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Silverton's Austin Haskett (48) carries the ball after a handoff from quarterback Levi Nielsen (4) in a game against Redmond on Friday at Silverton High School.

Silverton High prevails on its new turf field

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SILVERTON - The Silverton High School football team could not have hoped for a better home opener.

Playing on their new turf field for the first time with the bleachers packed and fans lined up halfway around the track, the Foxes had plenty of support Friday against Redmond.

No. 9 Silverton prevailed 41-35 in a Class 5A non-league game that saw both defenses struggle to get off the field.

"By the end there it was kind of like Rocky and Apollo Creed movies, slug-ging each other back and forth," Silver-ton coach John Mannion said.

Ultimately, the Foxes (2-0) got in the most telling blows late.

With Silverton leading 41-35 with about four minutes left, Redmond faced a fourth and 5 play from the Foxes' 20-yard line. Silverton's interior line stopped quarterback Bunker Parrish a yard short of the first down.

The Panthers had a chance to get the ball back in excellent field position, but on third and 13 from Silverton's 13-yard line, sophomore quarterback Levi Nielsen rolled to his right and connected with junior receiver Spencer Clements for a 14-yard first down on the right sideline.

Silverton ran out the clock to seal the win.

"It was an improve play. I knew where the sticks were," said Clements, who had seven catches for 142 yards and two touchdowns. "I pushed the fade like I was going deep and then stopped right behind the sticks."

Silverton had its first official practice on the new turf Aug. 22, but playing on it during a game was a new experience. The \$800,000 project was completed ahead of the original schedule.

The game looked like it could be a rout early on, with Nielsen throwing three touchdown passes in the first 13 minutes as the Foxes got out to a 21-0 lead. He connected with sophomore receiver Kobe Garcia for a 59-yard touchdown on a swing pass on the game's second offensive play.

Redmond scored three second-quarter touchdowns, trailed just 27-21 at half-time, and made it a tight game the rest of the way. But the Foxes never relinquished the lead.

"It was really important (to win), especially on the new turf," said Nielsen, who completed 15 of 20 passes for 307 yards and four touchdowns, and added a rushing touchdown. "It was in the news, in the articles, it was just like we had to win this game and we did. We battled it out. I'm really proud of my team."

Silverton extended its halftime lead to 33-21 early in the third quarter on a 64-yard drive culminate by senior running

back Darren Buckley's 2-yard run.

Back came the Panthers who went 61 yard on five plays, with Parrish scoring on an 8-yard run to cut the lead to 33-28.

Silverton responded with another drive. A 19-yard pass to Clements set up a 2-yard keeper by Nielsen for the touch-down. Nielsen's pass to senior receiver Brice Shippen for the 2-point conversion extended the lead to 41-28 with one minute left in the third quarter.

Redmond closed the gap to 41-35 with nine minutes left on a 8-yard touchdown pass, and forced a punt on Silverton's next possession.

But the Foxes got the stop they needed and a few key first downs to seal the deal.

"We're glad we made a big stop on fourth down," Mannion said. "Our defense, even though we gave up some lays, I thought that last stand, they got a stop on fourth down and our offense knocked out a couple first downs."

Nielsen displayed a strong and accurate arm the entire game.

"He progressed by leaps and bounds over the summer," Mannion said. "I think he's got a ton of potential. He played well tonight."

The Foxes open Mid-Willamette Conference play Friday at Dallas.

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REDMOND - 0-21-7-7 - 35

SILVERTON - 14-13-14-0 - 41

FIRST QUARTER
Silverton: Garcia, 59-yard pass from Nielsen. Willis kick

Silverton: Clements, 33-yard pass from Nielsen. Willis kick

SECOND QUARTER

Silverton: Clements, 18-yard pass from Nielsen. Haskett kick

Redmond: Smith, 3-yard run. Hughes kick

Redmond: Parrish, 2-yard run. Hughes kick

Silverton: Shippen, 49-yard pass from Nielsen. 2-point conversion no good

Redmond: Taylor, 6-yard run. Smith kick

THIRD QUARTER

Silverton: Buckley, 2-yard run. 2-point conversion no good

Redmond: Parrish, 7-yard run. Smith kick

Silverton: Nielsen, 2-yard run. 2-point conversion pass to Shippen

FOURTH QUARTER

Redmond: Hester, 9-yard pass from Parrish. Smith kick

INDIVIDUAL STATS

Rushing: Silverton - Buckley, 17-95; Haskett, 12-39. Redmond: Taylor, 10-110

Passing: Silverton - Nielsen, 20-15-309-0-4. Redmond: Parrish, 14-5-72-0-1

Receiving: Silverton - Clements, 7-142-2; Garcia 2-64-1; Shippen 1-49-1; Haskett 3-40. Redmond - Hester 2-36-1

Ruckus on the River



Casey Beall (left) and Josh Tsang (right) get in their kayaks for the second annual Ruckus on the River down river race on the North Santiam River on Saturday near Gates. The three day festivities also include an extreme tubing race over Mill City Falls and a service project to removed invasive plant species.



PHOTOS BY MOLLY J. SMITH / STATESMAN JOURNAL

Eric Munroe warms up for the five minute down river race.

For the second straight year on the first weekend of September, eNRG Kayaking made a splash in the North Santiam Canyon with Ruckus on the River.

The weekend event included stand-up kayak, down-river and extreme-tubing races, along with free-style expression sessions, pizza dinner at the Mill City Eagles Lodge and some down-home camping.