

Gritty Spartans Seize Win Over Jenks, Visit Moore Friday

By Ron Holt

After battling to a 7-7 halftime stalemate last Friday, Class 6A-1's featured District 1 opener between the host Bixby Spartans and visiting Jenks Trojans was up for grabs.

It was the improving Spartans who seized the momentum - in all three phases of the game - with a tenacious, determined team effort during the final two quarters in rolling to a 21-7 victory in front of a standing room only crowd at Spartan Stadium and Lee Snider Field.

Bixby, 3-1 overall and off to a 1-0 start in the district, faces another important district battle Friday at unbeaten Moore. Jenks dipped to 1-3 and 0-1.

Toughness, discipline and focus - Bixby attributes which have been a work in progress this season - were on display against the Trojans in a game also featuring clutch production from numerous seasoned Spartans.

Bixby relied on a potent one-two rushing attack from quarterbacks Carson Kirby and Cooper Parker and a gritty offensive line effort down the stretch to seal the win. Defensively, the Spartans limited Jenks' talented offense to 66 rushing yards on 29 attempts. Trojan star running back junior Kayden Jones rushed for 74 yards on 25 carries.

"I felt like in the second half, we were physical at times, we'll see what the film says," veteran Bixby head coach Loren Montgomery said afterward. "I thought our kids played really hard and our conditioning level held up pretty well.

"Our complexion is a little different than it was last year, but we've just got to keep getting better. We had playmakers make plays tonight and I thought our back end held up well because they've got some really good playmakers," Coach Montgomery added.

"I don't know how many carries No. 2 (K. Jones) had but keeping him corralled, for the most part, was important. Our guys were gang tackling ... coach (Rodney) Flowers and the guys did a good job taking the run game away."

Jenks gained the early momentum after senior quarterback Owen Jones scrambled before tossing an eight-yard touchdown pass to senior tight end Jack McInelly, giving the Trojans a 7-0 lead with 4:22 showing in the second quarter.

Bixby maintained possession the remainder of the quarter, going on a 13-play drive which left the Spartans facing a fourth-and-two at the Jenks 18 with seconds remaining.

BHS rolled the dice as Parker raced outside right in scoring from 18 yards out with 20.5 seconds left before halftime. Junior kicker Bradley Tao's extra point kick lifted the Spartans to a 7-7 tie at the break. The drive was highlighted by a 15-yard pass from Kirby to senior Blake Hogshooter on third-and-eight and an 18-yard pass from Kirby to Catcher DeHart on third-and-14 to keep the drive alive.

Jenks received an early break in the third quarter when senior linebacker Brody Henderson intercepted a pass by Bixby junior quarterback Carson Kirby at the Spartan 39-yard line. That's when the Spartan defense stiffened.

On third-and-seven from the Spartan 24, Parker, a senior linebacker, knocked down a pass by Jones before Spartan junior defensive back Emory Snyder broke up a Jenks pass on fourth-and-seven to end the threat.

Later in the period, Bixby put together an impressive 12-play, 47-yard drive which ended in a two-yard TD burst by Parker, giving the hosts a 14-7 lead with 1:39 left in the third stanza.

On its ensuing drive, Jenks received a 19-yard pass from Jones to Malakai Dillard, but the lengthy play was brought back 15 yards after Dillard received a personal foul for taunting. The drive ended in a punt.

On its next possession, Bixby went on a 10-play, 53-yard scoring drive which featured an eight-yard TD run by Kirby for a 21-7 Spartan lead with 8:39 left in the game. A pass interference penalty against Jenks on Hogshooter in the end zone moved the ball to the eight.

Bixby's final offensive possession featured 10 rushes for 50 yards, taking 5:26 off the clock. Kirby rushed five times, Parker ran four times and senior Bode Cairl ran once. Jenks only ran six more plays before time expired.

Parker, a two-way workhorse who seldom left the field, had a season high 18 carries for 81 yards and two touchdowns while Kirby ran 17 times for 78 yards and one score.

"Honestly, I feel the best I've ever felt after a game. I wasn't supposed to get the ball that much, but I ended up getting a ton of carries," said Parker. "I did some things I haven't done before. Our defense played a really good game. We gave up that one touchdown on a drive that was extended by a penalty but other than that we stopped them.

"We're getting better every week and everyone's pretty happy tonight," he added. "We only had a couple of penalties, so we cleaned that up from last week. It wasn't a perfect game. We've got to come back tomorrow and clean some things up but that was a big win since it affects the district standings.

"I'm really proud of the team in how we attacked practice this week and how we came out with the win."

NEXT GAME – Bixby visits Moore at 7 p.m. Friday (Oct. 4) in Moore High Stadium, 911 E. Main Street, Moore.

Moore, led by third-year head coach Greg Bryant, improved to 4-0 this season after holding on for a 21-20 District 1 win at Mustang last Friday. Mustang fell to 3-1 and 0-1,

According to reports, Moore's 5-8, 170-pound sophomore tailback Ozias Adams rushed for 164 yards on 31 carries last week at Mustang. He also scored a touchdown. The Lions lost senior quarterback Malikai Miller to injury in the first quarter, but backup Maverick Gardner responded with 145 yards rushing and two TDs.

Mustang had an opportunity to pull out the win but a bad snap on a 32-yard field goal attempt as time ran out failed.

Bixby has dominated recent meetings with Moore, defeating the Lions 68-5 at Lee Snider Field in 2023 and rolling to a 64-7 win at Moore in 2022.

