

Bixby Romps, Hosts Surging Norman in District Finale

By Ron Holt

EDMOND – A second quarter offensive eruption and a ball-hogging defensive effort lifted Bixby's second-ranked Spartans to a 48-10 victory over No. 6 Deer Creek here last Friday night in a Class 6A-1 District 1 battle at Tyler Tidwell Stadium.

Bixby improved to 8-1 on the season while remaining atop the district standings with a 6-0 record. Deer Creek fell to 6-3 and 3-3.

With the victory Bixby set up a high stakes regular season and district finale at 7 p.m. Friday (Nov. 8) at Lee Snider Stadium against the visiting Norman Tigers (8-1, 5-1) who seek a share of the district title with a win over the Spartans. Jenks is also 5-1 in district play.

After scoring quickly after receiving the game's opening kickoff, the Spartans scored 27 second quarter points en route to a 34-3 halftime lead. Bixby's defense, which turned back repeated Deer Creek threats in the first half, impressively intercepted four passes by the Antlers' quarterback Grady Adamson, including one that was returned for a touchdown.

Prior to the Bixby game, the 6-3, 220-pound senior Adamson, a Georgia Tech commitment, had passed for 1,565 yards and had only been intercepted four times during the Antlers' previous eight games.

On the opening drive it took the Spartans six plays to score as junior quarterback Carson Kirby threw a 16-yard touchdown pass to junior Nathan Gonzales. Bradley Tao's conversion kick gave Bixby a 7-0 lead with 10:37 showing in the first quarter.

The Spartans' offense stalled a few times afterward, turning the ball over on down after a lengthy drive later in the quarter followed early in the second quarter by a pass interception of a Kirby pass by Deer Creek defensive back Reid Pippin.

Deer Creek used the momentum to drive into Spartan territory before kicker Timothy Steinke kicked a 37-yard field goal with 9:23 left, making it a 7-3 game.

Bixby then turned up the intensity the remainder of the second stanza as Kirby lofted a pass that senior standout Blake Hogshooter caught over his shoulder in the end zone for a 47-yard TD. Tao's conversion kick expanded the lead to 14-0.

The drive took two plays to cover 58 yards in only 39 seconds. A 31-yard burst by senior running back Bode Cairl was another highlight of the drive.

With 5:09 left in the second quarter, Bixby's lethal passing game struck again as Kirby connected with junior wide receiver Emory Snyder for a 41-yard TD with 5:49 showing in the period. Tao missed his first extra point of the season as the Spartans went on top 20-3. This drive covered 51 yards in three plays, taking 1:03 off the clock.

A 23-yard Deer Creek punt set up Bixby's next scoring drive which took two plays to cover 43 yards in 23 seconds. A 12-yard reverse run by junior Cord Nolan was followed by a 30-yard touchdown heave from Kirby to junior Tyler Wright. A two-point run by Cooper Parker failed as Bixby's lead grew to 26-3. Bixby's defense got into the scoring act seconds later, thanks to sophomore defensive back Nathan Hobbs. Hobbs jumped in front of an Adamson pass for an impressive, leaping pass interception, broke away from a couple of Antler tackle attempts in running 21 yards for a touchdown with 3:19 left in the second frame. Kirby connected with Nolan on a two-point conversion giving BHS a 34-3 lead.

"We had a pretty good game on defense," said a smiling Hobbs, who scored his first TD this season while intercepting his second pass. "We just dropped in coverage really well ... we practiced that all week. He's a great quarterback but we came out and took care of our business."

The visitors expanded the lead to 41-3 at the 7:59 mark of the third quarter when Parker took the snap, found a gap in the line and out-legged the Antlers for a 49-yard TD sprint. Tao's conversion kick made it a 41-3 game with 7:59 showing in the third frame.

"During the offseason I was involved in track, Coach (Tyler) Schneider got me out there, I can definitely tell I'm a lot faster than I had been," Parker said. "During training in the offseason my speed times were

going up. If the defense overplays one side the other should be wide open. Coach Schneider has plays designed for both holes but if I can get the first down I go for it,” he said of the scoring play.

During the final 15 yards, Parker could feel a defender closing in, so he changed direction and coasted into the end zone. “I’ve been doing that since little league football since I wasn’t the fastest. I pulled that move a couple of times, so I was used to it.

“Our offense started out good scoring on the first possession and then had a little slump ... I think it was a pick that got the momentum back our way,” added Parker, a talented two-way player who rushed eight times for 87 yards and a TD while also being credited with 10 tackles, five unassisted, as a linebacker. The drive was set up by Snyder, a junior defensive back, who jumped in front of an Adamson pass at the Bixby 43. It was Snyder’s team-leading fifth pass interception.

“Most of the time when we play teams we come out and see some things completely different but this time they ran what we had game planned for, so it was kind of expected,” said Snyder, who also had seven tackles, including four solo stops. “They were banged up on offense, their best receiver was out tonight but we did what we needed to get the win.”

Deer Creek’s ensuing drive entered Spartan territory before ending when Wright leaped for a pass interception at Bixby’s 20-yard line. It was Wright’s first interception this season.

Bixby punted for the first time following the interception as Deer Creek went on its final scoring drive, which featured an eight-yard TD burst up the middle by senior running back Junior Youmbi, trimming Bixby’s advantage to 41-10 with 10:36 left in the game.

Spartan junior Gabe Blankenship rambled eight yards for the Spartans’ final TD with 7:06 left in the game for the final score while sophomore defensive back Brody Scott intercepted the fourth Antler pass minutes later.

