

Mustangs kick off title defense vs Regis



Mustang cheerleaders perform at halftime. Pictured (L-R): Arianna Worden, Julianna Teeman, Brook Wilson, Camryn Scrivner and Aundrea Pirtle.

By Blake Carter

Saturday afternoon quickly approached for Heppner, and so did their first-round matchup with Regis. Heppner, who seeded number one, knew that this game wasn't going to be an easy one. Temperatures sat at 50 degrees as the teams took the field. Heppner, remaining undefeated throughout the regular season, showed no signs of slowing down as they dominated the visiting Rams 43-8.

Regis, hailing from special district two, has been a solid team all year. The Rams earned their automatic bid by finishing third in their district, behind number two seed Kennedy, and tenth seed Santiam. The Rams suffered three losses on the season, two of them coming back-to-back against Kennedy and Santiam.

The two teams' captains met at midfield before the game, the coin was flipped, and Heppner would decide what to do with the ball. The Mustangs deferred their option to the second half, and Regis then elected to receive. Conor Brosnan lined up the ball and kicked the off 2021 playoffs.

After a touchback, Regis took the ball at their own 20-yard line. A quick three and out forced by the Mustangs would give Heppner the ball early. Two plays are all it took as the Mustangs advanced 30 yards into the endzone, Brock Hisler began the drive on an eight-yard carry and a five-yard penalty would advance the Mustangs even further, and then Hisler capped off the drive on a 17 yard score. Landon Mitchell carried the ball right up the gut to add the two-point conversion and give Heppner an early 8-0 lead.

On the ensuing Ram drive, a halfback pass would go wrong as Kason Cimmityotti intercepted the pass and left Heppner in prime field position at the Ram 42-yard line. Eight plays would drive the Mustangs down into the endzone as Mitchell found Jace Coe on a 10-yard touchdown throw, leaving Heppner up 14-0 at the end of the first quarter.

Another Ram punt would cut the Regis drive short, and unfortunately for them; the Mustangs were just getting going. Hisler scored his second touchdown on a one-yard dive over a pile right on the goal line. Coe carried the ball in on the two points try, as Heppner led 22-0. The Mustang defense, who has caused problems for opposing teams all year, forced a Ram fumble which

resulted in a score. Brosnan forced the ball loose as Hisler scooped it up and ran 23 yards for the score. A missed extra point would leave the Mustangs up 28-0.

The Rams next offensive possession wouldn't help much as they turned the ball over on downs. Mitchell would find Hisler on the following possession for a 13-yard score, Hisler would once again add the two points try to extend the Mustang lead to 36-0. Desperate for a turnaround, the Rams would look to drive, but before they could make any progress a high snap would end their drive, as Blane Mahoney jumped on the ball at the Ram 15-yard line. Mitchell would throw another touchdown as he dumped the ball off to Derrick Smith on a one-yard scramble and throw. Brosnan would knock the ball through the uprights to widen the Mustang advantage to 43-0. The Rams offense finally found their legs as they drove down the field right before the half ended. Regis looked to grab some momentum, but it would swing right back in the Mustangs favor as Caden George picked off a pass on the Mustang two-yard line as the clock struck zero.

Coming out of the half the Mustangs sat comfortably in the lead at 43-0, the clock would now run without stopping the whole second half. The Mustangs took this time to give some players the opportunity to play as they rotated players in. The Mustangs would recover two fumbles in the second half but couldn't produce any points. Regis would add points to the scoreboard as Noah Koenig ran 30 yards for a

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Ram touchdown. The Rams would add the two-point conversion, but the clock would run out of time, ending their season. The Mustang defense would force six turnovers across the game, as the offense would capitalize. Mitchell threw five passes in the contest, connecting on four for three touchdowns, and 45 yards. Kason Cimmityotti also threw a pass completion of nine yards. Hisler ran for 42 yards, and a touchdown. Mitchell also ran for a touchdown to go along with his 28 yards. Derrick Smith ran for nine yards, Aden Lathrop ran for three yards, Hayden McMahon ran for four yards, Cimmityotti for two yards, Coe gained 13 yards, while Caden George ran for 29 yards, Cameron Proudfoot ran for 14 yards as well. Smith and Coe each had two receptions, Coe gained 31 yards and Smith gained 10. Both players caught a touchdown pass as well and Hisler also caught a touchdown pass with his 13 yards.

Hisler led the team in tackles with six, Smith and Brosnan had five tackles a piece, Tucker Ashbeck had four tackles, Coe and Blake Carter recorded three tackles, Toby Nation, Zander Fisher, Proudfoot, and Caden George all had two tackles while Bryan Collins, Aden Lathrop, Kason Cimmityotti, Nick Wenberg, Blane Mahoney, Jaime Cavan, Kegan Steagall, Karver Wilkins, and Jake Lentz all recorded one tackle.

The Mustangs will battle conference foe Weston McEwen in quarterfinal action, November 13 at 1 p.m. The Mustangs previously defeated the Tiger Scots 39-0 in Athena.



Ty Boor (28) and Kegan Steagall (64) go for the tackle.



Kason Cimmityotti (18) runs the ball on a quarterback keeper in the third quarter.



Derrick Smith (2) runs the ball. -Photos by Damon Brosnan.

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