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WEST BRANCH TIMES

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MUDBATH

27-24 comeback thriller sends Bears to semis



West Branch juniors, from left, Quin Rocha, Reese Trepanier, and Logan Wright celebrate after Trepanier forced an MFL fumble and recovered it to preserve a 27-24 come-from-behind thrilling victory Friday night. In the background, Bulldogs senior Hunter Meyer consoles sophomore quarterback Zach Driscoll laying facedown on the rain-soaked Butch Pedersen Field. Photo courtesy Jeff Waller

First trip to UNI-Dome since 2011

Trepanier, Seydel, Hughes lead come-from-behind victory

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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Scorching performances by Tye Hughes, Cale Seydel, and Reese Trepanier collapsed No. 8 MFL-MarMac's 11-point, fourth-quarter lead for a 27-24 come-from-behind thriller Friday night.

Trailing by 10 at the half, West Branch overcame soaking conditions that plagued their first-half defense, scored two late touchdowns in three minutes, and earned their first semifinal game since 2011.

A non-stop rain drenched the Little Rose Bowl on Friday and the Bears struggled with tackling in the first half, but the second half favored the home team when two late Bulldog fumbles allowed West Branch to capitalize and pull out the win.

Despite the bone-chilling mid-40-degree down-pour, hundreds of fans stayed to see junior Reese Trepanier land on the second Bulldog fumble to secure the win, prompting screams of excitement from the stands.

"West Branch ... there

is no place like Dome!" announcer Jason Miller shouted through the public address system, drawing another round of screams from the fans.

As the last few seconds ticked off, the triumphant team pointed up to the press box to Head Coach Butch Pedersen, who again called plays from isolation as he continues his chemotherapy treatments. He responded with two high thumbs-ups through the window.

Coaches waved the team into the bleachers and out the back of the press box

to Oliphant Street to hear Pedersen give a rousing speech from atop the north stairs of the press box.

"You guys showed a tremendous amount of courage," the head coach said. "You came back and you won. That's 30 times we've been to the state playoffs, and another district championship, you guys did all this. But you know what else you get this year that we haven't had in a while? You get to go to the ... Dome!"

The team erupted in cheers.

Bears Page 9



Senior and Co-Captain Wyatt Fiderlein shows his emotions after the Bears pull off a heart-stopping victory in the final minutes of the fourth quarter to earn a trip to the UNI-Dome for the IHSAA Class 1A semifinal round. Matthew Dickinson/West Branch Times

Gruenhagen wins SD41 with 59 percent



Kerry Gruenhagen



Deb VanderGaast

By Gregory R. Norfleet
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Republican candidate Kerry Gruenhagen of Walcott won the new state Senate District 41 seat on Tuesday with 58.7 percent of the vote.

Democratic candidate Deb VanderGaast of Tipton pulled in 41.3 percent.

Across the three counties,

voters put forth 15 write-in candidates, according to unofficial numbers posted by the Iowa Secretary of State.

"It took a lot of hard work," Gruenhagen said. "I've been involved in the political scene for some time, so I knew how much work it was going to take. I'd like to thank the voters for trusting me. I'd like to thank my supporters for their enthu-

siasm. And I'd like to thank my campaign — they are the hardest working A-team a candidate could have."

Gruenhagen won majorities in all three counties that make up the district — Cedar, Muscatine, and Scott — and he split the vote in local precincts.

Gower-Springdale precinct

Senate Page 8

