

Bulldogs Play Strong Against Dighton

By Cole Christensen

Last Friday the Dighton Hornets traveled to Golden Plains to take on the hometown Bulldogs. The Hornets won their last game 54-00 over Brewster/Triplains after returning to the 8 man game, following several season of eleven man play while Golden Plains fell to Quinter in their first game of the season. This promised to be a tough match-up from beginning to end.

Senior Rilee Spreser kicked off to Dighton to start the game. Dighton had a long return but was brought down by junior Kalyn Weber. With 9:58 on the clock, Dighton broke through for a touchdown. GP stopped the PAT to make the score 0-6.

After Dighton kicked back to GP, senior Tate Preston returned the ball to the 25. Weber carried for 5, and Spreser made a first down. Weber gained another 5 and Spreser ran for another first down. For the next series, Weber ran the ball before a pass from Spreser to Cole Christensen fell short. Weber gained another 3 before Spreser connected with a pass to Preston for another first down. GP then fumbled the ball and Dighton recovered. Senior Devinn Ritter and Spreser stopped them at the line of scrimmage. Dighton broke through the line on the next play only to be run down by Andrew Luna. A GP penalty moved Dighton closer to the goal only to have a Dighton penalty move them back before Dighton ran in for another touchdown. This time the PAT was successful and Dighton held a 0-14 lead with 3:35 left to play in the first quarter.

Weber returned the kick before Spreser ran several times to get the first down. Weber than ran in the first Bulldog touchdown of the game. The PAT pass attempt fell incomplete and the Bulldogs were on the board 6-14 with 2:14 on the clock. However, on the next play, Dighton managed to run in another touchdown and a PAT to make the score 6-22 at the end of the first quarter.

Spreser started off the second quarter with a beautiful pass to Christensen for a first down. Runs by Spreser and Weber gained additional 1st downs. With strong field position, Spreser ran in a quarterback keeper for the touchdown. With another failed PAT attempt, the Bulldogs were now 12-22 with 9:26 remaining until half.

Dighton turned around and ran in the kick-off for a touchdown, but the Bulldog defense stopped the PAT. Now behind 12-28, the Bulldog offense took over and made several good runs but fell short of the first down and had to turn the ball back over to Dighton. Dighton fumbled and Preston recovered for GP. Spreser ran a first down and gained additional yards before an end zone pass was intercepted by Dighton. Back on defense, GP stopped several Hornet run attempts before Dighton could gain a first down. With just five seconds before the half, Dighton was at 2nd and goal and threw up a touchdown pass attempt only to have it broken up by Tyler Stevenson.

Dighton fumbled the ball again early in the third only to have Spreser recover. Weber ran it in for a touchdown. Another pass from Spreser to Preston connected for the PAT and the Bulldogs were back in the game down 20-28 with 10:51 still left in the third. Preston intercepted an attempted touchdown pass by Dighton. Before they could get the first down, GP had to punt back to Dighton. The PAT was no good and the Hornets now held a 20-34 lead with just under five minutes remaining in the quarter.

Despite first down runs by Stevenson, Weber, and Spresser and a last second pass from Spresser to Preston, the third quarter ended with the Bulldogs still behind 20-34.

Still in possession of the ball to start the fourth, the Bulldogs continued to push the ball down field before a pass from Spresser to Christensen connected in the end zone for a fourth Bulldog touchdown. Spresser then handed off to Stevenson who ran in for the 2-point conversion to bring the Bulldogs to 28-34.

After regaining possession, Dighton made a first down only to have it called back due to a holding penalty. A long pass attempt by the Hornets at 3rd and 19 was broken up by Spresser forcing Dighton to punt back to the Bulldogs. Spresser connected with Preston for a first down and then connected again with Christensen to bring the 'Dogs closer to the goal with just over 2 minutes left to play. As the clock wound down to 1:39, Bulldog Coach Travis Smith called a time out. Back on the field, another pass from Spresser to Christensen for a touchdown tied the game at 34. Spresser ran in the PAT to give GP a 36-34 lead with 1:34 still on the clock.

On the kickoff back to Dighton, Cole Christensen brought the runner down deep on the field. Preston stopped the next run attempt and a Dighton pass fell short. After another time-out with 46 seconds left to play, a Dighton pass connected only to be brought to the ground by Weber. A Bulldog face mask penalty gave Dighton a first down. Weber stopped the next runner. Dighton called another time out with 19 seconds left on the clock. After the time out, a Dighton pass fell incomplete. With 3rd and 6 and 14 seconds remaining, a Dighton pass connected and was run in for a Hornet touchdown with only 8 seconds remaining in the game. The Bulldog defense again stopped the PAT from going into the end zone but Dighton regained the lead 36-40. Never giving up, Preston ran back the kick to the 30 with 3 seconds to go. A pass attempt fell short as the buzzer sounded with the Bulldogs losing the game with at 36-40.

Coach Smith said, "I couldn't be happier with this loss. We played really hard and came together as a team." The Bulldogs are now 0-2 and will face the Greeley County Jackrabbits at home this Friday.

Stats for the game include:

Rilee Spresser—passing 8/15 for 137 yards, rushing 23 carries for 124 yards and one touchdown.

Kalyn Weber—passing 0/2, rushing 25 carries for 115 yards and 2 touchdowns.

Tate Preston—4 receptions for 49 yards

Cole Christensen—4 receptions for 88 yards and 2 touchdowns

Tyler Stevenson –2 carries for 5 yards

Tackles: Rilee Spresser 10, Cole Christensen 7, Miguel Navarro 1, Devinn Ritter 11, Andrew Luna 4, Ethan Walter 2, Tate Preston 11, Kalyn Weber 14, Trey Schwarz 3, Tyler Stevenson 5, and Ryan Ptashkin 1.