Five-year streak of first round losses broken

By Russ Pankonin
The Imperial Republican

Longhorn football coach Dan Lenners couldn't say enough good things about his team's 21-7 win over the Ord Chanticleers in the first round of playoffs there last Thursday.

"Our kids really competed. They found a way to get it done," he said.

By getting it done, this Longhorn team accomplished something the Longhorns haven't done since 2006—win a first round playoff game.

"That was a tremendous effort out of everybody," Lenners told his team immediately following the win. "That was a team win. I'm proud of you. Great win."

The Longhorns' execution on defense spelled the difference in the game, coming up with key stops throughout the game.

While some breakdowns are expected from time to time, Lenners said there was nothing major that hurt his team.

Ord's only scoring drive of the game, which came late in the second quarter, was kept alive by an unusual and questionable defensive holding call.

Trey Milner tackled a back out of the backfield after it looked like he had the ball. Lenners said Milner was just doing his job.

Instead, the quarterback faked to the back and then threw an incomplete pass on third down. But instead of being forced to punt, Ord got a new set of downs and went on to score.

In the third quarter, it felt like the momentum could change after Ord blocked the extra point kick after the Longhorns' second touchdown.

With the score at 13-7, a touchdown and extra point would have put Ord ahead. The defense charged back, forcing Ord into a three-and-out. Ord's punt into the wind only traveled about 5 yards, to set up the Longhorns' decisive score in the 21-7 win.

Longhorns get a home game

With the win, the Longhorns also earned the home field advantage Wednesday when they play host to the top seed in the west bracket—Boone Central/Newman Grove in a 2 p.m. MT game.

Based on the game film Lenners has watched on them, he has no question his team can compete right with them.

Boone Central comes in with a 7-1 record with their loss coming to Norfolk Catholic in the third week of the season.

Lenners said the key to the game will be shutting down their quarterback. Everything goes through him, he **said. They run the ball well and like to use the spread in their passing game, he added.**

'Horns score at end of 1st Q

It was the Longhorns who got on the board first, scoring on their second possession of the game with a 10-play, 59-yard drive.

They started at the Longhorn 41 after an Ord punt into the wind went just 15 yards. The wind, blowing around 25 mph, proved to be a factor throughout the night, especially in the kicking and passing game.

The Longhorns took the wind in the first quarter, which proved key when Ord's 2nd punt hung up in the wind.

On the scoring drive, the Longhorns stayed on the ground, mixing in just one 16-yard pass en route to the end zone.

Faced with 4th and a foot at the Ord 13, the Longhorns caught a break when Ord jumped off-sides from a hard count by quarterback Kale Gockley.

Starting at the Ord 8, fullback Justin German carried tacklers for at least five yards, going down on the Ord 1.

Lenners called time out to keep the 1st quarter clock from expiring.

Gockley scored on a sneak the very next play with David Almanza adding the extra point.

With the time out, Almanza was able to kick off with the wind. It was almost for naught with Ord returning it to their 45. Fortunately, a penalty took the ball back to the Ord 15.

It looked like the Longhorns had come up with the three-and-out stop until the flag fell for Milner tackling the back in the backfield off the fake.

That gave Ord a first down and from there, they pounded it out on the ground, going 85 yards on 13 more plays. Their extra point kick tied the game, 7-7, with 4:40 left in the first half.

Ord's kickoff went out-of-bounds, giving the Longhorns the ball at their own 35. However, Ord began stuffing the Longhorns ground game, forcing a punt.

The Longhorns got it back on a roughing the kicker penalty on Ord but still couldn't move the ball, forcing another kick.

After a three-and-out, the Longhorns got the ball at their own 40 with 5 seconds left in the half. A deep pass to Kevin German fell incomplete to end the half.

Imperial and Ord both went three-and-out on their opening possessions of the second half.

The Longhorns crossed midfield on the next drive before being forced to punt again.

Brian Bell kicked the ball down to the Ord 15. Bell then came through with a third down sack to force Ord to punt from their own 23.

Kevin German fielded the punt at the Longhorn 46 and returned it to the Ord 43.

Passing game opens up

Ord really focusing on shutting down the Longhorns' running game, pulling their linebackers in tight. In turn, that opened the passing lanes for the 'Horns.

The Longhorns got another break two plays later when Ord was flagged for pass interference against Kevin German.

A shovel pass to fullback Justin German got the ball to the Ord 11 as the third quarter came to an end.

Gockley found a wide open Michael May on a slant to the six. Two plays later, Gockley found Kevin German in the end zone for the Longhorns' second score.

Unfortunately, the Longhorns couldn't hold the line, allowing Ord to block Almanza's kick, opening the door a crack for Ord,

Aided by a squib kick by Almanza that Ord recovered on their own 19, the defense slammed the door shut, They held Ord to a three-and-out, forcing them to punt from their own 24.

With the wind in his face, Ord's punter shanked the punt right, resulting in just a five-yard punt.

The Longhorns needed just one play to capitalize when Gockley found May all alone over the middle. May went in for the score from 29 yards out.

Gockley hit May on another slant-in at the goal line, good for the two-point conversion and a 21-7 lead with eight minutes left in the game.

That capped a 9-9 passing effort by Gockley in the second half.

Ord started to mount a drive before the Longhorns held them on a fourth down conversion at the Longhorn 29.

The Longhorns burned the clock down to 4:30 before being forced to punt.

Ord drove from their own 25 to the Longhorn 11 before May intercepted a pass in the end zone to kill the drive.

Ord forced a fumble on the very next play and got it back on the Longhorn 19 with 2:04 left.

After completing a pass to the Longhorn 6, Ord couldn't complete another pass, allowing the Longhorns to run out the clock for the 21-7 win.

Stats at a glance

Ord

Tackles (solos-assists)—Justin German 0-13, Kale Gockley 4-8, Brian Bell 3-8, Kelton Fisher 2-7, Jeff Dickey 1-8, Justus Wallin 0-9, Michael May 2-5, Dan Sullivan 1-4, Trey Milner 2-2, Tyler Oxford 1-2, Freddie Kasselman 0-2, David Almanza 0-2.

Rushing (attempts-yards-TD)—Justin German 11-38-0, Kale Gockley 3-8-1, Dan Sullivan 9-8-0, Michael May 1-3-0, Trey Milner 8-3-0. TEAM: 32-60-1.

Passing (attempts-completions-yards-TD-INT)—Kale Gockley 13-10-111-2-0.

Receiving (completions-yards-TDs)—Michael May 3-49-1, Kelton Fisher 1-16-0, Kevin German 2-14-1, Dan Sullivan 1-10-0, Justin German 1-9-0, Jeff Dickey 1-4-0.

Scoring

CCS: 1 yd. TD run by Kale Gockley, kick by David Almanza good.

Ord: 5 yd. TD run by Nick Valla, kick by Valla good.

CCS: 7 yd. TD pass from Gockley to Kevin German, kick by Almanza blocked.

CCS: 29 yd. TD pass from Gockley to Michael May, 3 yd. pass from Gockley to May for 2-pt. conversion good.

CCS	7	0	0	14—21
Ord	0	7	0	0— 7