

# Bixby Erupts Past Mustang, Visits Deer Creek Friday

**By Ron Holt**

Getting off to a fast start is the weekly goal for state high school football teams. Establishing early momentum is also a goal.

Second-ranked Bixby seized the early momentum in the first half before returning momentum to the Spartan sideline early in the second half in capturing a wild 56-34 victory over No. 9 Mustang in a Class 6A-1 District 1 game at windy Lee Snider Field last Friday night.

Bixby, 7-1 overall and 5-0 in district play, continues its late season string of playing district contenders when the Spartans visit the sixth-ranked Antlers of Deer Creek-Edmond (6-2, 3-2) on Friday (Nov. 1). The quick-striking Spartans never trailed in the first battle against Mustang since 2011, but they were forced to put together repeated runs to offset Mustang's offensive success. Bixby used several explosive individual performances to thwart rally attempts by the Broncos.

On its first offensive drive, Bixby faced third-and-eight before backup quarterback Cooper Parker ran away from pressure before hitting senior wide receiver Blake Hogshooter, who made a tough catch, fought off a defender and then used his sprinter speed to complete a 50-yard touchdown at the 9:17 mark of the first quarter.

Parker capped off Bixby's second offensive possession with a two-yard TD run. Senior Bradley Tao kicked the conversion giving the Spartans a 14-0 lead with 5:25 showing.

Junior Braeden Presley set up Bixby's next scoring drive when he intercepted Mustang quarterback Trajan Williamson at mid field. Spartan junior quarterback Carson Kirby ended the ensuing drive with a five-yard TD run with 1:50 left in the opening quarter. Kirby hit junior Cord Nolan for a two-point conversion extending the lead to 22-0.

An 18-yard pass from Kirby to junior Corey Foreman and a 15-yard run by Parker highlighted the scoring drive.

After the Broncos' Latin Everhart missed a 30-yard field goal, Bixby continued its offensive assault as a 67-yard scamper by Kirby to the three-yard line was followed by Parker's three-yard TD run with 8:58 left in the second quarter as Bixby held a 29-0 lead.

That's when the Broncos began chipping away at the deficit. Mustang went on an 18-play, 86-yard drive, taking 6:51 off the clock. MHS successfully converted on two third downs and one fourth down before Williamson passed to junior Derek Straughn for a five-yard TD on fourth-and-goal for a 29-7 game with 2:07 left in the first half.

Mustang then converted an onside kick by Everhart, which the Broncos recovered at the 50-yard line. The visitors capitalized on a face mask penalty and pass interference call on the Spartans in driving for a three-yard TD run by Williamson with 9.8 seconds remaining, narrowing the deficit to 29-14.

Bixby received a 16-yard run by freshman BJ Jones ending the first half. In the final 8:58 of the second quarter, Bixby ran one play.

"You couldn't relax because they're good, they're talented," said Bixby head coach Loren Montgomery. "I thought we did a good job containing them in the first half but that sequence with about two minutes left ... they get the onside kick, and we had a face mask penalty and pass interference penalty that gave them great field position. They had a lot of momentum going into the half."

That momentum was short-lived. In three plays the Spartans stunned the Broncos when Kirby connected with Hogshooter, who caught the ball closely covered before out-running Mustang defenders down the sideline for a 74-yard touchdown and 36-14 Bixby lead with 10:52 left in the third quarter.

"We went a long time without the ball at the end of the first half, but coach talked to us at half and talked to us about regaining the momentum and we took care of business," said Kirby, who was 21-of-28 passing for 300 yards and five touchdowns while also rushing four times for 85 yards.

"It was definitely huge to stop their momentum and get the momentum back on our side. Games like that are fun, I think everyone played a great game," added Kirby, who has completed 158-of-227 passes for 1,895 yards and 21 touchdowns this season.

Mustang responded with a touchdown on its first possession of the second half as Williamson scored from a yard out making it a 36-21 game with 9:27 left in the third frame.

The duo of Kirby to tight end Nolan was featured in Bixby's next two scoring drives as Kirby hit an open Nolan over the middle for a 40-yard TD at the 4:56 mark giving Bixby a 43-21 lead.

Minutes later, Bixby junior Emory Snyder made a diving interception of a Williamson pass, giving the Spartans the ball at midfield. On the first play, Kirby again found Nolan running free over the middle for a 50-yard TD and 50-21 Spartan lead with 1:42 remaining in the period.

"It was big ... we needed a big play to get us going," Nolan said of his touchdown catch late in the third quarter. "The third quarter we really got our momentum back and they didn't get any as we kept scoring, and our defense started doing what we're supposed to do.

"Our defense was doing good but in the last two minutes they scored and we kinda got down a little, but we responded well," he added. "We've just got to sustain our momentum and keep the defense off the field."

Nolan had an outstanding game on both sides of the ball. Offensively, he caught four passes for 90 yards and two touchdowns and rushed once for five yards. Defensively, he led the Spartans with 13 total tackles including 11 solo tackles and two tackles for loss.

Early in the fourth quarter, Kirby launched a pass into the end zone where Hogshooter, despite being double teamed, made a big time catch, expanding Bixby's advantage to 57-21 at the 11:13 mark.

"I was covered but when I saw the ball coming to me, I knew I had to make a play," said Hogshooter, who ended the game with six pass receptions for 187 yards and four TDs. He averaged 31.2 yards per reception. "They were on me, but I'd say that's one of my better catches this year ... it felt really good.

