



By Russ Pankonin

The Imperial Republican

Three field goals spelled the difference in Friday's 23-14 loss to district foe Kearney Catholic. After losing close games in their last two outings, the Longhorns put themselves in a must-win situation if they are to make the playoffs.

The 2-5 Longhorns travel to Minden tonight (Thursday) to face the 2-5 Whippets in the final regular season game.

Coach Dan Lenners said the Longhorns will need a win to get into the playoffs and keep their 17-year streak of making the playoffs intact.

Even with last week's loss, the Longhorns moved up in the C1 wildcard points, based on their tough season schedule.

The Longhorns moved up to 29th while Minden stands in 22nd. The top 32 teams make the playoffs.

Minden is a team that likes to throw more than it runs, Lenners said. Ironically, the Longhorns had five times as many passing yards as rushing yards with 282 yards in Friday's game with Kearney Catholic.

Lenners said his team just couldn't execute their blocking to open up the ground game, forcing them to the air.

Defensively, he felt his team played one of its best games Friday night.

"We were able to keep them off balance," he said. The Stars only had one sustained drive all night, coming late in the second quarter.

The Longhorns had considerable success putting pressure on the Star's quarterback much of the night.

Short field advantage

After a pair of three-and-outs by both teams to open the game, Kearney Catholic got the first advantage.

They pinned the Longhorns deep in their own territory with a punt that downed at the 'Horns 10.

Chase County went three-and-out and were forced to punt. Windy conditions took its toll as the Longhorns' punt went just 11 yards, giving the Stars the ball on the Longhorn 12.

Four plays later the Stars scored.

Looking back, Lenners said he thought about taking a safety versus punting out of the end zone but decided against it.

Following another Longhorn punt, the Stars moved down the field but the defense held, forcing

a field goal attempt.

The Longhorns got a piece of the kick, which was no good.

That sparked a three-play drive that got the Longhorns on the board and tied the game.

On the second play quarterback Kelton Fisher hit Isaac Sorensen in the flat and he took it 59 yards to the Star's 21.

David Almanza took a reverse in for the score and added the point after kick to tie the game 7-7.

Late in the second quarter, the Longhorns recovered a Stars fumble but were unable to convert.

The Stars mounted their only sustained drive, scoring on fourth down with just 10 seconds left in the half for a 14-7 lead.

The Longhorns stopped a pair of KC drives inside the Longhorn 30 to set up their own scoring drive.

The Longhorns tied the game 14-14 on a 13-play, 88-yard drive, culminated by a one-yard plunge by Justus Wallin.

From there, the defense never yielded a touchdown but the Stars hit field goals of 21, 28 and 36 yards. The last one came inside two minutes left to seal the Longhorns' fate, 23-14.

Game time at Minden tonight is set for 6 p.m. MDT.

Stats at a glance

Kearney Catholic

Tackles (solos-assists)—Justus Wallin 4-14, Khris Kuhlmann 2-11, Jeff Dickey 3-8, Dan Sullivan 2-8, Isaac Sorensen 2-8, Kelton Fisher 3-5, Trey Milner 2-5, David Almanza 0-6, Sam Cahow 1-3, Tyler Oxford 0-3, Garrett Taylor 0-1, Jacob Christensen 0-1, Allan Smith 0-1.

Rushing (attempts-yards-TD)—David Almanza 1-19-1, Trey Milner 7-11-0, Kelton Fisher 8-7-0, Jeff Dickey 8-7-0, Dan Sullivan 2-3-0, Jacob Lueth 1-2-0, Justus Wallin 1-1-1.

Passing (attempts-completions-yards-TD-INT)—Kelton Fisher 33-18-283-0-2.

Receiving (completions-yards-TDs)—Isaac Sorensen 5-109-0, Trey Milner 4-55-0, Kevin German 4-52-0, Dan Sullivan 1-32-0, Jeff Dickey 2-16-0, Shay Eidson 1-10-0, David Almanza 1-9-0.

Scoring

Kearney Catholic: Thomas Connely 3 yd. TD run, kick by Grant Buschkoetter good.

CCS: David Almanza 21 yd. TD run, kick by Almanza good.

Kearney Catholic: 5 yd. TD pass from John Masker to Blake Holtmeier, kick by Buschkoetter good.

CCS: Justus Wallin 1 yd. TD run, kick by Almanza good.

Kearney Catholic: 21 yd. FG by Buschkoetter good.

Kearney Catholic: 28 yd. FG by Buschkoetter good.

Kearney Catholic: 36 yd. FG by Buschkoetter good.

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