

Outlaws football posts Homecoming victory

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

Excitement and energy filled Reed Stadium as the Outlaws celebrated senior night and homecoming on Thursday, October 11. The icing on the cake was Sisters' 29-18 victory over the Philomath Warriors — their first win of the season.

The Outlaws honored eight seniors (see story, page 5).

When the battle on the field got underway, the visiting Warriors knew from the get-go that it wasn't going to be easy. Sisters began their defensive dominance with two tackles-for-loss on the Warriors opening drive, and forced Philomath to punt from deep in their own territory. Korbin Sharp ran 26 yards on the punt return, and after a Philomath penalty, the Outlaws had the ball on the Warriors' 14-yard line. Sharp took a wide-receiver reverse to the house for the touchdown, and Wyatt Hernandez followed with the extra point.

Sisters made another stop, and after a horrible punt, had possession of the ball on the 50-yard line. After several penalties for both teams, the Outlaws moved

the ball through the air with Taylor Fendall going three-for-three, including a 29-yard gain to Gator Haken down to the three-yard line. Haken smashed through the line for the score. The PAT was blocked and at the close of the first quarter the Outlaws held a 13-0 lead.

In the second quarter, Sisters' defense once again held and forced a punt, which was mishandled and gave the home team the ball at Philomath's 25-yard line. The Outlaws marched down to the five-yard line behind some elusive runs by Haken, and settled for a 20-yard field goal from Hernandez.

The Warriors pulled it together and after a long drive got a touchdown, but were shut down on their two-point conversion attempt.

With the end of the first half approaching, the Outlaws got the ball down to the Warriors' 30-yard line. Fendall hit a streaking Ben Johnson in stride for a TD with just 18 seconds left on the clock. Hernandez' kick was good and at the half the Outlaws were on top 23-6.

Philomath was able to snatch the ball for an interception and scored a TD in the third to make it a 23-12



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Bailey Knirk led the Outlaws onto the field for their Homecoming game.

game at the close of the quarter.

In the final quarter, the Warriors marched down the field for a TD to bring the score to 23-18, after the Outlaws defense again stopped them on their two-point conversion attempt.

With 4:14 left in the quarter, the Warriors threw a pass over the middle, and Garret Kersavage was there to nab the ball for an interception.

Of the interception, Kersavage said, "The coaches told me to watch the ball because they were running inside, so I cheated inside. As soon as that quarterback threw, I knew it was my time to shine. I jumped in front of the route, cut him off, and then it was all history. I knew this would seal it. The clock was running out, and the game was over."

The Outlaws drove the ball from the Philomath 44-yard line behind some tough runs by Haken, who took it in for a TD on an 11-yard run with 1:14 left in the game. Haken followed a devastating block by Joel Miller, which opened up a clean path to the end zone. The extra point was blocked and the game ended in a 29-18 Outlaw win.

Haken commented on the game-winning TD.

"After we got that pick we really had to fight for it," said Haken. "It really worked for us to get around the outside."

Haken finished the night with 25 carries for 81 yards, two TDs, and 29 yards receiving. Johnson had four receptions for 50 yards and one TD. Fendall went 8-for-11 for 114 yards and one TD. He was 3-for-5 on third down attempts.

Matt Harris led the defense with eight tackles, followed by Hayden Sharp who recorded seven. Kersavage tallied four tackles and one interception.

Fendall told *The Nugget* he couldn't have scripted it any better.

"I don't know if it's ever been harder in my career to not focus on trying to get a win, and just coach the game," said Fendall. "What it came down to was us making a play on defense, and then we finished the drive and that was it. That's the part as a coach I don't think you could script any better. That's what you want to see finishing a game. I'm incredibly happy for the boys! What a fun night."

The Outlaws will wrap up league play at Stayton on Friday, October 19.



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Gator Haken scores vs Philomath.

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