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Tennessee Valley buries Quad City early in home opener

Kevin Eakin looked nothing like the quarterback that led Tennessee Valley to last year's Arena Cup championship in a season-opening loss to Green Bay last week. He threw a pair of costly interceptions and threw another one on the Vipers' first possession in Saturday night's home opener against Quad City.

From there, however, he was nearly flawless much to the delight of the crowd that showed up to watch Tennessee Valley drop its championship banner.

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Eakin threw for 194 yards and six touchdowns as Tennessee Valley embarrassed Quad City 74-20 before an announced crowd of 3,935 at the Von Braun Center.

"That was unreal," Eakin said afterward. "On tape, I thought they were going

to be much tougher. We knew what we had to do, and we went out and did it."

The win tied the largest margin of victory in franchise history. The Vipers beat Greensboro 63-9 on May 5, 2000.

"We got back to looking like ourselves," Vipers coach Dean Cokinos said. "We were focused for 60 minutes, and we got production from our offense, defense and special teams. Special teams were great tonight."

The Vipers evened their record to 1-1. Quad City fell to 1-1.

Bradly Chavez led the way with 11 catches for 108 yards and four touchdowns. Chris Bocage also had 11 catches for 100 yards and three touchdowns. He also returned four kickoffs for 101 yards, including a 58-yarder for a touchdown. Michael Johnson had six catches for 82 yards and a score.

Backup quarterback Tony Colston, the hero of last year's title game, was 8-of-10 for 96 yards and two touchdowns.

Tennessee Valley also came up with a pair of safeties, and Akeem Lockett recovered a fumble in end zone on the opening kickoff of the second half. Defensively, the Vipers allowed only 174 yards of total offense and forced three turnovers.

"We've got a chance to be good," Cokinos said. "We've got to clean up our mistakes and keep getting better."

After Eakin was picked off by Andre Goines less than four minutes into the game, the Vipers scored 16 unanswered points and never looked back.

"I was trying to make too perfect of a play," Eakin said of the interception. "We would have scored if I had made a better throw."

Fortunately for the Vipers, Eakin quickly bounced back.

He found Chavez with a 4-yard touchdown pass, Marcus White tackled Quad City quarterback J.J. Raterink in the end zone for a safety, and Bocage raced 58 yards with a kickoff return.



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