“It was a win in week nine, so we’ll take it. It wasn’t exactly what we wanted but we had some kids who made plays for us. Our defense got us some big plays,” said Bixby head coach Loren Montgomery afterward. “We’ll need a good week of practice for Norman. They are 8-1 ... the only team to beat them is Jenks.”

NEXT GAME – Norman, which has won four games in a row, is having one of its finest seasons in years and looking to gain some revenge for a 59-20 loss at Bixby in a Class 6A state quarterfinal game last season. Bixby led 59-0 at halftime.

This season Norman, led by head coach Rocky Martin, defeated Norman North (37-27), won at Edmond Santa Fe (34-14) and won at Piedmont (41-14) during non-district play.

In league play, the Tigers defeated Edmond North (30-0), lost at Jenks (31-12), beat Enid (49-7), won at Moore (42-35), downed Deer Creek-Edmond (54-27) and won last Friday at Mustang (40-28).

“Norman is a really good team. Their little quarterback (Phoenix Murphy) is dynamic, he runs around and keeps plays alive. He has good wide receivers that get open ... his brother (Ryder Murphy) is one of them,” Coach Montgomery said of the Tigers.

Murphy, a 6-1, 155-pound senior, has 28 passing TDs this season. Against Mustang, he reportedly passed for 211 yards, tossing two scoring passes to brother Ryder, a 6-1, 180-pound junior, and one each to senior Behr Boyd and Crew Noles. The Tigers also recorded a safety and received field goals of 29 and 32 yards by Aiden Jordan.

Last year’s Bixby-Norman meeting was the first between the two teams.

The Bixby-Norman game will be broadcast by The Sports Animal, FM 97.1, starting with the pregame show at 6:30 p.m. Shawn Tiemann provides play-by-play coverage while Mark Wozniak offers color commentary.

NOTABLES – Bixby has won 82 of its last 84 games and is riding an eight-game winning streak. ... Evidence of Bixby’s explosiveness offensively came in the second quarter as the Spartans scored three touchdowns on seven total plays, covering 152 yards and taking only 2:05 off the clock. Nathan Hobbs pass interception return for another Spartan TD came two plays after the third TD. ... Bixby ended with 475 total offensive yards while Deer Creek had 193 total yards. BHS also had two turnovers while being penalized eight times for 49 yards. ... Spartan junior QB Carson Kirby passed for 273 yards while completing 19-of-27 pass attempts. He ended with four TDs and one interception. Following Cooper

Parker's 87 rushing yards was senior Bode Caril, who ended with 81 yards rushing on 10 carries. Senior Blake Hogshooter caught four passes for 86 yards and one TD to pace the BHS receivers. Tyler Wright had three catches for 56 yards and one TD. ... Late in the game, Bixby fumbled a Deer Creek punt in BHS territory, but sophomore Kaiden Flowers alertly recovered for the Spartans. ... Senior kicker Bradley Tao has connected on 49-of-50 extra-point kicks. ... Deer Creek quarterback Grady Adamson was 9-of-23 passing for 89 yards and four pass interceptions. He was sacked once ... Captains for Bixby at Deer Creek were Cooper Parker, Cord Nolan, Braeden Presley and Carson Kirby.

'D' NUMBERS – Senior linebacker Cooper Parker led the Spartans in tackles with 10. Trey McGlothlin was credited with nine total tackles, three unassisted, and two tackles for loss; Tyler Wright had six tackles, four solos, two tackles for loss and one interception while Cord Nolan, Hector Garcia, Dawson Madden and Peyton Chronister each had five total tackles. Chronister also had a sack.

Maverick Nance, a 6-1, 159-pound junior linebacker, was also credited with five total tackles, including three unassisted and one hard-hitting tackle for a loss.

"I thought it was a pretty good hit ... I thought I had a pretty good game," Nance said. "I've improved from the first game to now and I feel like I've done a lot better. I feel a lot more comfortable since this is my first year playing varsity.

"Norman is a pretty good team. It'll be a tougher game and we just all have to lock in and be on the same page," he added.

OPPONENTS – Results of Bixby's 2024 opponents last week included Owasso (9-0) edging Norman North (64-54), Sand Springs (6-3) downing Putnam City North (41-26) and Choctaw (7-2) routing Lawton Eisenhower (59-14) in non-district play.

In District 1, Jenks blanked Enid (56-0), Norman won at Mustang (40-28) and Moore defeated Edmond North (49[-21]). League games this week besides Bixby hosting Norman include Jenks (6-3) at Edmond North (3-6), Moore (5-4) at Enid (2-7) and Mustang (5-4) at Deer Creek-Edmond (6-3).

District standings include Bixby (6-0) followed by Jenks (5-1), Norman (5-1), Deer Creek (3-3), Mustang (2-4), Moore (2-4), Edmond North (1-5) and Enid (0-6).

Bixby 48, Deer Creek 10

First Quarter

BHS – Nathan Gonzales 16 pass from Carson Kirby (Bradley Tao kick)

Second Quarter

DC – Timothy Steinke 37 field goal

BHS – Blake Hogshooter 47 pass from Kirby (Tao kick)

BHS – Emory Snyder 41 pass from Kirby (kick failed)

BHS – Tyler Wright 30 pass from Kirby (run failed)

BHS – Nathan Hobbs 21 pass interception return (Cord Nolan pass from Kirby)

Third Quarter

BHS – Cooper Parker 49 run (Tao kick)

Fourth Quarter

DC – Junior Youmbi 8 run (Steinke kick)

BHS – Gabe Blankenship 9 run (Tao kick)