

Friday Night Football Frenzy



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Photo Credit: Tony Adams / Belton Journal

Lake Belton wins 53-20 at Chaparral, locks up playoff spot

By Tony Adams

Belton Journal

With the final playoff spot in District 8-5A-I up for grabs, the Lake Belton Broncos traveled to Killeen on Thursday evening to take on the Chaparral Bobcats at Joseph Searles III Stadium.

Lake scored on three of its first four drives and was able to flex its bench as the Broncos clinched the final district playoff spot with a 53-20 win over the Bobcats.

The Broncos have now qualified for the playoffs for the fourth consecutive year, each year that the team has been eligible for postseason play.

Lake received the ball to start the game and scored in 11 plays, having driven 65 yards and took 3:07 off the clock. The extra point failed but an offsides call gave the Broncos another opportunity. AJ Arrington scored on a two-point run to put Lake up 8-0.

Imer Bolton-Smith had an interception two plays before Braxtan Cope recovered a fumble at the Chaparral 44 with 5:56 to play in the opening quarter.

A drive later, Gavin Stewarts 30-yard punt return set up

Arrington's 11-yard touchdown run. Long Chuong's extra-point try was good, but another offsides penalty by the Bobcats on the try enticed the Broncos to take the point off the board and go for two. Cope's successful run made the score 16-0 with 1:59 to go in the first quarter.

The Broncos got a huge defensive stop on fourth down as





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Gavin Owens dumped Bryson Coleman for a six-yard loss.

Lake cashed in with 4:04 to play in the half, as Arrington scored from a yard out. Chuong's extra-point put the Broncos up 23-0.

On the next play from scrimmage, Coleman hit Jaylen Moultrie in the flats for a 78-yard touchdown. The point-after try failed, as the Broncos continued to lead by

17 points with 3:43 to play in the half.

On Chaparral's next offensive drive, they received the benefit of a pass interference call. Coleman found Harrison Lyon for an eight-yard touchdown reception. The two-point try failed, as the Bobcats trailed by 11 points with 20 seconds left in the half.

Christian Onchweri received the ensuing kickoff at the Lake 10-yard line, made a couple of cuts, found a hole, and raced 90

yards for a back-breaking score with seven seconds left in the first half. Chuong's extra point made the score 30-12 at the half.

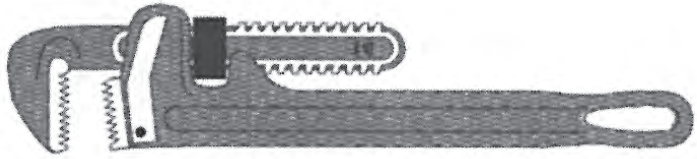
"That kid has done everything for us," Lake Belton head coach Brian Cope said. "On both sides and now, special teams as well."

Another long return by Stewart set up a 14-yard touchdown run by Davion Peters.

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Chuong's kick gave the Broncos a 37-12 lead with 9:14 left in the third.

Stewart dropped Coleman for a loss on a fourth down and two at midfield conversion attempt. Jessiah James hit Peters in stride down the right sideline on the next play for a 49-yard touchdown. Chuong's extra-point gave the Broncos a 32-point lead with 6:19 in to go in the third.

Chaparral's next drive was a 15-play march, having advanced to the Lake 34-yard line. Joe Ferrell's sack for a 10-yard loss forced the Bobcats to go for it on fourth down. Coleman fired an incomplection,

as the Broncos got the ball back with 57 seconds left in the third.

With 9:32 to play in the game, Reese Rosenbaum hit Peters on a fade pattern in the left corner of the end zone. Chuong's kick made the score 51-12.

Davian Arthur's 27-yard run late for Chaparral put another six points on the board. Coleman's two-point pass to Lyon was good to make the score 51-20 with 6:16 to play.

A bad snap on a late punt attempt by the Bobcats went out of the back of the end zone with 2:10 accounted for the final two

points on a safety.

"I am proud of our kids," Cope said. "I asked them to play for 48 minutes and have the opportunity for the fourth time in school history to go to the playoffs. Since 2010, we are one of two new schools in 5A-I and 6A to make the playoffs in each of their first four years. That is a great achievement by a great group of coaches and players."

The Broncos will play the winner of Friday night's Highland Park and Midlothian matchup in next week's Texas UIL 5A-I bi-district playoffs.

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Belton secured in playoff spot, bested by Brenham 49-28

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Tigers' fifth consecutive playoff appearance was already secured, but there was plenty to play for in the regular-season finale.

