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Falcons soar over Owls at Homecoming

By Matt Cain
Contributor

The energy was electric at Jess Dow Field on Saturday, Oct. 3 as the university celebrated its annual Homecoming game, bringing students, alumni and fans together for a spirited afternoon of football and school pride.

The Owls battled hard but ultimately fell 34-21, as their opponent capitalized on key second-half drives to secure the win.

“We’re a work in progress still, working every day to get better,” Head Coach Joe Loth said.

Despite the loss, the packed crowd draped in blue and white brought nonstop energy with the marching band, cheerleaders and tailgating fans setting the tone for one of the most anticipated days of the fall semester.

From pregame festivities to the final whistle, the atmosphere captured everything Homecoming stands for: tradition, community and a shared passion for university athletics.

With the loss, the Owls dropped to 1-3 overall and 1-1 in NE10 conference play, while Bentley University improved to 2-3 and 2-1 respectively.

Despite the setback, the Owls showed flashes of offensive rhythm throughout the game.



PHOTO | JULIAN MARKESE

Running back Kieran Falzon, a junior, running towards the end zone in the Homecoming game at Jess Dow Field on Saturday, Oct. 3.

Running back Kieran Falzon, a junior, powered the ground attack, finding the end zone twice and finishing with 70 yards on 10 carries.

Quarterback Brandon Jorgensen, a senior, added a dual-threat performance, throwing for 191 yards on 18-of-28 passing while also breaking free for a 10-yard rushing touchdown.

In the air, wide receiver Seth Westover, a senior, led the receiving corps

with 67 yards on five receptions while Divine Edwards, a senior, contributed six catches for 49 yards.

Though the university could not overcome Bentley’s second-half surge, the Owls’ effort and offensive balance gave the Homecoming crowd plenty to cheer for.

On defense, linebacker Rakaigh Pettway, a junior, had a career day, recording eight tackles, a sack and a pass breakup at

the line of scrimmage.

Linebacker LaRawn Robinson, a freshman, added seven tackles and a quarterback hurry.

Defensive end Peter Dempsey, a freshman, and defensive back TJ Butler, a senior, made their mark on special teams, each blocking a point-after attempt to keep the Owls within striking distance.

“Our defensive game plan was to be sound and execute,” Pettway said.

Bentley struck first,

putting together a seven-play, 43-yard drive to go up 6-0 midway through the first quarter.

On the ensuing extra-point attempt, Butler powered through the line and blocked the kick, keeping the deficit to one score.

The Falcons extended their lead to 13-0 early in the second quarter before the university’s offense began to find its rhythm.

After taking over on Bentley’s 47-yard line.

Jorgensen connected with wide receiver Jaylon Tucker, a graduate student, for a 24-yard gain to start the drive.

Falzon then followed with runs of two and eleven yards, setting the Owls up inside the red zone.

Jorgensen capped off the series with a 10-yard run into the end zone to cut the deficit to 13-7.

Coming out of halftime, the university’s offense carried momentum, orchestrating an 11-play, 83-yard drive to take the lead.

Jorgensen hit Edwards for 13 yards and running back John Amaning, a graduate student, broke free for a 15-yard run to move the chains.

After an 11-yard grab by fullback James Grif-fiths, a graduate student, Jorgensen connected with Westover for a 33-yard gain down the sideline, putting the Owls deep in Bentley territory.

Amaning added short gains before exiting with an injury, and Falzon finished the drive with a one-yard touchdown plunge to give the Owls a 14-13 advantage.

Bentley answered with two quick scoring drives — one late in the third quarter and another early in the fourth — to reclaim a 26-14 lead.

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Sodexo workers protest for better pay and benefits

By Draven Dabrowski
Sports Writer

Chants of “No contract, no peace,” echoed across campus on Sept. 17, as union workers and students rallied outside Connecticut Hall to protest Sodexo’s stalled contract negotiations.

The protest, which was organized by UNITE HERE Local 217, brought hospitality workers together with students to call for higher pay and stronger benefits.

“We want to make it known we want a fair contract,” Joshua Stanley, Local 217’s secretary-treasurer, said.

The employees stated that Sodexo, the company that manages dining services at many universities in the state, has delayed reaching a fair contract, leaving them struggling with the rising costs of living.

Stanley said prior to 2020, these workers were able to make a living off being a food service worker.

Now, he said many employees are living paycheck to paycheck, and without stronger wages, some are forced to borrow money just to make ends meet.

Gov. Ned Lamont and Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz appeared briefly at the rally in a show of support for the workers, though both were unavailable to provide a comment.

Students joined the workers in front of Connecticut Hall during their march to the

Academic Quad in front of Buley Library, holding signs in support of the union.

Several students have said that they believe the workers deserve fair wages.

Elementary education major Natasha Ribas, a sophomore, said that they support the workers stance, as their paychecks should reflect their hard work.

“They provide us with our meals daily, so it’s only fair they get better pay,” Ribas said.

The demonstration at the university was part of collective actions taking place at other Connecticut campuses where Sodexo provides dining services.

The hope from union officials is that the protest will draw attention to the issue.

Union leaders said that if negotiations with Sodexo do not move forward, workers are prepared to escalate their efforts.

“We will strike if necessary,” Stanley said. “We do not want to strike, but if it comes down to it, we will.”

This university’s hospitality workers serve thousands of students daily at Connecticut Hall and retail dining locations across campus.

Several workers at the protest said they take pride in being part of the student experience, but that the job has become increasingly difficult to sustain as living costs in Connecticut rise.

The rally remained peaceful, with chants and

signs drawing the attention of students walking to class.

“They have the right to protest. They are doing it peacefully,” business administration major Damien Davies, a senior, said. “I don’t see a problem in what they are fighting for.”

Union organizers said they plan to continue holding rallies and meetings with workers across the state campuses until an agreement is reached.

No timeline for another bargaining session with Sodexo was announced.

However, leaders emphasized that employees intend to keep pressure on the company until their demands are addressed.

“We will keep on fighting until Sodexo realizes we deserve better than what they are offering us,” Stanley said.



PHOTOS | DRAVEN DABROWSKI

Joshua Stanley, Local 217’s secretary-treasurer, at the UNITE HERE Local 217 rally in front of Connecticut Hall on Sept. 17.



Union workers and students rallied outside of Buley Library to protest for higher wages and stronger benefits.