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Tigers hold off Santiam in quarterfinals

Stanfield's win propels them to semifinal match against Kennedy

By **MATT ENTRUP**
Staff Writer

No team in Class 2A football has found the end zone as often as the No. 2 Stanfield Tigers this season, and No. 10 Santiam wasn't about to try and match them in a shootout when the teams met in the state quarterfinals on Friday night at Horyna Athletic Complex.

The game started under a thick fog that turned the opposite sidelines into a menagerie of ghostly figures. For most of the first half Stanfield's offense was nowhere to be seen as Santiam dominated time of possession. But the Wolverines were never able to break an opportunistic Tigers defense that came up with five sacks and a pair of turnovers, and Stanfield made the most of its limited chances on offense for a 13-0 win.

Dylan Grogan and Makiah Blankenship scored rushing touchdowns, and Thylor Monkus and Brody Woods forced turnovers to help Stanfield reach the state semifinals for the second straight season.

"Santiam came to play today and we had to respond. Sometimes you get punched in the mouth and you've got to get back up and keep fighting. My guys kept fighting," Stanfield coach Davie Salas said. "Hats off to (Santiam). They played a great game, had a great game plan. If I was coaching against the Stanfield Tigers, I'd eat the

clock myself."

The Tigers (10-1) had just two possessions in the first half, and their first was a three-and-out. When Salas called a timeout with 7:18 left in the second quarter after Santiam drove the ball into the red zone, the Wolverines held a full 15-minute advantage on the clock.

Out of the timeout, Santiam quarterback Riley Nicot completed a pair of short passes to move the ball to the Stanfield 5-yard line, but one of the Wolverines' several false starts immediately backed them up to the 10.

Stanfield's defense made the first of its game-changing plays and jarred the ball from Santiam's runner as he plunged into the line. Monkus jumped on the fumble to give the Tigers possession at their own 5-yard line with a few ticks past 5 minutes left in the half.

"In that first timeout we just talked about getting our heads together. We didn't expect (Santiam) to come out and play as hard as they did," Grogan said. "When they're that close you want to get the ball back and change the momentum of the game, it was pretty big."

A personal foul on Santiam helped jump-start the Tigers' drive, and a 17-yard run up the gut by Blankenship got them out near midfield. Facing 3rd-and-11, the Tigers lined up in a run formation and fooled the Wolverines with a screen to Monkus in the middle of the field that picked up the first down and took the ball into Wolverines territory for the first time with 2:21 left in the half.

The Tigers were soon looking at 3rd-and-long again



STAFF PHOTO BY E.J. HARRIS

Stanfield's Justin Keeney breaks the tackle from Santiam's Colton Craigmyle in the Tigers' 13-0 win against the Wolverines on Friday in Stanfield.

on Santiam's 45, but dialed up the perfect play to catch the Wolverines cheating up to stop the run. Grogan froze the secondary with a fake hand-off, then looked up to see a wide-open Justin Shelby waving his arm as he streaked up the middle past the last line of defense.

The pass came in just at the edge of Shelby's reach, and he was able to secure the ball just as a Santiam defender dragged him down from behind at the two-yard line with 33 seconds left in the half.

"We'd seen that on film, seen that in their mistakes, so we knew that was going to be a pretty good play," said Grogan, who finished 5-of-11 for 89 yards and ran the ball 10 times for 61 yards. "I knew where I was going to look with my first read, and I saw him open."

"I seen the safety and he

was about 10 yards under me so I was just throwing my hand up and hoping (Grogan) would see me," said Shelby. "I was thinking, 'You drop this ball you're fired.'"

A holding penalty on first down pushed the Tigers back to the 10, but they were back on the shadow of the goal line with two seconds to go after a seven-yard quarterback draw on third down. Needing just two more yards to put his team on top, Grogan called his own number again. He stretched over the line and held onto the ball despite taking a hard hit that opened a gash on the back of his right hand.

"We had two seconds left, I knew I had to put it in, it was fourth down," Grogan said. "All in right there, so once I got stood up I reached over with my long arms."

Enoel Angel kicked the extra point to give the Tigers a

7-0 lead at halftime, and they would have the ball coming out of the break.

"I felt like we were in control," Grogan said. "I knew our defense would stand up and I felt like the guys were into it after that."

Stanfield, which averaged 41.7 points a game coming into Friday, had struggled to get its running game going in the first half against a physical Wolverines front, totaling 56 yards on nine carries.

"Once we got everyone into the locker room, our line talked about their jobs, what they needed to do, came out in the second half and was successful," said Monkus, who had a game-high 103 yards on 14 carries. "Our line did a great job the second half, a lot more room to run."

The Tigers came out and ran the ball 11 times for 56 yards on their first drive, which Blankenship capped

with a two-yard plunge to make it 13-0 with 6:58 left in the third quarter.

The extra point sailed wide, but the Tigers made sure they wouldn't need it with a stifling defensive effort that held the Wolverines to 71 yards in the second half and 190 for the game.

In their last four games the Tigers have allowed just 26 total points and picked up their second shutout in that span.

"We've been harping on defense, you know, defense wins you championships," Salas said.

A major difference for the Tigers in the second half was in the passing game, where Santiam's Nicot went 3-of-8 with an interception after passing at will in the first half. He finished 10-of-16 for 131 yards.

Brody Woods had a pair of breakups and intercepted a pass in the end zone with 3:12 left in the game to end Santiam's final drive.

The Tigers would hold the ball the rest of the way and finished out in victory formation. Stanfield finished with 300 yards on offense and carried the ball 33 times for 211 yards.

The Tigers' semifinal opponent will be No. 3 Kennedy at 5 p.m. Saturday at Liberty High School in Hillsboro.

