

Creighton Battles Past Clarkson-Leigh 30-20

BY VANCE JANAK
P&D Correspondent

CREIGHTON, Neb. — Creighton couldn't land a knockout punch Thursday to finish off Clarkson/Leigh. But the Bulldogs delivered enough blows with their rugged running game and relentless defense to move on with a 30-20 victory in the opening round of the D1 playoffs.

Creighton running back Jacob Morrill scored on the game's first play and added the Bulldogs' final touchdown, while senior quarterback Bronson Pohl added a pair of touchdowns in between. Creighton had a 16-0 halftime advantage and then held off Clarkson/Leigh's second-half comeback to advance to Wednesday's second round game at No. 4 Bruning-Davenport/Shickley (8-1).

Muddy field conditions at Bill Harder

Field forced the fifth-seeded Bulldogs (8-1) to scale back their offensive game plan. That left Morrill to carry the load and find the holes created by Creighton's offensive line. The 6-foot, 189-pounder bruised his way to 188 of the Bulldogs' 284 yards on the ground. The Bulldogs didn't complete any of their four pass attempts.

"Our line, they were doing great all game," Morrill said. "I owe it all to them. They are the ones that win us the game every single time."

After trailing 16-0 at halftime, the Patriots (5-4) never let the Bulldogs get comfortable.

Clarkson/Leigh rode the momentum gained by senior Thomas Urban returning the second half kickoff 76 yards for a touchdown. The Patriots' defense then held the Bulldogs to nine yards on six third-quarter offensive snaps.

But Clarkson/Leigh never put together a scoring drive.

"Our defense was really playing well," Clarkson/Leigh coach Jim Clarkson said. "If we could have gotten a couple more first downs, we could have pulled ahead. We did a nice job on defense but then our momentum stopped."

That's because Creighton's offense got going again.

Starting the fourth quarter at its own 6 yard line, Creighton put together an 8-play scoring drive that Pahl capped with a 1-yard touchdown plunge. Cole Thomas added the two-point conversion run to balloon the Bulldogs' lead to 24-8 with 7:51 to play.

Clarkson/Leigh, in its first season of consolidated football after Clarkson reached the semifinals of the D2 playoffs a season ago, didn't go away. Logan Went, who led the Patriots with 98 yards

rushing, dashed 54 yards for a touchdown, keeping Clarkson/Leigh within 24-14 with 7:38 remaining.

Morrill, who went 55 yards on the first play of the game, kept the advantage at 16 with a 37-yard touchdown run with 5:11 remaining.

"We knew we had to regroup," Morrill said. "We didn't need that (Patriot touchdown) to happen. We came out and showed them what we can do tonight on the ground. We like to spread it out and pass, but we kept it basic and pounded it pretty well."

Clarkson/Leigh got a 9-yard touchdown pass from John Steffensmeier to Urban to close within 30-20. The Patriots' ensuing on-side kick went out of bounds, helping secure Creighton's win.

Even though Creighton coach Jeff Jensen was happy with the victory, he saw things the Bulldogs need to correct

before Wednesday's contest.

"We got ahead by a couple (touchdowns) and then we'd let them back in," Jensen said. "We've done that two weeks in a row now where we've let people hang when we could have buried them at the time."

Despite the solid defensive effort — allowing only one play of 20-plus yards from scrimmage — Jensen pointed out the Bulldogs' defensive shortcomings.

"If you look at that again, we've got some guys that are there, and in a different situation, those things don't happen," Jensen said. "I would say right away that their 20 points were on us and not on them. ... I think we controlled a lot of things. You take away a couple guys out of position and it's a different game."

Crofton Grounds Southern Valley 46-0



Crofton's Jake Guenther upends Southern Valley's Dakota Best for a loss during their Class C2 football playoff game on Thursday at Crofton, Neb. Crofton powered its way to a 40-0 halftime lead on the way to a 46-0 victory. The Warriors will host Doniphan-Trumbull, who beat Ravenna by the same 46-0 margin, in the second round on Wednesday.

BY JAMES D. CIMBUREK
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CROFTON, Neb. — Coach Tony Hoffman calls the Crofton Warriors "mudders." On Thursday, they were right at home.

