

BLEACHER SEATS

With Robb Rush



At the first of the season I talked about the responsibilities of each part of the Heppner (or any other town's) football effort. I said that the coaches' part was to teach a winning system. Coming away with the league championship speaks for itself. I said that it was the team's responsibility to learn said system and to put forth maximum effort. The league championship speaks for itself. I said the responsibility of the fan was to be supportive of the team and coaches as long as they handled their ends of the bargain. The group of loyal fans journeying to Elgin speaks for their part.

The game in Elgin was a bitter disappointment to everyone concerned—most of all the players. But looking back at the game and getting everything in the proper perspective, the Mustangs played a decent ball game.

This year's football team—no matter how fired up or dedicated—could not function in the manner that took them to the league championship without the full services of Bryan Marlin and Dennis Peck. Certainly these two senior players are not the whole team, not by any stretch of the imagination. But they are an integral part of the team effort, lending leadership and great experience in "skilled" positions, both on defense and on offense.

This year's Mustangs gave the fans a great deal of entertainment and excitement. We got to see the whole gamut of games. We were able to see the high-scoring runaways, the down-to-the-wire heart stoppers, and your basic do the job and end up ahead games. But throughout the entire season, the Mustangs gave us a winner, and winners are more fun to watch.

One of the more important aspects of a season is to see marked improvement of the team in general and the younger players in particular. Except for one or two cases, the Mustangs were able to accomplish this. What this means is that the fans are going to be able to support winners for some years to come. I am sorry that this season is over for the Heppner seniors. But I am also looking forward to the '79 season.

I can't wait to see what Joedy Marlatt is going to do for an encore. Not to mention the return of juniors Steve Marlatt, Jim Parker, Larry Palmer, Todd Sherrer, Dale Holland, Ron Young, Ron Schwartz, Perry Wilson, Lee McCorl and Chris Zita. The returning sophomores include Ray B. Miller, John Strahm, Brett Sherrer and John Bier. The returning freshmen members are John Murray, Doug Holland and Earl Hammond. Not a bad group to look forward to.

I want to say something about the group of fans traveling to Elgin. What a group of people! There were as many or more people from Heppner at the game as there were from Elgin—a good showing of support and enthusiasm. They seemed to be a highly vocal group, also.

Football games must be only for the fans who are out of school and the coaches and the team. Because conspicuous by their absence (save for a loyal few) were the Mustang student body. The closest thing to a horn was under the hoods of the cars in the parking lot. It is like the old timers say: "The times they are a changin'!"

In the old days (and some not so old days) a team (particularly a home-town team) playing in the state championship series was more important than non-school

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Mustangs drop quarterfinal to Huskies 25-7

Heppner Mustang hopes for advancing past the quarterfinals stage in the state Class A playoff action were dashed Saturday in Elgin.

The Elgin Huskies, undefeated champions of the Wapiti League, proved that they were as quick as they were big, racking up four touchdowns to the Mustangs' one, for a 25-7 victory.

Heppner was able to contain the Huskies well for most of the first half of play, showing the defensive skills and ball moving capabilities that made the Mustangs number one in the Columbia Basin Conference. But from the second half on, it was Elgin's game.

Early in the first quarter, the Elgin team moved to within ten yards of paydirt, where Mustang defenders dug into the frozen Elgin turf, taking over control of the ball on downs. The first quarter ended with no points on the scoreboard.

In the second period, the Huskies moved within 20 yards of the goal line, on a controversial pass play in which the receiver bobbled the ball out of bounds—ruled a completion by officials. But the Mustangs came back, with Lionel Wood making an interception in the end zone, setting up another Mustang attack.

Spearheading the attack was freshman John Murray, who made most of his 106 yards in rushing for the game on the first play of Heppner's possession. Taking a handoff from his own 20, Murray sprinted 77 yards to within three yards of the goal line. Dennis Peck, the Mustangs' top ground gainer of the season, took over, putting the first score of the game on the board. A Doug Holland kick made it 7-0 Mustangs.