"I thought practice was good," coach Montgomery said of last week's preparation. "The coaching staff is having to work really hard to get a young bunch up to speed. I was pretty pleased with the way we improved from last week. It's a big step when you talk about the district. You've got to get first or second to get a bye or homefield advantage. We've got to keep improving."

The Bixby at Moore game will be aired by The Sports Animal, FM 97.1, with Shawn Tiemann handling the play-by-play description and Mark Wozniak providing color commentary.

SPARTAN "D" – Bixby had several noteworthy defensive efforts against Jenks, which lost for the seventh time in the last eight games against BHS. Junior linebacker Cord Nolan, another two-way player, ended with 12 total tackles, five solo stops, four tackles for loss and one sack.

"That was a great game," Nolan said. "Since the start of the year we've talked about finding our identity and I thought our defense stopped the run tonight and played smash mouth football. We were physical tonight.

"Those last two weeks we didn't play disciplined football but tonight we took a step in the right direction. We did our jobs tonight and when we do that good things happen," he added.

Linebacker Cooper Parker also ended with 12 total tackles, including eight solo stops while junior linebacker Trey McGlothlin was credited with seven total tackles, three unassisted, and a quarterback sack for a seven-yard loss.

"I wouldn't say this was the biggest game of the year but it's one of the biggest games since it's district," McGlothlin said. "For us to come back from the loss at Owasso to how we played tonight feels pretty good.

"I felt like I was running to the ball tonight, doing my job. There were some mistakes but we're going to keep growing every day. No one is slacking ... we're all trying the best we can to make plays. I'm 100 percent proud of the way we've progressed."

Sophomore Nathan Hobbs was credited with eight tackles, two solo, and one and a half sacks, while junior Emory Snyder ended with seven tackles, six solo, Braeden Presley had six tackles, all solos; junior

Dawson Madden had four tackles, two solo, and two tackles for loss, and Kaeden Penny, who played both ways in the line, had two tackles, one solo and half a sack.

“It felt good ... I just followed what our coaches instructed us to do so I could have a good game,” Penny said. “We’ve got to correct a couple of things, but I think we played pretty good tonight.”

Madden, a linebacker who is 30 pounds heavier than last year, said “We’ve been working all week fixing the discipline and fixing the mistakes and I thought we were really locked in tonight. We realized our goal of stopping No. 2 and making someone else beat us.

“I thought we held our gaps really well. We could have done better pressing the quarterback, but we did make him throw some incomplete passes. It’s a big step for us.”

Brooks Dixon, a senior defensive back who continues making plays, added, “We had a lot to work out the first couple of weeks, but I thought we finally put it together tonight. The biggest difference was our energy, and we didn’t have any big penalties that cost us. We made sure we cleaned things up.

“From here on out, we’ve got to make sure how we played tonight is how we play by limiting the mistakes,” he added.

NOTABLES – Bixby has won 77 of its last 79 games. ... Spartan captains versus Jenks were Cord Nolan, Braeden Presley, Cooper Parker and Kaeden Penny. ... Bixby finished with 318 total yards while Jenks was held to 203 total yards. ... BHS quarterback Carson Kirby was 17-for-25 passing for 124 yards. Top receivers were Blake Hogshooter (3 catches, 44 yards), Cord Nolan (4 catches, 39 yards), Cetcher DeHart (3 catches, 18 yards) and Tyler Wright (2 catches, 20 yards). ... This season, Kirby has passed for 948 yards and seven touchdowns while being the leading rusher with 257 yards and two TDs on 36 carries. ... Senior Blake Hogshooter has 19 pass receptions for 236 yards and two TDs to pace the Spartans. Cord Nolan had 13 receptions this season for 206 yards; Cetcher DeHart has 18 receptions for 160 yards and two TDs and Tyler Wright has 11 catches for 184 yards and two TDs. ... Junior Braeden Presley not only had six solo tackles, but returned five punts for 46 yards and had two kickoff returns for 18 yards. ... One quarter of play during Bixby’s game at Choctaw two weeks ago lasted one hour. One hour into the Jenks at Bixby game last Friday the two teams were at halftime. ... Top ten teams in this week’s Tulsa World Class 6A-1 rankings, in order, are Owasso (4-0), Bixby (3-1), Union (3-1), Deer Creek (4-0), Norman (4-0), Jenks (1-3), Moore (4-0), Edmond Memorial (3-1), Mustang (3-1), Broken Arrow (1-3),

OPPONENTS – Bixby’s 2024 opponents and last week’s results: Owasso (4-0) defeated Broken Arrow, 49-21; Sand Springs (2-2) won 41-20 at Bartlesville, Choctaw (2-2) captured a 56-40 win at Piedmont, Moore edged Mustang, 21-20; Norman rolled at Edmond North, 30-0, and Enid fell at Deer Creek-Edmond, 49-0.

Other District 1 games this week include Norman (4-0, 1-0) visits Jenks (1-3, 0-1), Deer Creek (4-0, 1-0) visits Edmond North (2-2, 0-1)) and Mustang (3-1, 0-1) travels to Enid (2-2, 0-1).

Bixby 21, Jenks 7

SECOND QUARTER

JHS – Jack McInelly 8 pass from Owen Jones (Noah Carter kick), 4:22

BHS – Cooper Parker 18 run (Bradley Tao kick), 20:5

THIRD QUARTER

BHS – Parker 1 run (Tao kick), 1:39

FOURTH QUARTER

BHS – Carson Kirby 8 run (Tao kick), 8:39