

Last Friday's PLAC showdown at Art Sanders Field was a game of runs. The Senators scored 14 quick points to take a 14-7 lead. The Blackhawks then scored 20 unanswered points, with the last one coming with 11:05 remaining in the game to take a 27-14 lead.

Instead of folding the tents, West Washington shook off the cobwebs and mounted a furious comeback that ended with a 28-27 victory.

"Sometimes you have games like that," said West Washington Head Coach Phillip Bowsman. "There is stuff that we need to fix, but we are going to focus on the positives and build off those. It took a lot of guts and a lot of grit to pull that one off."

When Valley scored with 11:05 remaining in the game, the Senators were still struggling to move the ball until a series of Valley mistakes opened the door.

The Hawks were whistled for a 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty that moved the Senators past mid-field.

The mistake combined with a big run by Tyler Dunn and a huge catch by Tyler Holliday.

Brandon Grimes kicked the PAT (Point After Touchdown) and the Senators were down six, 27-21 with 10:27 remaining.

Valley tried to mount a clock consuming drive, but the Senator defense came up with a big stop on fourth down with 7:19 remaining in the game.

West Washington burst through the crack in the door.

They mounted a drive that lasted nearly seven minutes and came to a point where they were facing fourth and goal from the 10-yard line.

Coming out of a time out Cody Maudlin through a perfect pass to Holliday who maintained possession while dragging his toes in-bounds.

Holliday didn't have a lot of time to celebrate as his next task was as important as the catch. He is the WW holder on PAT attempts. He got the ball down and Grimes put the Senators in front by splitting the uprights.

Valley had several shots to the endzone in the final seconds, but couldn't get anything going.

"It was a great finish," Bowsman said. "Holliday made some great catches and had a great run after the catch. He had to go up and leave his feet and ended up getting them both down. He is also the holder on PATs and we were four for four on those, but none was bigger than the one there at the end."

Holliday said of the two plays at the end that making the catch was the harder part.

“Man there was a lot going on there with having to catch it and get my feet down,” he said. “With the PAT, (Grimes) is so good. He is an awesome kicker.”

The game-winning drive was similar to the one Maudlin led when the Senators won the sectional championship at Milan last year.

“I told him (before he took the field for the final time tonight) this is our championship drive from last year all over again,” Bowsman said.

Holliday said he knows his catches were important, but said there were many other things that contributed to the win.

“We ran the ball more than we passed it late in the game,” he said. “Our line did an outstanding job opening the holes and Tyler (Dunn) found them and got through them.”

Bowsman said nothing happened during the week to make him think his team would be as flat as they were for the first three quarters. He said if anything it might have been all the pre-game festivities that included homecoming and the 20-year reunion of the the Senators trip to the state finals in 1993.

Even with so much going on, he said he was glad they found a way to get the job done.

“The bottom line is we won,” Bowsman said. “The kids fought and did a great job of staying after it. We were upset with the players and they were upset with us, but in the big picture we all settled down and got the job done and played great late.”

The Senators remained perfect on the season at 4-0 and have a pivotal showdown Friday night at Paoli.

The Rams are coming off a loss to Perry Central.

A win by the Senators would make their Oct. 4 game against Perry Central for all the marbles in the PLAC race.

West Washington’s game Friday will be at 7 p.m.