

## Bulldogs Place Fourth at WWB By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Bulldogs placed fourth in the second annual Wild West Bowl in Dodge City on November 4 to finish their season with a 6-4 record following the 27-44 loss to Weskan. "It was a tough way to end our season," said head coach Travis Smith, "but I couldn't be more proud of the guys I coach! Ending the season 6-4 after losing 4 of 6 starters from a year ago says a lot about the kids that stepped in and filled their shoes!"

The Bulldogs faced off against the Weskan Coyotes for this final game of the year. They had defeated the Coyotes 59-12 at home earlier in the season on a rainy field. This game didn't go quite as well for the Bulldogs as they couldn't get a score throughout the first quarter as the Coyotes put up 16.

The 'Dogs opened the second on offense but a pass play fell incomplete putting them in punt formation. Nolan Ritter chose to run instead of punt. A horse collar call gave the Coyotes a 15 yard penalty advancing the Bulldogs to a first down on the 22 yard line. Dylan Spresser carried the ball for a short gain followed by a 9 yard catch by Nolan Ritter from Harley Weese. Caleb Korte finished the drive in the end zone with a 9 yard run. The PAT kick attempt did not clear and the 'Dogs were on the board 6-16.

The Coyotes answered with a 75 yard return for a touchdown. Wade Rush blocked the extra point kick and the Coyotes led 22-6. Miguel Monge recovered the kick at the 28 yard line. The 'Dogs were stopped for a loss and could not get their passes to connect forcing another punt. The Coyotes ran another long touchdown on the first down (73 yards) for an additional score. Their PAT kick cleared the goal posts for a 30-6 lead.

Both teams continued to fight in the second as they moved the ball only to be set back with penalties. Passes could not connect and tackles stopped advancements. The Coyotes called a time out but the Bulldogs came back determined as Dylan Spresser tackled them just short of the goal line. Miguel Monge and Spresser held them out on the second down and Caleb Korte tackled them for a loss on the third. Harley Weese provided pass coverage on the fourth down to prevent the score with two minutes remaining in the half.

The Bulldogs moved the ball with a catch by Jeron Schutte and carries from Spresser and Weese. A catch by Korte gave them a first down with just seconds to play but the clock ran out of time to leave the Coyotes in the lead 30-6 at half time.

The Coyotes opened the second half with a long kick return but were chased down by Korte who stopped them on the 10 yard line. The Coyotes passed the ball in for another touchdown but the PAT failed to extend their lead to 36-6.

The Bulldogs recovered the kick on the 40 and made several successful passes moving to the one yard line. A flag on Weskan moved the ball half the distance to the goal allowing Weese to carry the ball in for a second Bulldog touchdown.

The Bulldogs defense held strong with a sack from Korte and tackles by Weese. Freshman Wade Rush recovered a blocked punt and ran it in for a third Bulldog score. He then caught a PAT pass from Weese to close the spread to 19-36 in favor of the Coyotes.

With the Coyotes back on offense, the Bulldogs made multiple stops allowing Weese to grab an interception. Jacob Ritter passed to Schutte, but they ended the drive with a deep punt. The defense held once again keeping the score 19-36 at the end of the third.

The Bulldogs scrambled with the ball in the air during the fourth to attempt to gain some yards as they remained determined. Midway through the quarter, Weskan passed for yet another score and a PAT kick. The Bulldogs gained yards but again turned the ball over. With two minutes to play, the Bulldogs made their final score of the season with a pass from Weese to Korte ending with a 55 yard touchdown by Korte. Nolan Ritter kicked the field goal for the extra points and a final score of 27-44.

Harley Weese finished the game with 48 rushing yards and 188 passing yards. He ran in one touchdown and passed for another along with 9 tackles and 1 interception. Caleb Korte rushed for 21 yards and one touchdown and received for 81 yards and a second touchdown. He also had 10 tackles for the team.

Dylan Spresser rushed for 44 yards and received for 10 and made 1 tackle. Nolan Ritter received for 61 yards and made 7 tackles while Jeron Schutte received for 45 yards. Wade Rush received for 3 yards, made 6 tackles, and blocked one punt that he picked up for a touchdown. Jaime Infante made 3 tackles and captured 1 fumble recovery. Additional tackles were made by Miguel Monge-5, Jacob Ritter-3, Tanner Trussel 3, Larry Radovich 1, and Josh Spresser 1.

The Bulldogs finished their season with a 6-4 record and fourth place in the Wild West Bowl for their second year of six-man play. Their motto all season was #Riseasone. The boys agreed that they really came together to be one team and not just individual players on the field.

“Our season went pretty well,” said Dylan Spresser, junior. “We lost five starters on a six-man team. We had to work together more. Most of the juniors have been together for a long time. We trusted each other—that trust transferred to the rest of the team.”

“Our goal for next year is to get to the championship game,” continued Spresser. “Everyone going out for basketball and track will help us maintain our team focus and prepare for next year. We also need to make sure more people get in the weight room over the summer.”

The Bulldogs will graduate two seniors, Jeron Schutte, a four-year player, and Larry Radovich, who joined the team this season.

“This was one of my most memorable seasons,” said Schutte. “It was different and exciting because of the group of kids on the team. They brought a lot of excitement to the field. Having three different coaches this season was beneficial to us. Coach Smith brought us his leadership and experience; Coach Ritter helped us out on the offensive line, and Coach Aumiller kept us in shape with our conditioning. I appreciate everything they did for me and for the team. I’m going to miss being a Bulldog!”

They will return 7 juniors along with a strong freshman and sophomore group. “I’m sad to see my seniors leave,” added Coach Travis Smith. “We will return 5 starters next year. It should be a another great year.”