While the larger Elgin team mounted another offensive drive—aided by a controversial pass interference call—Lionel Wood again rose to the occasion for Heppner, picking off a pass on the Mustangs' ten yard line. But Heppner failed to move the ball during that possession and was forced to punt.

Randy Burgess fielded the kick, then sprinted it back for the Huskies' first score. Mustang

defenders foiled an Elgin attempt for a two-point conversion. But Elgin offense, sparked by the TD-oriented Burgess brothers, Randy and Rocky, proved uncontrollable.

With less than two minutes to go in the half, the Huskies drove to within three yards of paydirt. Heppner's Dennis Peck, displaying excellent defensive skill in the game's first half, was in on the tackle to thwart the Elgin TD, injuring his shoulder in the process. In pain and unable to move his arm, Peck was sidelined for the remainder of the contest. Moments after Peck was helped from the field, Elgin's Rocky Burgess plunged into the end zone from the two yard line, making it 12-7 for the Huskies as the half ended.

Returning to the field without Peck, and with only sporadic defensive appearances by ankle-troubled senior standout Bryan Marlin, the game went downhill for the Mustangs.

While Heppner was unable to sustain drives, Rocky Burgess continued to make points for the Huskies, on runs

from 9 and 70 yards out.

"Our offense was hurt by Peck and Marlin being out, there's no doubt about it," said Heppner Coach John Sporseen. "They (Elgin) were hitting hard throughout the game, and we got worn down as the game went on...Elgin is by far the best team we've faced all year."

"We gave it our best shot and got beaten by a better team," the Heppner coach stated. "I'm pleased with our performance during the season."

Prospects look good for next season, with only four starting seniors graduating. Seven juniors and three sophomores started for Heppner during the Elgin game, and Mustang freshmen have made key contributions throughout the season.

Elgin will face St. Mary's of Medford in semifinals action next week.

The Mustangs will hold a fall sports award dessert on Tuesday, starting at 7 p.m. It is expected that Columbia Basin Conference all-star team members will be announced at that time.



Bustin' out

Fleet-footed running back John Murray breaks out and leaves a surprised Husky defender in his tracks. Murray set up the Mustangs only score on a 77-yard run, with Dennis Peck carrying in the TD on the next play. The Heppner squad lost the quarterfinal game to Elgin 25-7.

Seven Mustangs make CBC All-Star team

Seven Heppner Mustangs have been named to first-team positions on the Columbia Basin Conference All-Star team.

The CBC champion Mustangs received more positions on the all-star roster than any other team in the league. Selections to the honor squad were based on voting by coaches in the conference last week.

Dennis Peck, the Mustang's premier ground-gainer was given a berth as running back. Named to the all-star offensive line were the Mustangs' hardhitting duo of Joedy Marlatt and Jim Parker. Marlatt also won a first-team all-star slot on the defensive side, as linebacker. Sticky-fingered Dale Holland captured both defensive and offens-

ive top honors as end, and Bryan Marlin was voted to a first-team position as all-star back.

Named to the all-star second team were center Ray Miller, linebacker Jim Parker, and Bryan Marlin, this time for his punting skill.

Marlin was one of three CBC standouts to receive all-star recognition for a second consecutive year.

Non-Mustangs earning berths on the CBC all-star lineup for offense were Wah-tonka quarterback Jeff O'Gorman; Weston-McEwen running back Brandt Bannister; Condon running back (and league rushing leader) Marion Weatherford; Wah-tonka end Randy Twidwell; Weston-McEwen lineman Frank Webb; Wah-tonka lineman Ron

Schmidt; Umatilla center Mike Peterson; Wah-tonka kicker Ron Schmidt, and Sherman punter Eric Kalista.

Defensive first-team members from elsewhere in the league were linebackers Seth Johnson of Weston-McEwen and Doug Neuman of Condon; backs Brandt Bannister of

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