



Fifth win comes against Minden in regular season finale last week

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

The Chase County Longhorns will enter the C1 playoffs coming off a 28-15 win over Minden last Thursday to close the regular season with a 5-3 mark.

The ninth-seeded Longhorns will open their playoff run today (Thursday) at Ord, the eighth-seeded team in the C1 west bracket.

As the lower seed, the Longhorns will travel in the first round with the goal of bringing a home game back to Imperial in the second round.

To do that, the Longhorns will have to break a five-year string of first-round playoff losses.

Coach Dan Lenners feels good about his team going into the post-season game.

After being down at half last week against Minden, Lenners said his team responded to score three second half touchdowns. It allowed them to meet their goal of being undefeated at home during the regular season.

Lenners will be challenged to fill a couple holes in the line this week. Linemen Callin Ledall and Spencer Hartman will be attending the National FFA Convention and will miss the game.

Lenners said junior Tyler Oxford and sophomore Freddie Kasselmann will move into the line to cover the two positions.

Lenners said it's important the Longhorns get off to the strong start tonight. They struggled in the first half against Minden but said that can't happen against Ord.

He said Ord doesn't throw the ball a lot, but may decide to after seeing the Longhorns' pass defense against Minden.

"We didn't play the ball and lost track of the receiver too many times," he said. Fortunately, that got better in the second half, he said.

Longhorns score first

The Longhorns got on the board first against Minden, scoring on their second possession of the game, going 63 yards in two plays.

A 16-yard pass from Kale Gockley to Michael May set up the next run by Trey Milner.

After getting cut off on the left side of the line, Milner reversed field and went 47 yards untouched for the score.

The extra point kick got blocked, leaving the Longhorns up 6-0 with a little more than 3 minutes left in the first quarter.

The Longhorns answered by shutting down Minden on a fourth-down conversion attempt at the Longhorn 32.

The Longhorns got 29 yards from May on a reverse counter but couldn't sustain the drive. A Brian Bell punt pinned Minden on their own 5.

Despite that, Minden went to the air, connecting on a pass of 35 yards to get out of the hole.

Later they connected for 66 yards and the score. A successful kick gave them a 7-6 lead at half.

Longhorns rally in 2nd half

At halftime, Lenners said his guys hung their heads like they were trailing by 30. He said he was especially proud of how his kids responded after some chiding at the break.

On Minden's second possession of the half, the Longhorns caught a break when a punt snap sailed over the punter's head.

On 4th-and-6 from the Minden 23, May took a handoff on another reverse counter, getting dragged down on the three.

One play later, Justin German took it across. German added the two-point conversion to make the score 14-7 with 4:04 left in the third.

The Longhorn defense stiffened, forcing a Minden punt to set up the Longhorns' next score early in the fourth.

Running the same reverse counter, May got past the linebackers and cut back for a 63-yard touchdown run. A second kick got blocked, making the score 20-7 with 10:50 left.

Minden fumbled the ball away inside their own 45 but the Longhorns couldn't convert. Bell pinned Minden back inside their own 10 with the ensuing punt.

Minden went to the air to move into Longhorn territory but they couldn't convert a fourth down at the Longhorn 37.

The Longhorns iced the game with a 11-play drive on the ground, with German capping the drive from three yards out. A successful fake on the PAT kick gave the Longhorns a 28-7 lead with about five minutes left.

In the closing minutes, Minden converted a 4th-and-7 from the Longhorn 9 into a touchdown to make the final score 28-15.

Today's game at Ord begins at 5 p.m. MT.

Complete playoff brackets for all classes appear on the web under the football link at www.nsaahome.org.

Stats at a glance

Minden

Tackles (solos-assists)—Justus Wallin 1-10, Callin Ledall 0-9, Brian Bell 1-7, Kelton Fisher 4-2, Trey Milner 3-2, Kale Gockley 1-4, Dan Sullivan 1-4, Jeff Dickey 1-4, Justin German 1-4, Michael May 1-3, Freddie Kasselmann 1-3, Khris Kuhlmann 2-1, Jacob Lueth 0-2, Tyler Oxford 0-2, David Almanza 0-1.

Rushing (attempts-yards-TD)—Michael May 3-112-1, Trey Milner 11-93-1, Justin German 9-55-2, Kale Gockley 7-33-0, Dan Sullivan 11-29-0, Khris Kuhlmann 3-5-0, Jeff Dickey 1-1-0.

TEAM: 45-328-4.

Passing (attempts-completions-yards-TD-INT)—Kale Gockley 11-2-32-0-0.

Receiving (completions-yards-TDs)—Kelton Fisher 1-16-0, Michael May 1-16-0.

Scoring

CCS: Trey Milner 47 yd. TD run, kick by David Almanza blocked.

Minden: 66 yd. TD pass from Jonas Lovin to Isaac Carlson, kick by Alexis Ciprian is good.

CCS: Justin German 3 yd. run, Justin German 3 yd. run for 2 pt. conversion.

CCS: Michael May 64 yd. TD run, kick by Almanza blocked.

CCS: Justin German 5 yd TD run, 3 yd. pass from Kale Gockley to Jeff Dickey for 2 pt. conversion.

Minden: 9 yd. TD pass from Lovin to R.J. Watson, 3 yd. pass from Lovin to Carlson for 2 pt.

conversion.

CCS 6 0 8 14—28

Minden 0 7 0 8—15