

Outlaws snap losing streak

By Rongi Yost
Correspondent

The Outlaws football team's hard work and dedication finally paid off this past week with a big win over Pleasant Hill. Sisters snapped their four-game losing streak with a final score of 28-26 in their road win over the Billies.

Sisters started off strong and in the first quarter, with Wyatt Maffey scoring on a one-yard run. The TD was set up by blocks on the right side of the line, which allowed Wyatt to walk into the end zone. The PAT failed, but at the close of the period the Outlaws held a 6-0 lead.

In the second quarter the Outlaws scored again. The snap was bobbled, but quarterback Griffin Gardner made a heads-up play and forced his way into the end zone on a one-yard run. Sean Alvarez's kick for the PAT was good and the Outlaws extended their lead to 13-0.

With 4:20 left in the half Maffey scored on a 65-yard run that was a sweep around the left side of the Outlaws' line with a convoy of blockers. The play was set up from key blocks from pulling-guard Hudson Symonds and fullback Adam Maddox-Castle.

Alvarez ended the first half scoring when he split the uprights for a 32-yard field goal with four seconds left on the clock. Time expired and the Outlaws closed out the half holding the Billies scoreless 22-0.

"Our boys came out red-hot on offense and executed on both their run and their pass game," said Coach Clayton Hall. "The offensive line did an outstanding job creating holes and lanes for the Outlaws' running backs to go through. The O-line also did a great job protecting our quarterback."

Momentum shifted in the second half. The Outlaws had two costly fumbles that set up the Billies to score and gain the momentum. Pleasant Hill scored 26 unanswered points, 13 in the third quarter

and 13 in the fourth, and took the lead from the Outlaws at 26-22.

When the Outlaws got the ball back on their own 32-yard line with 5:57 left in the contest, fans were on the edge of their seats until the final buzzer. Mason Sellers started the drive when he ran the ball on a fly-sweep around the left side for 15 yards to the 47-yard line, followed by Gardner, who ran the ball for 13 yards down to the Pleasant Hill 40-yard line.

Gardner ran the ball again on the next play, but got called for a personal foul on an offensive targeting call, which resulted in a 15-yard penalty from the spot of the foul. That penalty moved the ball to the Billies' 45-yard line. A 39-yard run from Maffey, and a three-yard run from Gardner put the Outlaws on their 36-yard line.

Adam Maddox-Castle had a nice 27-yard run down to the nine-yard line, but on the next two plays the Outlaws were charged with penalties that put the ball back on the 21-yard line.

Gardner finished the drive with a beautiful touchdown pass to Josh Buettner to put the Outlaws back on top with 1:09 left on the clock. Gardner threw a great pass and Buettner made a great catch as he created space from the corner and caught the ball while falling to the ground in the end zone.

Buettner described what happened.

"When Coach Hall called my number I knew I had to come through for the team," he said. "I gave the corner a step inside and I was off to the back of the end zone. I'm just happy we could get the win. Go Outlaws!"

The crowd erupted as the Outlaws regained the lead at 28-26. With 16 seconds left in the game, the defense sealed the win with an interception by Gardner.

Quarterback Gardner went 8 for 22 for 221 yards passing, and recorded one passing TD.

Gardner said, "Everyone finally felt the feeling of

winning that we've been working for since July and I think everyone is ready to go get another win."

The Outlaws recorded 190 total yards rushing. Wyatt Maffey led the team with 17 carries for 132 yards rushing. Adam Maddox-Castle had three carries for 24 yards rushing, and Mason Sellers had two carries for 17 yards rushing. Gardner tallied three carries for 17 yards rushing.

Maffey credited his rushing success to his linemen, who he stated did their job with confidence and made big plays.

Maffey said, "We built off last week's game, and I feel like we really came together as a team. We encouraged and strengthened each other as the game continued. We really believed we would win and we fought until the very end. I remember feeling a spark being lit between us at the beginning of the game and we just took it and ran with it. To me the win was seeing our team come together, and that's what it's all about."

Riley Sellers had two receptions for 64 yards and Josh Buettner had two receptions for 50 yards, including one touchdown. Maffey had two receptions for 45 yards, Jamen Schwartz added one reception for 35 yards, and Maddox-Castle one reception for 27 yards.

Henry Rard led the defense with seven tackles. Maffey, Jesse Murillo, Ben Cooper, and Reese Larrabee all finished the night with



PHOTO PROVIDED

Outlaws running back Wyatt Maffey had a strong game for the Outlaws.

six tackles each. Maffey also forced a fumble and had two fumble recoveries. Sellers and Gabe Bailey also forced a fumble, and Austin Ekern tallied one fumble recovery.

Defensive Coordinator Hayden Hudson said, "Our defense played well against the spread. The defensive line and linebackers did a good job maintaining the run and the secondary was step-by-step with the wideouts all night."

"The defense played a great first half and when met with some adversity in the second half, held strong and fought till the end. The defense as a whole made huge strides in the last two

weeks and we look forward to next week and a rematch with the ground-and-pound of the Tigers."

Hudson noted standout secondary players Schwartz, and Riley and Mason Sellers, who were in the right position all night and made plays on the outside.

Hall told *The Nugget* he was proud of his players for not folding under pressure.

"Many teams would not have had the fortitude to overcome what we did," said Hall. "Our backs were against the wall, but we chose to fight on and win the day."

The Outlaws will hit the road for Junction City on Friday, October 15.



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