

Bixby Outscores Pesky Edmond North, 85-24

By Ron Holt

Despite establishing an apparent school record for most points scored, Bixby's Class 6A-I District 1 Homecoming game with visiting Edmond North felt closer than the final score might indicate. At least it did for the first half.

The second-ranked Spartans turned the game into a rout by outscoring the Huskies 43-7 in the second half in coasting to an 85-24 victory in front of a large Lee Snider Field crowd last Friday night.

Bixby, which returns to the road Thursday (Oct. 17) for a District 1 game at Enid, improved to 5-1 overall and is 3-0 in district play. Edmond North dropped to 2-4 and 0-3.

The Spartans were productive offensively in the first half while scoring 42 points. But Edmond North, led by pesky sophomore quarterback Chauncey Cravens, kept within striking distance, thanks to an aggressive passing game. Cravens' ability to avoid pressure kept plays alive until spotting an open receiver or scrambling to keep drives alive.

The visiting Huskies trailed 42-17 at intermission sparked by Cravens' 254 yards passing and one touchdown. Bixby's defense adjusted in the second half and the Spartans remained aggressive even when reserves played most of the final quarter.

"He's very elusive," Bixby's 15th-year head coach Loren Montgomery said of Cravens. "He's the starting point guard on their basketball team ... he's just a sophomore. He's a really good player and they have some talented players And, coach (Carter) Whitson can coach. He had some good schemes.

"It's hard to stay in coverage for 12 seconds. The game escalated in the fourth quarter. You had to keep going but once it got out of hand, they were able to run the clock," he added. "I didn't like the picks; we threw two of those, and we had some penalties on a three-and-out series.

"We've got to be more consistent running the ball. I think we are efficient but it's just that we want to be explosive," coach Montgomery said.

Bixby forced a punt on Edmond North's first offensive possession with the Spartans taking four plays to take the early lead following an 18-yard touchdown sprint by senior quarterback Cooper Parker. Parker's conversion run failed, but the Spartans led 6-0 with 10:58 showing in the first quarter.

The Huskies finished a 12-play drive with a 29-yard field goal by senior Stokley Fudge, narrowing the gap to 6-3 with 5:55 showing.

Four plays into the Spartans' next drive, junior quarterback Chase Kirby lofted a deep pass to senior Blake Hogshooter who made the uncontested 37-yard TD catch in the end zone. Bradley Tao's conversion kick gave BHS a 13-3 lead.

Later in the second quarter, Kirby again connected with Hogshooter for a 34-yard touchdown pass play. Again, Hogshooter was alone standing in the end zone when the ball arrived as Edmond North lost track of the Spartans' 6-4, 189-pound senior.

"I guess the defense saw something else or maybe they thought it was a run. We didn't run anything too tricky, it was just a post," Hogshooter said of catching two uncontested TD passes. "When I saw the ball coming, I was thinking I can't drop it now ... I'm wide open.

"Wek just made some dumb mistakes in the first half. Our coaches are great coaches and during halftime we got a good talking ... they helped us clean up some of the things we were messing up. We got it fixed and came out and finished the game in the second half," he added.

Hogshooter finished with four catches for 95 yards and two TDs. This season, he's caught 27 passes for 485 yards and five touchdowns.

Highlighted by a 63-yard screen pass from Cravens to junior David Lawler, the Huskies drove to the Spartans' five where Cravens scrambled for a five-yard TD and Fudge kicked the extra point narrowing the deficit to 13-10.

Bixby gained some breathing room in the second quarter as Parker caught a 12-yard TD pass from Kirby and junior linebacker Trey McGlothlin intercepted Cravens, returning the interception 25 yards for a touchdown expanding the hosts' lead to 28-10.

Edmond North battled back thanks to a pass interception off a deflected pass at Bixby's 25-yard line. Three plays later, Cravens threw a 13-yard touchdown pass to senior Drake Spoon as the Huskies remained close at 28-17 with 7:17 left in the first half. It was as close as the Huskies would get. Two plays into its next possession, Bixby's Braeden Presley took a handoff right, broke through a couple of tackle attempts before winning the foot race to the end zone for a 66-yard touchdown and a 35-17 BHS lead.

"We try to steal as many snaps as we can on offense for Braeden since he plays every snap defensively," coach Montgomery said. "He was still effective on the offensive side."

The second Kirby-to-Hogshooter TD connection later in the period increased Bixby's advantage to 42-17 at halftime.

Bixby wasted little time padding the scoreboard as a hurried onside kick by Edmond North's Fudge was grabbed by 5-9, 171-pound senior Deonte Dejesus and returned 50 yards for a touchdown. Dejesus split two Edmond North special teamers and found clear sailing to the end zone jump starting the Spartans' second half eruption.

"We didn't know it was an onside kick at first, but we just adjusted to it, and we all moved forward," said a smiling Dejesus afterward. "I got hit on the left and they just split, and I took it and ran. I knew it was going to be a big play and knew my teammates would be celebrating."

Dejesus' stunning return and a two-point conversion run by Kirby extended Bixby's advantage to 48-17 at the 11:52 mark of the third quarter.

Edmond North's scoring ended after an 18-yard TD pass from Cravens to Antjuan Johnson, making it a 50-24 game.

Down the stretch, Bixby continued its offensive production as Kirby threw a 12-yard TD pass to Cord Nolan and a 28-yard scoring pass to Presley before Bode Cairl scored on a one-yard run, Gabe Blankenship scored from two yards out and Tylan Montgomery ran five yards for a TD.

Kirby was 19-of-23 passing for 231 yards and five touchdowns while being intercepted twice. Parker ran seven times for 67 yards and one TD while Kirby also had 67 rushing yards. Nolan finished with five pass receptions for 50 yards and one TD.

