stats reported:

AARON GOODMILLER	
RECEIVING	
CATCHES	10
YARDS	225
TOUCHDOWNS	4
DEFENSE	
SACKS	1
PASSES DEFENDED	8
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MANUEL MENDOZA	
PASSING	
ATTEMPTS	40
COMPLETIONS	17
YARDS	300
INTERCEPTIONS	1
TOUCHDOWNS	6
RUSHING	
CARRIES	4
YARDS	15
DEFENSE	
INTERCEPTIONS	1
INTE RETURN YARDS	10
PASSES DEFENDED	1
.....	
EARL ESPEJO	
RECEIVING	
CATCHES	10
YARDS	85
TOUCHDOWNS	1
DEFENSE	
INTERCEPTIONS	1
INTE RETURN YARDS	5
.....	
ERIC ESPEJO	
PASSING	
ATTEMPTS	15
COMPLETIONS	10
YARDS	100
TOUCHDOWNS	2
RECEIVING	
CATCHES	10
YARDS	150
TOUCHDOWNS	1
RUSHING (SCRAMBLES)	
CARRIES	5
YARDS	60
.....	
RICHARD FRIEND	
RECEIVING	
CATCHES	7
YARDS	80
DEFENSE	
PASSES DEFENDED	2
.....	
MACKY LOPEZ	
RECEIVING	
CATCHES	3
YARDS	90
TOUCHDOWNS	1
DEFENSE	
SACKS	2
PASSES DEFENDED	3
INTERCEPTIONS	1
INT RETURN YARDS	70
INT FOR TOUCHDOWN	1

RULE REMINDER

Please make sure that all members of your team are aware of and obey this rule, to avoid future controversy!

JAMMING AND/OR BUMPING OF RECEIVERS IS NO LONGER PERMITTED. THERE SHOULD BE NO CONTACT OTHER THAN PURELY INCIDENTAL WHILE MAKING A PLAY ON THE BALL.

ANY CONTACT THAT IMPEDES A RECEIVER'S ABILITY TO RUN HIS ROUTE WILL RESULT IN REPLAYING THE DOWN OR A FIRST DOWN, AS DETERMINED BY TEAM CAPTAINS.

HBL EDITORIAL

D O N N I E C O N T Y

Come out and Play

Starting the second season with the HBL has shown me 2 things: 1- this is my replacement for Saturday morning cartoons, and 2- to simply enjoy life. I remember the first time Earl asked me to come out and play. I remember not really being able to since my job at the time didn't allow Saturdays off. I really didn't know what to expect the first time I hit the field. I think I may have just been afraid to play with Eric. The way I saw it, it was my only way to get off my lazy ass and get some exercise. But then, as the games went by, I saw how competitive it was getting. I remember the whole Centerville vs. McLean ordeal, and how we almost came out swinging before the game even started. That's when I almost didn't want to play. Don't get me wrong, I know we're not out there pickin' daisies n' shite—a little competition among friends is always good.

When I was a kid, I remember playing tee ball, kick ball, and soccer. I mean, of course everyone had the neighborhood football games with the Nerf. Then, one summer we actually graduated to that pee-wee K2 ball. I never thought I'd be so into playing football now. Who would've thought I'd be lookin' to get cleats, gloves, the Facenda cd to psyche myself up before the games, and now jerseys! I know there are some hardcore football players out there who may want to rip Romo a new arsehole for being too aggressive (ahem, Mr. Football), I even get pissed at him sometimes, but I guess that's all part of it. Sometimes the games get ugly, and you don't want to give up until you win. But we should remember to walk off the field the way we walked on.

I remember all the great football movies I saw growing up, Best of Times, All the Right Moves, Wildcats ("foot-ball"). Now we have the Waterboy, Replacements, Jerry Maguire, Varsity Blues, Any Given Sunday, Remember the Titans, and of course, Rudy. Then we saw the HBL trailer—for what lies ahead... To be able to come out every week, and be able to play a game you love to play, it's a great thing. Now I know technically I've never played any high school football and that I'm not a "has-been". I still consider myself a rookie (especially when I make stupid mistakes). And yes, my dear Sarah, "the phantom hitter", has gotten me twice now...but like I said, it's all part of the game.

I know it may seem like we're all "too into" this HBL thing. I thought I'd be the last person to send in an article. It just goes to show you that being a part of anything can make you feel good, especially if we're all out there to have fun. I know some of you who may be reading this haven't played yet this season, but I hope we can have a huge turnout like we did last year for the Turkey Bowl and HBL Bowl. Just remember, on any given Saturday, you know where you can find us if you want to come out and play.

"Donnie Boy" Conty holds the HBL record for longest rush from scrimmage — 80 yards.

Submit your own column! Write whatever you want, and simply e-mail it to HBLnews@aol.com. Interview columns coming soon!

HBL Wives Speak Out!

- Marti Davila (Rich)** "I hate not having use of the car on Saturday mornings, but hey, whatever gets rid of that gut!"
- Anna Espejo (Earl)** "HBL is insane! First the videos, then the jerseys.... what next? pads and helmets??? As long as it's all fun and games and nobody gets hurt—or hurts anyone ;-), HBL's a good Saturday morning workout for the guys.
- Sarina Espejo (Eric)** "I hear this once in awhile, but it cracks me up all the time. 'DAMN IT, STEVE!' (Eric, after dropping a glass washing dishes.)"
- Precious Lopez (Macky)** "With all the flab my husband is getting from being a PS2 potato.... I should say I love HBL.... 'cuz it just might help him get rid of those "unnecessary love handles".... ;-)"
- Michelle Roa (Ben)** "I personally haven't had a chance to actually watch an HBL game, but I hear that Ben gets beat by Aaron, Donnie runs, and Eric expresses a lot of compassion for the sport! I look forward to Ben's "HBL highlights", and it sounds like the guys are having fun!! I think they can use you guys on the Redskins! (Sorry Earl!)"

JERSEY UPDATE

The HBL Jerseys are a huge success! And this may be only the beginning. The question is now this: should we go the final step and have alternate white jerseys made? Would everyone be willing to pay for an extra jersey? If each player had their own "home and away" jerseys, we would be able to divide into clear teams every week! Many have already expressed interest—let us know!

If you have ordered a jersey and have not paid for it, please do so this weekend. If you know that you will not be playing, please give your money to someone who you know will play. We'll ensure that your jersey is delivered promptly. Donnie has graciously fronted the cash for this entire project—please see to it that he is reimbursed as soon as possible!

Quotes of the Game

TOP CHOICES FROM ENTRIES SUBMITTED BY HBL PLAYERS

"No, man—I'm too clean."
— Donnie, after someone asked him to stick around and play (winner with 3 votes!)

"It was a game effort, P.B.!"
— John, after a failed 4th down play by Manuel ("Pillsbury")

"You're kidding! Miguel went to med school?!"
— Manuel, after Steve said that Miguel went to Mexico