



Lightning delays game for nearly an hour

By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Lightning struck in more ways than one in Friday's football contest here against Cozad.

Friday's game started in a driving downpour with winds pushing upwards of 35 mph.

Less than four minutes into the game, lightning lit up the southern sky, forcing both teams from the field.

But the lightning that caused the most damage came from the Cozad Haymakers' backfield in the form of speedster Jake Paulsen.

On Cozad's first possession following a Longhorn punt, Paulsen broke through the line, slipped one tackle and raced 70 yards for the touchdown.

In just one quarter of play Paulsen racked up nearly 200 yards of offense. He added another touchdown and set up two more, one coming right behind a 45-yard run to the Longhorn 2.

By the time the first 12 minutes eclipsed off clock, the Longhorns trailed 27-0.

Field position a factor

The wind and rain hindered the Longhorns' efforts as well. The Longhorns mishandled the kickoff after Cozad's first touchdown.

Starting at their own two, the Longhorns fumbled a pitch but fell on it. Then, after the rain delay, the Longhorns came out and executed a quick kick.

While the rain had stopped, the wind continued to blow hard. The kick against the wind yielded just 18 yards, giving the Haymakers their first of two short fields in the first quarter.

After Cozad's second score, the Longhorns got a return to their 31 but lost yardage and were forced to punt. This time the punt yielded just six yards, giving the Haymakers another short field.

Twice the Longhorns moved deep in the Haymaker territory, only to get two passes intercepted.

After that, the Longhorns never threatened to score.

Line outsized by Cozad

Cozad's line averaged better than 250 lbs. and dominated the Longhorn line throughout the night.

Despite the size difference, Longhorn Coach Dan Lenners said that can be offset by holding blocks just two to three seconds longer.

That's something his offensive line just isn't doing, he said. As a result, he said the Longhorns can't run the ball on a consistent basis, forcing them to pass.

"When a team knows you have to pass, they just pin their ears back and come at you," Lenners

said.

Lenners said Trey Milner worked hard to get 90 yards on the ground to lead the offense.

On the defensive side of the ball, poor tackling continued to take its toll as well, Lenners said, noting it's not possible to make an arm tackle on a player like Paulsen.

Lack of depth continues to plague the Longhorns when players get hurt.

Lenners said he's got some freshmen who have shown in practice and in games that they are ready to play.

He said they will be seeing action in the coming weeks.

Mitchell Friday

The Longhorns will try to improve on their 1-3 record Friday when they travel to Mitchell, who comes into the game 0-4.

Despite their winless record, Lenners said the Longhorns can be fooled by that.

He said they have a quarterback and running back with good speed and have knocked off some 60-yard runs.

Friday's contest begins at 7 p.m.

Jayvees' record 1-1

The Longhorn junior varsity's record stands at 1-1 thus far.

Their first game with Ogallala was cancelled when lightning delayed the game.

In their second outing, the jayvees gave up two late touchdowns in the fourth quarter to fall to Ogallala 13-0.

Last week, the jayvees traveled to Hershey, defeating them 14-6. This week's scheduled game with Perkins County was cancelled due to a lack of players for PC.

The jayvees will face Holyoke Monday night in Imperial with action beginning at 6 p.m.