

NEBRASKA HIGH SCHOOL PLAYOFFS

Crofton Rolls In C2 Opener

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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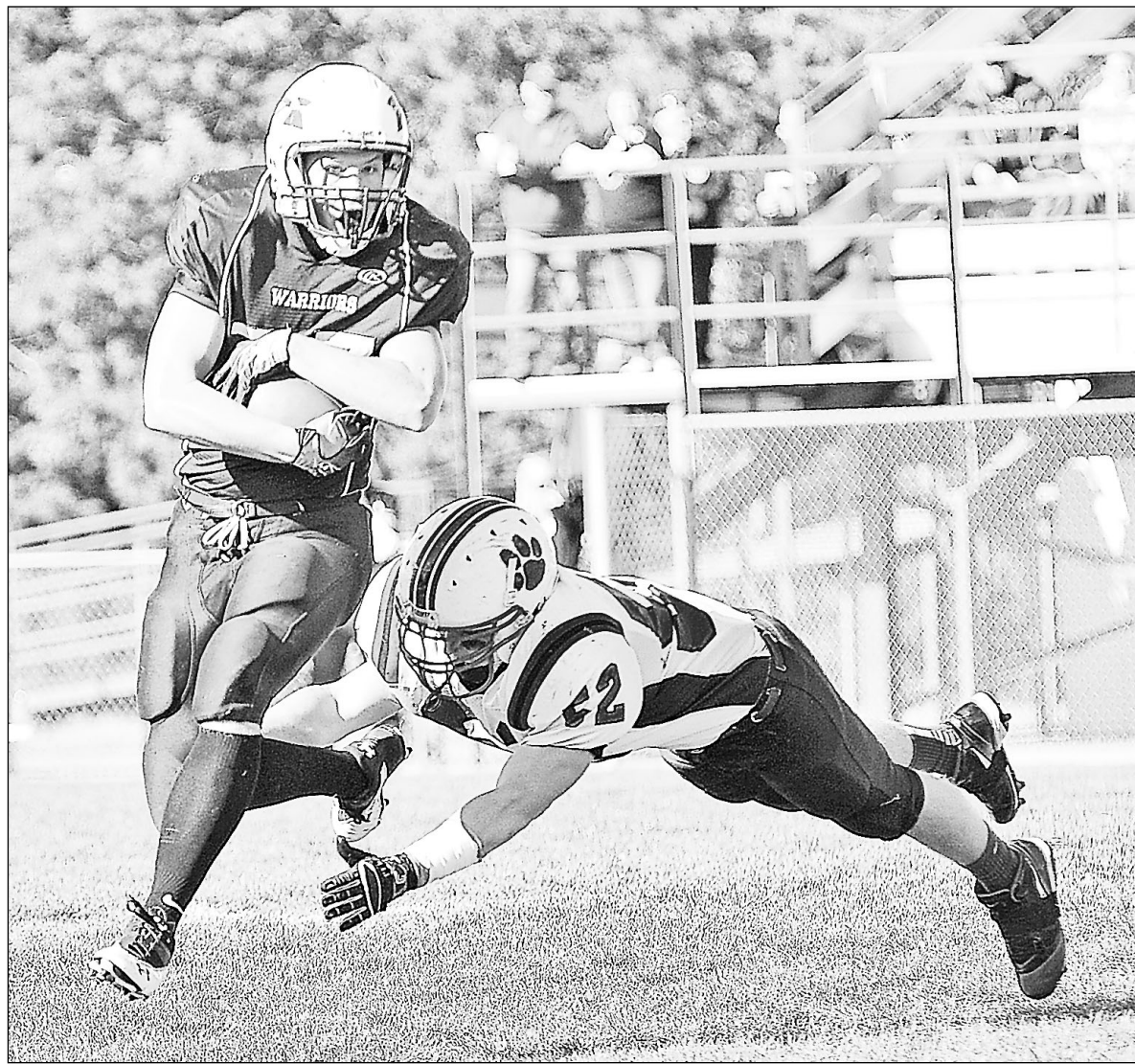
CROFTON, Neb. — The Crofton Warriors earned an opening round playoff victory for the sixth straight season, pulling away after the first quarter for a 55-0 victory over the Hershey Panthers in the opening round of the Class C2 football playoffs, Thursday in Crofton, Neb.

After each team stalled on its opening drive, Crofton used a 43-yard run by Tom Peitz to set up a 10-yard touchdown run by Justin Janssen. The theme would repeat itself on the ensuing possession, as a 46-yard pass from Alex Janssen to Calan List set up a second Warrior touchdown. Justin Janssen took the ball the final five yards, giving Crofton a 12-0 lead with 10 minutes left in the second quarter.