Crofton ground out 309 yards rushing and 377 yards total offense, and held Southern Valley to a negative 26 yards on the ground in a 46-0 victory over the Eagles in the opening round of the Nebraska Class C2 football playoffs on Thursday in Crofton, Neb.

The victory pushed Crofton to 7-1 on the season and advanced the Warriors to the second round on Oct. 31. Crofton will host Doniphan-Trumbull (7-2), 46-0 winners over Ravenna in the opening round.

Evan Wockman and Justin Janssen combined for 202 yards and five touchdowns as the Warriors controlled the clock with a solid ground game despite less than solid footing. The first snow of the season, which came Wednesday night before the ground had frozen, left the ground a soggy mess.

"I always tell the kids that Crofton is a bunch of mudders," Hoffman said. "Fortunately we didn't have to throw a lot, though I think we could have had we needed to. Kids were slipping all over."

Crofton scored on each of its first three possessions, with Wockman, Justin Janssen and Adam Spady each scoring touchdowns. After two fumbles stalled Crofton's fourth drive, the Warriors scored on the next three possessions to stake Crofton to a 40-0 halftime lead. Again, Spady, Wockman and Justin Janssen found the end zone, giving each a pair of touchdowns at the break. Wockman added his third touchdown on Crofton's second possession of the second half, ending the scoring.

Wockman scored on runs of 11, 23 and one. Justin Janssen scored on runs of one and 34. Spady's scoring runs were 24 and 15 yards.

Also for Crofton, Alex Janssen was 3-7 passing for 68 yards.

Southern Valley passed for 119 yards, with sophomore Jeremiah Perkins and freshman Chance Best each leading the Eagles to a handful of first downs.

"We've only been averaging 240 yards per game, so offense has something we've been concerned about," said Southern Valley head coach Jeremy Epp. "We'd get a couple positive plays, then we'd go backwards."

Cedar Catholic Blanks Louisville To Advance

LOUISVILLE, Neb. — Hartington Cedar Catholic's Taylor Kathol rushed for one touchdown and threw for two more to lift the Trojans to a 28-0 victory over Louisville in the opening rounds of the Nebraska Class C2 football playoffs on Thursday in Louisville, Neb.

The victory advances the Trojans (5-4) to a second round matchup with Ponca on Wednesday in Hartington, Neb. The teams met on Sept. 14, with Ponca claiming a 39-24 decision.

Kathol hit Grant Dickes for a 10-yard score in the first quarter, and James Kaiser for a 47-yard score in the second quarter to take a 14-0 halftime lead. Kathol scored on a 1-yard run and a two-point conversion in the fourth quarter to ice the victory.

Ryan Becker rushed for 164 yards and a 3-yard touchdown run. Kathol was 7-12 passing for 159 yards, with Dickes (67 yards) and Trent Jansen (45 yards) each recording three catches.

Wade Knott rushed for 78 yards for Louisville.

Defensively, Noah Miller had

12 tackles, including three for loss, to lead the Cedar Catholic defense. Dalton Lammers picked off a pass for the Trojans.

Colt Johannsen made six stops for Louisville.

HARTINGTON CEDAR CATHOLIC (5-4) 30 28 6 0 — 28
LOUISVILLE (5-4) 0 0 0 0 — 0

Exeter-Milligan 64, Randolph 32

MILLIGAN, Neb. —The Exeter-Milligan Timberwolves used 337 yards rushing to defeat the Randolph Cardinals 64-32 in the opening round of the Nebraska

Class D1 football playoffs on Thursday night.

Exter-Milligan was led by Kyle Jensen who totaled 186 yards on 14 carries and four touchdowns. James Sluka contributed 76 yards and two rushing touchdowns on the evening. Robbie Androyna led the Timberwolves defense with 12 tackles. Blake Papik recorded nine tackles on the evening. Kyle Jensen had a fumble recovery for a touchdown along with eight tackles.

Dylan Loberg led the Cardinals offense with 164 rushing

yards on 26 carries. Nolan Nodhues tallied 38 rushing yards on the night. Luke Andrew and Levi Lackas combined for three catches.

