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Thunder struck down

April 18, 2005
 By Matt Kramer
 NFL Europe



Dave Ragone almost led the Thunder to a comeback win. (city-press.net)

Berlin Thunder head coach Rick Lantz always tells his players that their goal as players is to put themselves in position to win a football game in the that minute. That's exactly what the Thunder did this past weekend, staging a valiant comeback on the Amsterdam Admirals inside a loud Amsterdam ArenA, only to fall 31-27 in the final minute of play.

"I would assume if you were a fan up in the stadium you would have liked this game," Lantz said. "We had the opportunity to win, our kids sucked it up and played well at the end, but you know they threw the ball into the endzone and caught it. It was tough."

Down 24-13 with under eight minutes to play in the ballgame, Thunder quarterback Dave Ragone staged a nearly heroic comeback, completing seven of his next 11 passes, including a 17-yard touchdown pass to tailback Cal Murray, and then completed a five-yard touchdown pass to a leaping Aaron Boone, who made certainly one of the most incredible catches in Thunder franchise history when he leaped up in the back of the endzone to snag down a seemingly errant Ragone pass, giving the

Thunder a sudden 27-24 lead.

However it was a lead the Thunder could not manage to hold as Amsterdam ended Berlin's six game regular season winning streak dating back to last season, and gave the Thunder its first loss of the 2005 NFL Europe campaign.

Ragone finished the day 15-of-27 for 186 yards and two touchdowns. He also ran for one 14-yard touchdown and scampered in from two yards out on a two-point conversion. His great game was hardly unseen by his head coach.

"Dave showed some unbelievable toughness and did all the things that you want your quarterback to do," Lantz said. "He really got beat up, but that's no excuse. We didn't play well enough on defense and there was a time there when we didn't play well on offense. But Dave did a hell of a job."

"It was a tough loss," guard Shannon Snell said. "We came back from an 11-point deficit and we were so close to winning. When you get blown out in a game you understand that the other team was the better team. But when you lose a close one like this it's really tough."

Snell did take solace in the fact that Berlin's offense – and defense – never gave up. "We didn't play well in the beginning, but we showed how well of a team we can be by coming back on Amsterdam. Each and every week it's a matter of who plays the best as a team. Some teams may have more talent, but it's the complete team that is going to be the best. We have a lot of faith in everyone on this football team. We can be a World Bowl contender."