

## Bulldogs Advance in Playoffs

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Football team advanced to the semi-finals of the Six-Man Playoffs with a 62-47 quarter-final win over the Ashland Blue Jays in Ashland on October 20. "This was a fun game," said junior Fabian Cepeda. "We are working better as a team."

Ashland won the toss and scored on their first possession to open with a 7-0 lead. The Bulldogs answered with a touchdown pass from Wade Rush to Rojelio Loya. Missing out on the extra point run, the Bulldogs trailed 6-7. Ashland answered with another score extending their lead to 14-6. The Bulldogs regained possession and with runs by Roberto Loya and Rojelio Loya gained some yardage. Rojelio then passed the ball to Rush who sent it over to Roberto who ran the field for a Bulldog score to end the first quarter with a 14-12 Blue Jay lead.

The Bulldogs kept up their defense in the second quarter as the Blue Jay runner was met by a pack of Bulldogs. Ashland was able to throw for a touchdown but the Dogs stopped the extra point giving the Blue Jays a 20-12 lead. Back on offense, the Dogs gained yards with runs by Rojelio and Rush. A pass from Roberto to Toby Korte brought the ball within a short distance of the goal. Rush finished the drive by pushing his way over the line. Another extra point attempt was unsuccessful but the Dogs were back within two 18-20.

The Blue Jays were determined to push forward and with another pass for a touchdown extended their lead to 27-18. As they kicked the ball back to the Bulldogs, Rojelio Loya grabbed the ball and ran it down the field for another Bulldog touchdown. The extra point pass did not connect giving the Blue Jays a 27-24 lead.

Mason Green stopped the Blue Jays' advance on the next play but the Blue Jays were able to quickly score once more. The PAT run succeeded and they held a 34-24 half time lead over the Bulldogs.

Golden Plains stormed out of the half to add three touchdowns, three conversions, and a safety. Following runs from Roberto and Rojelio Loya, Rush threw the first touchdown pass to Korte. He then kicked the ball for the extra points to close the score to 32-34.

Rush then knocked the ball loose on the kick and recovered the Blue Jays' fumble. Rush ran in the second touchdown of the quarter and kicked the ball through the uprights to give the Bulldogs their first lead of the game 40-34.

Ashland ran in a long touchdown only to have it called back with a penalty. They then passed in a score to tie the game up at 40. The Dogs answered as Roberto Loya ran in the first play of the series and Rush kicked for two to regain the lead 48-40.

Rush kicked the ball back to the Blue Jays deep and the Dogs tackled them near their own goal line. The Dogs continued to push them back closer to the line before Rojelio Loya tackled the Ashland QB behind the line for a Bulldog safety. The Dogs got the ball back as Jerrit Koerperich downed the kick. Rojelio carried the ball a couple of good runs as the quarter ended with a 50-40 Bulldog lead.

The teams traded possessions as they each stepped up their defense in the fourth. The Dogs were able to connect with a pass from Rojelio to Roberto who ran in another Bulldog touchdown extending their lead to 56-40.

The Blue Jays pushed the ball down the field but the Dogs fought back with tackles by Roberto, Rojelio, Wade Rush, and Ethan Shea. Ashland was able to pass and run toward their goal only to be met by Rush just shy of the line. Rojelio then kept them out of the end zone but they finished the drive with their final score of the game.

With time still on the clock, the Bulldogs were giving it their all. After receiving the kick from the Blue Jays, Rush ran in one last touchdown for the Dogs to finish the game with the 62-47 win.

“We had trouble running the ball in the first half,” added junior Jovanny Infante. “It was amazing to gain this win. By working together as a team, we were able to achieve our goals. I’m proud of how we played—we made each other better.”

With this win over Ashland, the Bulldogs advance to the semi-final game against Cheylin in Bird City on October 24 to determine who will play in the championship game of the Wild West Bowl on October 31.