



'Horns close out the regular season tonight; playoff berth assured

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

While the Chase County Longhorns matched up physically with the Kearney Catholic Stars (KC), they couldn't compete with their speed.

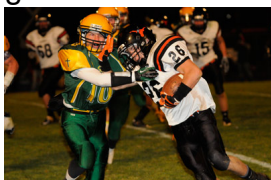
That proved to be an overwhelming factor as the Longhorns fell to 4-3 Friday night with a 35-0 loss to KC in a C1-9 district game.

The Longhorns will be jockeying for playoff seeding when they complete the regular season here tonight (Thursday) against a Minden Whippet team that comes in at 2-5.

Despite their record, Minden can't be overlooked. Coach Dan Lenners said Minden's record doesn't indicate how good of a team they really are.

Lenners said a win Friday is a must if the Longhorns are to get a home game in the first round of the C1 playoffs that begin next Thursday.

Even with a win, the Longhorns could still be traveling, depending on the outcome of other C1 games this week.



Early opportunities missed

While KC's overall team speed was a factor Friday night, perhaps a bigger factor for the Longhorns were the first three possessions of the game.

Just two plays into the game, KC fumbled the ball away on their own 36. Justus Wallin came up with the recovery but the Longhorns failed to move the ball, going three-and-out.

After a touchback, KC started on their own 20 and marched down to the Longhorn 5 before the drive stalled, forcing a field goal.

It looked like the Longhorns would get away with just giving up a field goal, However a questionable roughing the kicker penalty against the Longhorns gave KC a new set of downs. They took advantage of it, scoring a touchdown for a 7-0 lead with 4:21 left in the first.

The Longhorns answered, as they moved the ball down the field.

Quarterback Kale Gockley hit Michael May with a pass good for 15, plus another 5 yards for a face mask penalty on KC, to take the ball to midfield.

After a five-yard blast by fullback Justin German, Gockley found Kevin German downfield, taking the ball to the KC 15.

The Longhorns weren't able to penetrate the KC defense in the red zone, forcing Lenners to opt for the field goal.

Another miscue occurred when a KC player got by a Longhorn defender, allowing KC to block

the kick.

Coming up empty on those first two offense possessions really hurt the Longhorns, Lenners said. Plus, KC was able to turn three points into seven on the kicker penalty.

For the rest of the half, the Longhorns never crossed mid-field while KC added two more touchdowns for a 21-0 halftime lead.

The Longhorns went three-and-out to open the second half but got a break when KC mishandled Brian Bell's punt and Khris Kuhlman recovered it.

Again, the Longhorns couldn't move the ball and were forced to punt.

The Stars answered with two scoring drives in the third to take a 35-0 lead.

Neither team scored in the fourth to make the final 35-0.

Looking back, Lenners said the Longhorns played good defense, holding KC for no gain or a loss on at least 10 plays in the first half.

At times, the defense looked great; at other times, KC's speed proved to be too much.

That speed factor is not something you can simulate in practice, Lenners said.

The Longhorns will look to bounce back tonight (Thursday) when they play host to the Minden Whippets.

Game time is set for 6:30 p.m. MT.

Playoff seedings will be released over the weekend with the first round games being played on Thursday, Oct. 25.

Stats at a glance

Kearney Catholic

Tackles (solos-assists)—Jeff Dickey 3-7, Brian Bell 2-7, Kelton Fisher 4-4, Justin Wallin 2-4, Kale Gockley 5-0, Callin Ledall 3-2, Dan Sullivan 3-1, Justin German 2-2, Trey Milner 2-1, Khris Kuhlmann 1-2, Jacob Lueth 1-2, Freddie Kasselmann 1-2, Tyler Oxford 1-2, Michael May 1-1, David Almanza 1-0, Charles Holman 0-1.

Rushing (attempts-yards-TD)—Trey Milner 11-27-0, Justin German 6-16-0, Michael May 1-10-0, Kale Gockley 3-2-0, Dan Sullivan 1-1-0. TEAM: 22-56-0.

Passing (attempts-completions-yards-TD-INT)—Kale Gockley 15-5-49-0-1, Travis Luhrs 1-0-0-0-0.

Receiving (completions-yards-TDs)—Michael May 2-41-0, Kevin German 1-28-0, Trey Milner 1-11-0, Kelton Fisher 1- -9-0.

Scoring

KC: 2 yd. TD run by Abe Clinch, kick by Chase Murphy good.

KC: 16 yd. TD run by Clinch, kick by Murphy good.

KC: 44 yd. TD run by Brett James, kick by Murphy good.

KC: 1 yd. TD run by Clinch, kick by Murphy good.

KC: 21 yd. TD run by Thomas Connely, kick by Grant Buschkoetter good.

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