SAN	0	0	0	0	0
SHS	0	7	6	0	13
Scoring plays					
2nd Quarter					
:02 — SHS Dylan Grogan 2 run (Enoel Angel kick), 7-0					
3rd Quarter					
6:54 — SHS Makiah Blankenship 2 run (kick missed), 13-0					
Statistics					
PASSING — Santiam: Riley Nicot 10-16-1, 131; Stanfield: Dylan Grogan 5-11-0, 89.					
RUSHING — Santiam (37-59): Stanfield (33-211, 2 TD): Thylor Monkus 14-103; Dylan Grogan 10-61, TD; Makiah Blankenship 7-34, TD; Justin Keeney 2-13.					
RECEIVING — Stanfield: Justin Shelby 1-43, Brody Woods 3-34, Thylor Monkus 1-12.					

Mustangs stampede past Prospectors

Heppner back in 2A semifinals for fourth straight year

By **ERIC SINGER**
Staff Writer

On Saturday afternoon, Heppner's six seniors — Jake Lindsay, Logan Grieb, Kolby Currin, Tim Jaca, Kevin Murray, and Trevin Home — stepped onto the grass of Les Payne Field on for one final home football game.

Les Payne Field has been a place of great success for the Mustangs over the course of the seniors' four-year high school career, with Heppner winning 25 of 26 games in that span. But this game held more meaning than a typical home game — a win over Grant Union on Saturday would send the Mustangs to the state semifinals.

The senior six did their parts to leave a lasting impression on the Mustang fans once the game was played, leading the No. 4 Mustangs to a 46-0 victory over No. 5 Grant Union, punching the ticket to the semifinals for the fourth straight season.

"It's awesome, really awesome," Grieb said of the victory. "I never thought it (home finale) would come this fast but it did and it's a heck of a way to go out."

Fellow senior Kevin Murray recognized the home crowd for supporting the team.

"We're playing in the best town with the best fans and atmosphere you could ask for and we played as hard as we could to get the best memory here," Murray said.

With a steady wind blowing for most of the game Saturday, Heppner (8-2) did not venture into the pass section of the offensive playbook except for one play — an incomplete pass in the first quarter. The Mustangs didn't need the passing game to be effective, running the ball

SCOREBOARD

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PREP FOOTBALL
Saturday
#4 Heppner vs #1 Regis (2A semifinals, at Liberty HS, Hillsboro), Noon
#2 Stanfield vs #3 Kennedy (2A semifinals, at Liberty HS, Hillsboro), 5 p.m.

Prep Scores

Class 2A Quarterfinal
Stanfield 13, Santiam 0
Heppner 46, Grant Union 0

43 times for 380 yards and seven touchdowns scored by four different players.

"Coach Grant gave us a great game plan and we focused on the fundamentals a lot because that's what wins games in the playoffs," Grieb said.

Grieb led the way with three of those touchdowns from his running back spot — all scored in the first half — and finished with 145 yards on 18 carries. Junior running back Coby Dougherty had a solid game with 103 yards on 16 carries and two scores.

"It's the greatest thing ever to block for those guys," Jaca said, "and when you feel their hand on your back to follow, you just know you're doing the right thing and when you pick your guy and see them going for six, it's amazing."

The offense did not start the game as dominant, as the Mustang's first drive resulted in one first down before they were forced to punt. But on the next drive, Heppner was able to get the ball moving and Dougherty finished the possession with a 9-yard run up the gut into the end zone to put Heppner in front, 8-0, with just more than one minute left in the first quarter.

Grant Union's offense started to show some life early in the second quarter and were finally able to move the ball into Heppner territory. But on a 4th-and-6 from the Mustangs 35, Grant Union quarterback Wade Reimer's attempted screen pass was intercepted by a leaping Tim Jaca, who used every bit of

his 5-8 frame to make the snag, and then returned the ball all the way to the Prospectors 27.

"I got let off easy and immediately clicked in my head to read a screen and watched the QB's eyes and then just jumped," Jaca said. "I wasn't sure if I could reach that one. I don't get those very often so it was an awesome feeling."

The turnover set up a 1-yard touchdown by Grieb, which put Heppner up 28-0 at halftime.

Heppner's defense didn't have its sharpest performance overall Saturday, but did enough to earn the team's first shutout of the season. The Mustangs forced a total of three turnovers — two interceptions and one lost fumble — and held Grant Union to just 165 total offensive yards.

The Mustangs will now hit the road for the first time in the playoffs this week when they take on the No. 1 seed Regis Ramson Saturday, Nov. 19, at Liberty High School in Hillsboro. The Mustangs and Rams met in the semifinals last year as well, when the then-No. 2 seed Mustangs beat the No. 3 seed Rams, 26-3.

Kick-off is set for noon.

GUHS	0	0	0	0	0
HHS	16	12	12	6	46
Statistics					
PASSING — GUHS (6-16-2, 76) W. Reimers 3-10-2, 37; Z. Deiter 3-6, 39. HHS: K. Smith 0-1.					
RUSHING — GUHS (42-90) C. Weaver 12-16; W. Reimers 11-25; Z. Deiter 9-47; D. Stokes 5-10; E. Carniglia 1-1; Team 4-(9). HHS (43-380, 7 TD) L. Grieb 18-145, 3 TD; C. Dougherty 16-103, 2 TD; B. Wolters 4-62; T. J. Lindsay 1-10.					
RECEIVING — GUHS (6-76) W. Reimers 3-39; D. Stokes 1-15; E. Carniglia 1-14; K. Shelley 1-8.					
FIRST DOWNS — GUHS: 9. HHS: 15.					

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