Belton traveled to face a familiar foe Friday, concluding the District 10-5A, Division II schedule at Brenham — a team the Tigers encountered four times during the previous four years, emerging victorious only once.

The winner of the fifth meeting would earn second place in the league's final

standings and the right to open the postseason at home later this week. Furthermore, the loser would be forced to play at No. 4 Iowa Colony.

Clearly, the stakes were high, but Belton was unable to cash in on the opportunity.

The Tigers scored on their first play from scrimmage as junior dual-threat quarterback Will Shepard broke free for a 57-yard touchdown, giving Belton an immediate 7-0 advantage with less than two minutes elapsing from the clock.

It would not hold, though. Brenham capitalized on

a trio of first-half turnovers by the Tigers to take control, scoring 28 unanswered points en route to a 49-28 victory.

As a result, Belton (5-5, 3-2) is tasked with upsetting the state-ranked Pioneers, who

have only lost four games in the three seasons, in the bi-district round. The contest will take place either Thursday, Friday or Saturday.

While the Tigers would

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have preferred the opposite outcome, multiple miscues repeatedly prevented any opportunity at generating momentum following Shepard's initial punch.

The Cubs responded and tied the game on sophomore running back C.J. Glover's fourth-and-2 conversion for an 18-yard touchdown. Then, after being pinned deep in its own territory, a botched snap by Belton led to a blocked punt by senior defensive end Jase Mueller, who returned the ball across the goal line, creating a gap that continued to grow.

Following a pair of punts, an interception by Brenham senior linebacker Caleb Espinoza set up a touchdown pass from senior Xyran Upshaw to tight end Hagen Frank, and the 21-7 cushion carried over into the second period.

Belton was in prime position to halt the outburst, driving to the Cubs' 5-yard line, but a lost fumble set up a 91-yard march

into the end zone.

On the ensuing possession, senior running back Gino Zecca recorded a 20-yard touchdown to pull the Tigers within 14 points, 28-14, but less than 90 seconds later, Brenham (9-1, 4-1) negated the score with a second touchdown connection between Upshaw and senior Chris Guidry.

Belton never had another chance to rally.

With 12 seconds remaining before halftime, Glover generated his second touchdown rushing, allowing the Cubs to take a 42-14 lead into the second half, where they were never challenged.

Zecca caught a 7-yard touchdown pass from Shepard early in the fourth quarter and junior Evan Echipare followed with a 77-yard touchdown, but trailing by 21 points, it was still not enough to spark a comeback.

Regardless, the Tigers turn their

attention toward winning just their third playoff game since 2016.

In the years following former head coach Bob Shipley's 38-30 victory versus South Grand Prairie, Belton has only experienced two bi-district championship celebrations. The Tigers defeated Austin Northeast 56-0 and Austin Travis 61-6 in 2022 and 2023, respectively, but Iowa Colony brings a far different resume.

Following Friday's 40-7 win at Texas City, the Pioneers improved to 9-1 with a 6-1 record in District 9, where they finished second to No. 2 Richmond Randle. The Lions (9-0, 6-0), who own the head-to-head tiebreaker versus Iowa Colony, conclude their season Saturday against Rosenberg Lamar Consolidated (3-6, 1-5).

Last year, Iowa Colony advanced to the Region III final, where it lost 21-14 to the league-rival Lions, who went on to claim their first state championship.

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VS East View High School Belton, TX

Sep 19 / 07:00 PM

VS San Angelo Central Belton, TX

Sep 26 / 07:00 PM

AT Cuero High School Cuero, TX

Oct 09 / 07:00 PM

VS C.E. Ellison Belton, TX

Oct 17 / 07:00 PM

AT University High School Waco, TX

Oct 24 / 07:00 PM

VS Rudder High School Belton, TX

Oct 30 / 07:00 PM

VS Waco High School Belton, TX

Nov 07 / 07:00 PM

AT Brenham High School Brenham, TX

Aug 21 / 06:30 PM

AT Copperas Cove, Copperas Cove, TX

Aug 29 / 07:00 PM

AT A&M Consolidated HS College Station, TX

Sep 04 / 07:00 PM

AT McNeil High School Cedar Park, TX

Sep 11 / 07:00 PM

VS Killeen High School Belton, TX

Sep 26 / 07:00 PM

VS Rouse High School Belton, TX

Oct 03 / 07:00 PM

AT East View High School Georgetown, TX

Oct 10 / 07:00 PM

VS Glenn HS Tiger Stadium Belton, TX

Oct 17 / 07:00 PM

VS Leander HS Tiger Stadium Belton, TX

Oct 24 / 07:00 PM

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