Peitz exploded for another big run, taking the ball the final 43 yards for a score, then added a 1-yard score in the closing seconds of the half to extend the lead to 28-0.

Peitz and Justin Janssen each scored touchdowns in the third quarter, and Alex Janssen and Dustin Whipple added scores in the fourth quarter to ice the victory.

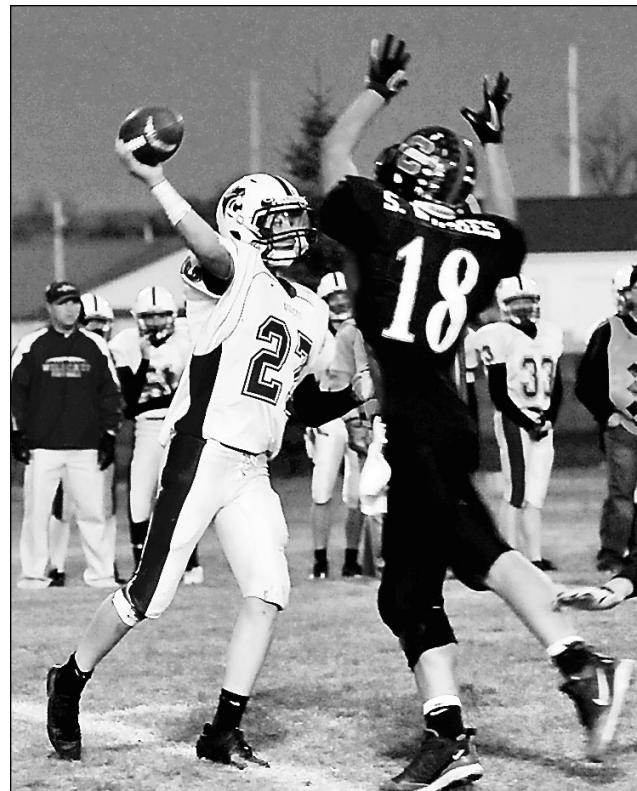
Peitz finished with 285 yards on 26 carries to lead the Crofton offense. Justin Janssen added 104 yards on just 12 carries as the Warriors pounded out 451 yards



Crofton running back Justin Janssen, left, eludes the diving tackle of Hershey defender Trevor Otzel during the first quarter of their Nebraska Class C-2 playoff game Thursday afternoon in Crofton, Neb.

JEREMY HOECK/P&D

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JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

Creighton's Seth Wilmes, 18, pressures Hartington quarterback Nick Miller during their opening round game in the Nebraska Class D1 football playoffs, Thursday in Creighton, Neb.

Bulldogs Bounce Hartington 40-14

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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CREIGHTON, Neb. — For the second time in two weeks, the Creighton Bulldogs put away Hartington, beating the Wildcats 40-14 in the opening round of the Nebraska Class D1 football playoffs, Thursday in Creighton, Neb.

The teams met on Oct. 14, with Creighton scoring a 50-20 victory.

"Any time you play a team a second time, the advantage is with the team that got beat," said Creighton head coach Jeff Jensen. "It's tough to do that back to back."

Hartington stopped the Bulldogs on fourth down in Wildcat territory on the game's opening possession, but it could not convert. Two punts later, Creighton put together a 63-yard drive, capped by a Reid Liska 17-yard run. After another Wildcat punt, the Bulldogs drove 55 yards for a 1-yard TD run by Cole Thomas.

"This was similar to the last time we played them," Jensen noted. "We didn't come up and put the ball in early."

The Wildcats answered with their first extended drive of the game, but the Creighton defense stalled them at the 30. The Bulldogs took advantage, as Jacob Morrill punched the ball in with 43 seconds left in the half, giving Creighton a 24-0 lead.

Hartington got a score in just before half, as Nick Miller ran the ensuing kickoff back 72 yards to put the Wildcats on the board just before half. The momentum carried into the second half, as Alec Fuelberth rambled 52 yards for a score on the opening play of the third quarter.

"The kickoff return right before half gave us some momentum," said Hartington head coach Blair Kalin. "We made a couple adjustments on a play we ran earlier and hit our blocks."

Creighton responded with a drive from its own 14, pushing all the way to the Hartington 2-yard line before a fumble derailed the drive. The Wildcats, though, fumbled the ball back two plays later, and Seth Wilmes punched the ball in from 10 yards out to extend the Bulldog lead.