"At halftime coming out of the locker room our coaches were telling us not to let up, that it was still anybody's ball game. We came out with intensity and took control of the game."

Down the stretch, Bixby's final score was a 12-yard TD run by sophomore Gabe Blankenship, sandwiched around a one-yard TD run by Mustang's Everhart and a 74-yard run by sophomore Taven Brown.

"They had a good team ... they were physical," Montgomery said. "I thought it was a good game for us. We didn't play our best football, but I think we're gaining on some things."

**NEXT GAME** – This will be the second meeting between Bixby and Deer Creek-Edmond when the Spartans visit newly named Tyler Tidwell Stadium on Friday (Nov. 1). Kickoff is set for 7 p.m. The game will be broadcast over The Sports Animal, 97.1FM with Shawn Tiemann providing play-by-play coverage and Mark Wozniak offering commentary.

Deer Creek's only previous meeting against Bixby came in the 2021 Class 6A-II state championship game, won by the Spartans 63-14 at the University of Central Oklahoma's Chad Richison Stadium in Edmond.

Deer Creek, which started playing football in 1976, was off to a successful start in its first season in Class 6A-1. The Antlers were in Class 4A until moving to Class 5A in 2008 and to Class 6A-II in 2016. The Antlers only state championship came in 2000 with a 24-13 win over Seminole in the Class 3A state championship game at Oklahoma State's Lewis Field.

The Antlers, led by head coach Wade Standley, won their first six games this season before losing 28-0 at Jenks in Week 7 and 54-27 at Norman last Friday.

This season, DC won 53-17 at Oklahoma City McGuinness, won 38-24 at Edmond Memorial, defeated visiting Norman North 35-10 and visiting Enid 49-0 before winning 55-24 at Edmond North and 30-20 at home against Moore before the Jenks game.

Offensively, the Antlers are led by senior quarterback Grady Adamson, who has committed to Georgia Tech, junior running back Lemar Davis and receivers senior Mason Smith and junior Jalen Davis. DC averages 35.8 points per game while allowing an average of 22.12 points per game.

Deer Creek was 9-3 last season in Class 6A-II, going 7-0 in district play.

**NOTABLES** – Bixby has won 81 of its last 83 games and seven straight games. ... Bixby was flagged six times for 50 yards with several penalties thrown against the Spartan defense. "One of the things we're going to look at Sunday are our penalties. Penalties when you are on defense are devastating because it

gives them more downs,” Coach Montgomery said. “We’re going to look hard at some of those things and try to get it fixed.” ... Bixby’s offense amassed 686 yards of total offense against a solid Mustang defense – 317 yards rushing and 366 yards passing. Through eight games, Bixby’s offense is averaging 50.1 points per game while averaging 248.9 yards per game passing and 247.3 yards per game rushing the ball. ... Besides Nolan’s 13-tackle effort, Peyton Chronister was credited with 10 total tackles, including six solo stops. Parker had nine tackles, five unassisted, and one tackle for loss while Emory Snyder had seven tackles, six solo, and one pass interception. Maverick Nance ended with six tackles, five unassisted. ... The interception by Snyder was his team-leading fourth pick of the season. ... This season, the 6-4, 175-pound Hogshooter has 37 pass receptions for 722 yards and 10 touchdowns. In his Spartan career, he has been credited with 59 pass receptions for 1,157 yards and 18 touchdowns. ... This was the third meeting between Bixby and Mustang and the first win for BHS. ... Captains for the Mustang game were Cooper Parker, Cord Nolan, Braeden Presley and senior Michael Gilson.

**OPPONENTS** – Results of Bixby opponents last week included Owasso (8-0) edging Edmond Santa Fe, 31-27, at home; Muskogee rolling to a 49-33 win at Sand Springs (5-3) and Choctaw (6-2) dominating 48-0 at U.S. Grant. In District 1 play, Jenks (5-3, 4-1) romped 56-14 at Moore (4-4, 1-4) and Edmond North (3-5, 1-4) held on for a 14-7 win at Enid (2-6, 0-5).

In league games Friday, Enid visits Jenks, Moore visits Edmond North and Mustang hosts Norman. In District 1 standings, Bixby leads at 5-0 followed by Jenks 4-1, Norman 4-1, Deer Creek 3-2, Mustang 2-3 Moore 1-4, Edmond North 1-4 and Enid 0-5.

### **Bixby 64, Mustang 3**

#### **FIRST QUARTER**

BHS – Blake Hogshooter 50 pass from Cooper Parker (Bradley Tao kick)

BHS – Parker 2 run (Tao kick)

BHS – Hogshooter 7 pass from Carson Kirby (Cord Nolan pass from Kirby)

#### **SECOND QUARTER**

BHS – Parker 3 run (Tao kick)

MHS – Derek Straughn 14 pass from Trajan Williamson (Latin Everhart kick)

MHS – Williamson 3 run (Everhart kick)

#### **THIRD QUARTER**

BHS – Hogshooter 74 pass from Kirby (Tao kick)

MHS – Williamson 1 run (Everhart kick)

BHS – Cord Nolan 40 pass from Kirby (Tao kick)

BHS – Nolan 50 pass from Kirby (Tao kick)

#### **FOURTH QUARTER**

BHS – Hogshooter 28 pass from Kirby (Tao kick)

MHS – Everhart 1 run (Everhart kick)

BHS – Gabe Blankenship 12 run (Tao kick)

MHS – Taven Brown 74 run (Everhart kick)