Exeter-Milligan will improve to 9-0 and will advance to the second round of the Nebraska high school playoffs. Randolph will end their season with the loss and will finish at 5-4.

EXETER-MILLIGAN (9-0) 30 28 6 0 — 64
RANDOLPH (5-4) 0 0 16 16 — 32

FOOTBALL | PAGE 9A



PAUL KITAGAKI JR./SACRAMENTO BEE/MCT
San Francisco Giants starting pitcher Madison Bumgarner throws in the fourth inning against the Detroit Tigers in Game 2 of the 2012 World Series at AT&T Park on Thursday in San Francisco, Calif.

Series

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the 2010 World Series when, as a 21-year-old rookie, he stopped Texas in Game 4 on the way to a championship.

This game was scoreless in the seventh when the Giants went ahead, right after actor Tom Hanks — a former peanut vendor at the nearby Oakland Coliseum — sang "Take Me Out to the Ball Game" on the field.

Pence led off with a single and Fister departed, getting lots of hugs in the dugout. Rookie reliever Drew Smyly walked Brandon Belt on a full-count pitch and Blanco's bunt loaded the bases.

The Tigers kept their infield back up the middle, and had no play at the plate on Crawford's bouncer.

Pence added the insurance run the next inning with his flyball off Octavio Dotel.

Felder and the Tigers came up inches short of taking an early lead, the result of yet another alert play by second baseman Marco Scutaro and a dubious decision by third base coach Gene Lamont.

Felder was hit by a pitch to lead off the second, Delmon Young followed with a double and when the ball rattled around in left field, Lamont waved the burly slugger home. Even with no outs, Lamont sent him.

Scutaro, in the middle of every big play for the Giants this month, dashed across the diamond, caught Blanco's relay and unleashed a strong throw to the plate. All-Star catcher Buster Posey made a swipe tag to Fielder's backside, just as the Tigers star slid home. Umpire Dan Iassogna had a clear look and made a demonstrative call — out!

Felder immediately popped up from his slide and pleaded his case with two hands. Tigers manager Jim Leyland rushed out and pointed to the plate. At second base, Young yelled, "No!"

But even if there was replay review, it wouldn't have helped the Tigers. Because TV replays showed Iassogna, working his first plate job in a World Series, got it right.

There was no dispute that Fister somehow avoided a serious injury moments later.

With two outs in the Giants second, Blanco lined a shot up the middle that hit Fister on the right side of the head and deflected on the fly to shallow center field.

Fister showed no visible effect from the blow — in fact, some in the crowd wondered whether the ball perhaps glanced off his glove because Fister stayed on his feet. Only when fans saw replays did groans echo around the ballpark.

Leyland, pitching coach Jeff Jones and a trainer went to the mound, and Fister insisted on staying in the game. He walked the next batter to load the bases,

but retired Bumgarner on a popup, starting a streak of 12 straight hitters set down by Fister.

Among those who winced was Oakland pitcher Brandon McCarthy, who sustained a skull fracture and brain contusion after being hit by a line drive last month.

"I'm not watching but did just see the replay. Certainly hope he's ok," McCarthy tweeted.

NOTES: Bumgarner struck out Austin Jackson and Omar Infante to start the game. Two other Giants fanned the first two batters in a Series game: Christy Mathewson (1905) and Carl Hubbell (1933). ... Bumgarner picked off Infante at first base to end the fourth. Infante made a break for second and, like Fielder earlier, came up short with his slide. ... Scutaro was the only Giants hitter to have previously faced Fister. ... Posey has a hit in all seven World Series games in his career.

While Crofton had a strong overall game, special teams and penalties proved to be a concern.

"We had three or four bad quarterback-center exchanges, penalties and some missed extra points," Hoffman said. "In big games, like where we'll be next week, we need to do better."

We will make it important in practice in the coming days, and we'll have that fixed."

Southern Valley, which finishes with a 3-6 record, will graduate just nine players from a squad that had the Eagles' first playoff appearance since 2006.

"Seven of the eight teams we played this year made the playoffs, and we were 22 points away from being 6-2," Epp said. "We played two freshmen, 10 sophomores and eight juniors and seniors. We competed well with most teams, but we have to continue to get better."

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