The Bulldogs put the game out of reach just six plays later. After Justin Wilmes recovered a muffed kickoff,

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Sudbeck Powers Cedar Catholic Past Stanton 42-14

BY KEITH A. BROCKBERG
P&D Correspondent

HARTINGTON, Neb. - The Hartington Cedar Catholic Trojans got 313 yards from senior tailback Keenan Sudbeck and a 4th-quarter goal-line stand from their defense and opened Nebraska Class C-2 Playoff action with a 42-12 win over the Stanton Mustangs Thursday night in Hartington.

The Trojans opened in the no-huddle and mixed it up on their first series as they attempted a deep pass to open, threw a 16-yard completion Frank Herbolshelmer and ran a 14-yard reverse with Logan Weinandt, but in the end, it was Sudbeck who stiff-armed a Stanton tackler at the line of scrimmage and out-ran the rest of the Mustangs to the endzone for a 21-yard touchdown run.

Stanton did block the extra-point kick, but the Trojans led 6-0 117 seconds into the game.

"We're thankful we got off to a fast start and got points from that first series," Cedar Catholic head coach Chad Cattau said.

"We've always been getting off to good starts this season, and it felt good

for us to get off to a fast start tonight," Sudbeck said.

After the Cedar Catholic kickoff was returned by 35 yards by Justice Hahlbeck, the Mustangs were able to answer with a horse of their own.

Spencer Nickolite opened the answering drive with a 16-yard run and brought Stanton to the Trojan 1-yard line with a 26-yard rumble and a 3-yard push.

Hahlbeck finished the drive with a 1-yard reverse for a touchdown as he let Brennan Borgmann clear the Trojan pursuit with a sell-out block.

Nickolite was stopped short on the conversion run, but Stanton felt good in the 6-6 tie.

After Grant Dickes intercepted a Stanton pass, Sudbeck sped to the outside and then cruised 40 yards upfield for his second touchdown of the night.

Herbolshelmer ran in for the 2-point conversion, and the Trojans led 14-6 with 2:58 to play in the first quarter.

The Mustangs kept charging and took advantage of a fumble-recovery by Blake Heppner, who burst into the



KELLY HERTZ/P&D

Hartington Cedar Catholic running back Keenan Sudbeck escapes the grasp of Stanton's Justice Hahlbeck during Nebraska Class C-2 football playoff action Thursday night in Hartington.

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Gazelles Finish Regular Season With Victory At O'Gorman

SIoux FALLS — The Yankton Gazelles volleyball team will enter next week's district tournament on a three-game winning streak thanks to Thursday night's 3-1 victory at Sioux Falls O'Gorman.

Yankton (15-3) beat the Knights by set scores of 19-25, 25-19, 25-18, 25-18.

Despite losing the first set, Yankton finished off O'Gorman with convincing wins with an average margin of seven points.

The Gazelles offense was led yet again by junior Mikala Hora who posted 32 kills. Kelsey Fitzgerald helped with 16 kills of her own. Leading the defense was Chloe Cornemann with 32 digs, while Jena Nelson added 16 digs and Tori Gross had 14.

Emily Fedders recorded 50 set assists. In JV action Yankton lost 7-25, 8-25. No stats were reported. The JV team finishes the season with a record of 1-17.

The sophomore team was also swept 10-25, 11-25. Susie Kinsley led with six kills. Rylee Smith added seven digs followed by Emily Bos with six. They finish the season with a record of 2-16.

The Gazelles freshman 'A' team lost 13-25, 8-25. Haley Mines led the effort with 16 digs. They finished the season 8-10.

The freshman 'B' team swept the Knights 25-9, 25-21. Joselyn Salvatori led the team with five kills and four ace serves. Paige Thieman added six assists. Marissa Stucky added six digs. Yankton finishes the season 5-8.

Dakota Valley 3, Dell Rapids 1

NORTH SIOUX CITY — Dakota Valley defeated Dell Rapids on Thursday night thanks to a strong effort from Kylie Martin by volleyball scores of 25-14, 25-23, 18-25, 25-21.

Martin posted 11 kills and four ace serves for the Panthers (17-10), while Jayde Bergman added seven kills. Ellie Bohan posted 24 assists. Pieper Tweed posted 12 kills followed by Erica Johnson with 10. Shelby Olson added two blocks.

Dell Rapids' Hannah Hammer and Madie Vietor each posted six kills. Laine Mitchell posted 16 assists and eight digs.

Paige Bunkers added 10 digs.

Dakota Valley also won the JV match 25-20, 25-19 and C-Match 25-14, 25-8.

Dell Rapids travels to Baltic for its District Tournament next Tuesday. Dakota Valley travels to Vermillion for their District Tournament Tuesday.

