

Bulldogs Run Out of Time in Weskan

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Bulldogs ran out of time in Weskan on October 5 as they received their first loss of the season 46-52 in the last few seconds of the game.

The Bulldogs received the ball to start the game ending the drive with a punt. Weskan then scored first to lead 8-0. The 'Dogs again made gains but couldn't quite get to the end zone allowing the Coyotes from Weskan to score again to lead 16-0 at the end of the first.

The Bulldogs pulled together in the second and opened with a quick touchdown by senior Caleb Korte. Their defense held the Coyotes to start deep. Dylan Spresser took the ball all the way to the end zone on the first play and the Bulldogs were back in the game 12-16.

With the defense holding the Coyotes off once more, the 'Dogs again started deep on the 4 yard line. Spresser ran the ball to midfield, then a pass from Jacob Ritter connected with Nolan Ritter for a first down. Korte then ran to the 4 and Spresser ran to within $\frac{1}{2}$ yard of the goal line. A flag on Weskan gave the 'Dogs half the distance to the goal before Korte finished the drive in the end zone for an 18-16 Bulldog lead.

Weskan answered with a touchdown pass to regain the lead 22-18 with just over two minutes until the half. Nolan Ritter returned the kick to the 25. Spresser gained 5, then 9. Korte ran the first down to the 3 yard line. Spresser finished in the end zone with 39.5 seconds 'til the half. Nolan kicked the PAT to give the Bulldogs a half time lead of 26-22.

The Bulldogs kicked to the Coyotes to start the second half. The Coyotes ran the ball for a first down before being pushed out of bounds by Korte. Their pass then connected and the PAT kick cleared the uprights to put the Coyotes back on top 30-26 early in the third.

The defense stayed strong for both teams as they each made some gains only to be stopped by effective pass coverage and strong tackles. Following a water break, the Bulldogs moved the ball with carries by Spresser and Wade Rush. Nolan Ritter caught a pass and ran to the 1-yard line allowing Korte to score the touchdown. The PAT kick by Ritter once again cleared and the 'Dogs held a slight lead 34-30.

The Coyotes again answered with another score to regain the lead 38-34 with 8.8 seconds remaining in the third. Nolan Ritter picked up the kick back to the Bulldogs and returned it to the 30. Dylan Spresser finished the drive in the end zone as the clock ran down to regain a Bulldog lead 40-38 at the end of the quarter.

The action continued throughout the fourth quarter as the Bulldogs worked hard on defense. They made the first down but turned the ball over on downs. When Weskan tried to pass, but Golden Plains sophomore Rojelio Loya intercepted the ball to return possession to the 'Dogs. They made several gains but again turned over on downs.

The 'Dogs defense made some good stops but with 2:26 left in the game, the Coyotes scored another touchdown pass and kick to pull ahead 46-40.

The Bulldog drive began with a kick return by Nolan Ritter. Spresser ran a 7 yard gain, then Korte gained a few more yards. Spresser then ran the ball to the five yard line for the first down. Korte finished the drive in the end zone to tie the game up at 46 with 1:00 on the fourth quarter clock.

The Bulldogs stepped up their defense to keep the Coyotes from scoring but Weskan once again passed and ran the ball into the end zone with 35.7 on the clock. There was a holding call on the Coyotes that brought the score back. They called a time out and stepped back on the field to run in their final score with 25.6 seconds remaining and pulled ahead 52-46.

Back on offense, the Bulldogs pushed forward with determination and grit. Korte picked up the kick and ran to the sideline at the 23 yard line. A couple of pass attempts fell incomplete. With the clock reset at 2.0 seconds following a timeout, quarterback Jacob Ritter kept the ball to run to the goal line. He was tackled just short of the end zone and the ball flew from his hands. Weskan kicked it and it rolled to the end zone where Nolan Ritter recovered it. Just as the Bulldogs thought they had tied the game, the play was called an incomplete forward pass and was not counted as the Bulldogs lost their first game of the season 46-52.

“This was a tough loss for my guys today,” said Coach Travis Smith. “We got it to their 5 as time expired. I couldn’t be more proud of them. There is a lot of season left.” “It was hard to lose such a close game,” added junior Jaime Infante. “We really need to work on improving our pass coverage,” continued Nolan Ritter. “We still have the opportunity to compete in the Wild West Bowl at the end of the season,” added Infante.

Dylan Spresser finished the game with 276 total yards—38 passing, 232 rushing, 6 receiving, and 3 touchdowns along with 16 tackles. He is currently ranked third in the Sports in Kansas Offensive stat leaders for rushing yards with 1172 in the first six games of the season. “I couldn’t do it without the blocking I have,” said Spresser. “It’s nice for our six-man program to have that type of recognition.”

Caleb Korte had 73 total yards—20 passing, 53 rushing, and 4 touchdowns along with 14 tackles. He is ranked in the Sports in Kansas Defensive stat leaders with 61 tackles so far this season. Wade Rush had 15 rushing and 17 receiving yards along with 7 tackles. He is also ranked on the Sports in Kansas defensive stat leaders with 65 season tackles after week 6.

Rojelio Loya had 8 tackles and 1 interception. He is on the Sports in Kansas Defensive Stat Leader with 5 interceptions so far this season. Jacob Ritter had 68 yards—32 passing and 36 rushing with 1 tackle. Nolan Ritter had 67 receiving yards, 7 tackles, and 2 PAT kicks. Miguel Stevens-Monge had 5 tackles during the Weskan game.

The Bulldogs have a bye this week with a 5-1 record. They will host Western Plains/Healy for their final scheduled game on October 19 before heading into the play-offs. The game will kick off at 7:00 pm in Rexford.