Bixby's 85 points are a school record for most points. The Spartans, during coach Montgomery's tenure, scored 81 points in an 81-6 home win over Putnam City in 2021 and scored 80 points in an 80-0 home win over Southmoore in 2022 for previous high scores.

NEXT GAME – The Spartans return to the road Thursday, Oct. 17, when the Spartans visit the Enid Plainsmen in a Class 6A-1 District 1 fall break game, starting at 7 p.m. at Enid's D. Bruce Selby Stadium. Enid is 2-4 overall and 0-3 in the district after falling 49-7 at Norman last Friday.

Once-beaten Norman victimized the Plainsmen with solid ground and air attacks in building up a 42-0 halftime lead. EHS's lone score came on a lengthy touchdown pass from quarterback Aidan Robinson to receiver Keon Young. Young ended with more than 100 yards receiving.

This season, the Plainsmen of second-year head coach Cameron Conder, won at Ponca City (43-10), won at Lawton (49-21), lost at home to Stillwater (38-23), lost at Deer Creek (49-0) and lost at home to Mustang (33-32) prior to the Norman game.

Enid was 3-8 last season, finishing 2-5 in district play. The Plainsmen lost at Bixby (79-7) in a 2023 district game. In 2022, Bixby won 77-14 at Enid before blanking EHS 63-0 in the Class 6A state quarterfinals at Bixby's Lee Snider Field.

"We've got Enid on a short week. It's another tough place to play and it'll be the fall break. We just have to go get after it," said Bixby head coach Loren Montgomery.

The Bixby at Enid game will be broadcast by The Sports Animal, FM-97.1, with Shawn Tiemann proving the play-by-play description and former Spartan assistant coach Mark Wozniak offering color commentary.

NOTABLES – Bixby has won 79 of its last 81 games. ... Spartan captains against Edmond North were Cord Nolan, Cooper Parker, Braeden Presley and Blake Hogshooter. ... Despite some first half issues, Bixby's defense played aggressively and received notable performances from several players. Senior linebacker Cooper Parker was credited with eight total tackles, two unassisted, two tackles for loss and

two pass deflections. Junior linebacker Cord Nolan, who also delivered numerous jarring tackles, had seven tackles, five unassisted, two tackles for loss and a sack. Junior linebacker Trey McGlothlin had four tackles, two solos, one tackle for loss and his first pass interception this season. Maverick Nance was also credited with a sack. ... Bixby recorded two sacks against Edmond North. On the season, Spartan defenders have been credited with 15.5 sacks. ... Senior kicker Bradley Tao had another efficient game, kicking off 13 times with 11 going into the end zone and was nine-for-nine on conversion kicks. He's 31-of-31 on extra-point kicks this season.

THIRD PICK - It was a tough first half outing for Bixby's defense because of the problems created by Edmond North's scampering quarterback.

Bixby's Emory Snyder, a 6-2, 200-pound junior defensive back, experienced highs and lows in the game. He was called for pass interference and felt he should have prevented an Edmond North TD, but he ended the game on a positive note, intercepting his team-leading third pass of the season.

Snyder returned the interception 33 yards to set up a third quarter Spartan touchdown.

"Their quarterback was scrambling a lot. He kind of reminded me of Kyler Murray. We were having to cover for a long time, but we've still got to stay on him," said Snyder. "That PI (pass interception) and touchdown were my fault ... I can't blame it on anyone else but me. The pass interception helped ... I thought I might go all the way, but I think I got stopped around the 15 (yard line).

"The game was a lot closer than the scoreboard read. We need to really focus on our technique. We were playing sloppy in the first half, busting coverages and not staying on guys," he added.

O-LINE MESHING - With only one starter returning along with a key backup, Bixby's offensive line has been a work in progress this season. The early results show a positive progression.

The five starters this season include 6-3, 275-pound sophomore Kaeden Penny at left tackle, 5-10, 231-pound junior Sam DeWoody at left guard, 6-0, 275-pound senior Jacob Hamlin at center, 5-11, 231-pound senior Beckham Hooper at right guard and 6-6, 303-pound senior Broderick Shull at right tackle.

"They are getting better every week, but they know we have to get better at the little stuff ... every week that's our goal," said Corbin Burchett, Bixby's 13th-year offensive line coach. "That's been the starting unit all season.

"Broderick is our only returning starter. Hamlin was our sixth player last year and he started one game. Hooper is the guy we converted from tight end to tackle. He stepped it up when we asked him to play in the line for us.

"It took a couple of games for them to mesh together ... it took them a little time to get in a groove but they're definitely playing better as we've gone along. They've worked their butts off and are getting better every week.

"I'm proud of their development but we're not as good as I think we'll end up. We're going to keep on the uphill climb right now and I think that will work for us," he added."

The O-line contributed to Bixby's 85 points and 542 yards of total offense in the win over Edmond North. And they are contributors to the Spartans' season average of 242.3 passing yards per game and 236.8 rushing yards per game.

OPPONENTS - Results of Bixby season opponents last week included Owasso (6-0) winning 55-0 against visiting Westmoore, Ponca City falling 44-6 at Sand Springs (4-2) and Choctaw (4-2) rolling 41-17 at Southmoore. In district play, Jenks (3-3, 2-1) captured a 45-13 win at Mustang (4-2, 1-2), Enid lost 49-7 at Norman (5-1, 2-1) and Deer Creek (6-0, 3-0) held off visiting Moore (4-2, 1-2), 30-20.

In district games Thursday, Norman visits Moore, Deer Creek travels to Jenks and Edmond North hosts Mustang.