DELL RAPIDS (13-14)14 23 25 21
DAKOTA VALLEY (17-10)25 25 18 25

Elk Point-Jefferson 3, Vermillion 0

ELK POINT — Lexi Branson and Amy Zeller combined for 29 kills as Elk Point-Jefferson blanked Vermillion 25-15, 25-18, 25-20 in volleyball action Thursday night in Elk Point.

Branson had 18 kills and Zeller added 11 for the Huskies, while Keely Bertram recorded seven kills, three ace serves and 19 digs. Hope Erickson keyed the offense with 17 set assists and Kelsey Abby led the defense with 15 digs.

For the Tanagers, Kelly Amundson had five kills, Lizzy Bye posted 20 digs and four

kills, and Val Moos posted 15 digs.

Each team begins district tournament action next week.

VERMILLION15 18 20
ELK POINT-JEFFERSON25 25 25

Viborg-Hurley 3, Colman-Egan 0

HURLEY — The Cougars of Viborg-Hurley swept Colman-Egan on Thursday night 25-13, 25-19, 25-12.

Viborg-Hurley's Haley Jorgensen posted 11 kills, three blocks and three ace serves. Kimberly Kolthoff posted eight kills and two blocks. Michelle Miller added 26 assists. Jill Johnson added nine digs followed by Leacadia Christensen with eight.

Colman-Egan's Mandy Etringer led the defense with 31 digs followed by Carli Johnson with 22. Bailey Groos added four ace serves.

Viborg-Hurley travels to Gayville for its district tournament Thursday. Colman-Egan's district assignment is TBD.

COLMAN-EGAN (9-18)13 19 12
VIBORG-HURLEY (21-5)25 25 25

Clarkson Stings Bees In Class D2 Playoff Opener

BY JEREMY HOECK
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BLOOMFIELD, Neb. — Six turnovers.

For the Bloomfield Bees, that was the final count on what turned out to be a disastrous night of football.

Clarkson, the No. 11 seed with 10 experienced seniors, pulled a somewhat surprising stunner in rolling past sixth-seeded Bloomfield 46-22 in Nebraska Class D2 first round playoff action Thursday night in Bloomfield, Neb.

The Bees (6-3) fumbled on three of their first four drives in the second half, and could do nothing to slow down the visiting Red Devils — which came in with a 4-4 record after a rugged regular season schedule.

In all, Bloomfield had seven of its 11 drives end with a turnover, five on fumbles, one on a

turnover on down and another on an interception.

"You can't do that and beat anyone this time of the year," coach Jim Dooley said. "Those kinds of things make all the difference."

"I'd like to play that game again without all those turnovers and see what happens."

The deciding touchdown in the game came with 32 seconds left in the second quarter, on a controversial 19-yard pass from quarterback Craig Gall to J.T. Tomka. The ball was juggled and later dropped by Tomka, but officials decided he came down with possession, putting Clarkson ahead 22-14.

From there, it was all Red Devils.

On Bloomfield's second drive of the third quarter, the Bees drove all the way down the field and had the ball inside the 5-yard

line. However, two penalties moved them back, and on the second play of the fourth quarter, Bloomfield fumbled.

That turnover effectively changed the momentum toward Clarkson, a team that lost to Guardian Angels Central Catholic, Dodge, Humphrey St. Francis and Howells in the regular season.

"That's a heckuva program we just beat; I have all the respect in the world for them," said appropriately-named Clarkson coach Jim Clarkson. "But we play in a tough district, so we're seasoned that way."

"I think that prepared us for this kind of a game."

Clarkson then scored three touchdowns in the fourth quarter — two on runs by Gall, 74 and 37 yards, and a 30-yard run by Jared Steffensmeier — to pull ahead 46-14.

Bloomfield got a 43-yard touchdown run up the middle from quarterback Chet Beckmann with 2:02 to play, but the game was already in hand.

"It was like watching a wreck in slow motion," Dooley said. "I suppose the good thing is our kids didn't give up, they just got frustrated."

In the first quarter, Clarkson scored a pair of touchdowns after Bloomfield fumbled the ball. The first was a 41-yard run by Steffensmeier and the second was a 29-yard pass from Gall to Colton Tomka.

Down 14-0 early, the Bees responded in the second quarter. Alec Wilson ran 57 yards for a touchdown at the 10:29 mark, with the two-point conversion making the score 14-8, and Wilson later caught a 2-yard touch-



JEREMY HOECK/P&D

Bloomfield running back Alec Wilson, right, tries to avoid Clarkson defender Lucas Gurnsey during the first quarter of their Nebraska Class D2 first round playoff game Thursday night in Bloomfield, Neb.

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