

# Friday Night Football Frenzy



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Week Two



*Photo Credit: David Tuma / Belton Journal*





# Tigers triumph over Eagles

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

GEORGETOWN – Will Shepard was almost perfect, and as a result, Belton is.

The Tigers junior quarterback put on a nearly flawless performance Friday at Georgetown ISD's Birkelbach Field, where he accounted for 294 yards of offense and four touchdowns, guiding Belton to a 34-26 victory against the host Eagles.

Shepard completed 15 of 17 passes for 240 yards and three touchdowns and carried the ball 14 times for 54 yards and a score to help the Tigers improve to 2-0 after posting a regular-season record of 2-8 last year.

Leading by just a single point,

27-26, late in the game, Shepard secured the outcome with a three-yard run into the end zone with nine seconds remaining in regulation. The play capped off a 98-yard drive that began after a potential go-ahead touchdown pass for Georgetown was intercepted near the goal line.

While everything worked out in the Tigers' favor, they struggled offensively in the second half after reaching the end zone on all three of their possessions in the first and second quarters.

Outside of the opening half's first and last drives, the squads alternated scores throughout the first two quarters thanks in part to Shepard's connection with junior receiver Gavin Ross.

The pair connected six times

in the half for 113 yards and a pair of touchdowns with the first coming approximately four minutes after the Tigers forced Georgetown to punt away its initial possession.

Despite being pinned at its own 1-yard line, Belton worked its way all the way down the field with Ross hauling in a 12-yard score to give the Tigers a

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7-0 lead with 5:17 remaining in the period.

Three minutes later, the score was tied after sophomore Zechariah Guyton crossed the goal line on a four-yard run, but Belton responded on the first snap of the second quarter as Shepard, who completed all eight of his passes in the half for 119 yards, found Ross for a 34-yard score.

Once again, however, the Eagles' offense would not be denied, and Guyton capped off a 73-yard drive with a six-yard touchdown.

Then, the Tigers capitalized again with sophomore halfback Cason Morton posted a five-yard score before Georgetown junior quarterback Kaleb McDougle and Xavier Warren, a senior, recorded a 16-yard touchdown with 40 seconds remaining before halftime.

The Eagles went for a 2-point conversion, but it failed, and Belton took a 21-20 advantage into halftime after Georgetown recovered an onside kick but had a last-second 28-yard field

goal attempt blocked by junior Graham Chambley.

Belton's advantage held until the Eagles captured their first lead on a 15-yard touchdown pass from McDougle to Braylon Westfall, a junior, but the snap for the extra point went awry, and Georgetown's cushion was limited to five points, 26-21, with 4:36 left in the third period.

On the ensuing drive, the feat repeated as Shepard and Ross recorded their third touchdown on a five-yard pass, but the 2-point conversion run was short with 49 seconds on the clock, and the score held until Shepard's final carry.

Javid Planz, a junior running back, led the Tigers' ground game, carrying the ball 15 times for 64 yards, while Ross had 10 catches for 158 yards and three touchdowns to go with a carry for 35 yards. Additionally, Morton had 76 yards receiving on a pair of catches.

Belton will look to build on the outing Friday, when it opens its home schedule against Georgetown East View.






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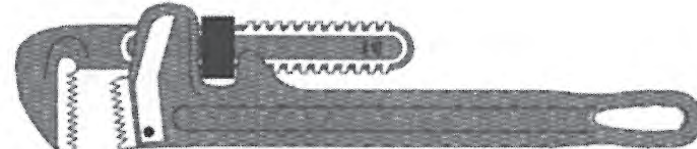
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# Broncos drop road heartbreaker to McNeil, 34-28

By Tony Adams  
The Belton Journal

The Lake Belton Broncos faced another non-district tough road test in Cedar Park on Thursday night, as they took on Round Rock McNeil at Gupton Stadium.

In a game where both teams marched up and down in the field in the first half, defenses began to get stops. However, the Broncos battled hard but could not get the ball back late, as the Mavericks downed Lake, 34-28.

"Our kids fought for 48 minutes," Lake Belton head coach Brian Cope said. "I am so proud to coach this group of young men. Sometimes, your closest teams face their biggest adversities early for it to pay off down the road. We had kids step up all

around and made great plays. We just came up a little short."

Arrington Alexander was the workhorse on Lake's first drive, as he carried the ball four times for 29 yards. Following completions by Jessiah James of 10 yards to Braxtan Cope and 28 yards to Davion Peters, Alexander finished the 75-yard drive with an 18-yard touchdown run. Aiden Lassich's extra point kick was successful, as the Broncos held a 7-0 advantage 2:49 into the game.

The Mavericks answered with five-play, 60-yard drive as Jadon Sultz hit Aden Taylor for an 18-yard touchdown. Bryce Wilson's extra point tied the game at 7-7 with 7:18 to go in the opening quarter.

The Broncos went three-and-out on their second drive and flipped the field with Peters' 53-yard punt.

McNeil scored nine plays later on Sultz's 9-yard pass to Zach Christie. Wilson's PAT was successful in making the score 14-7 at the conclusion of the first 12 minutes.

Zion Harness' 25-yard kickoff return set up Arrington's 75-yard scamper to pay dirt. Lassich's point-after kick tied the game at 14-14 with 11:40 left in the first half.

The Mavericks scored five plays later on Jarell Gary Jr.'s three-yard run. Wilson's kick made it 21-14 with 9:30 left in the first half.

Lake held the ball for 6:04 over the middle of the second quarter. Harness had a couple of first-down runs as the Broncos worked the ball methodically down the field. On fourth down and nine at the McNeil 17, James scrambled to keep a play alive and

*Continued on Page 9*



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fired a pass underneath to Cope in the front of the end zone for the score. Lassich's extra point tied the game at 21-21 with 3:26 left in the half.

McNeil had an opportunity to take the lead late in the first half. However, Wilson's 39-yard field goal attempt went wide right to keep the game at 21-21 heading into the halftime break.

The Mavericks had an opportunity to take the lead in to start the second half, having mounted a 74-yard drive that was stopped at the Lake Belton 17. On fourth down and four, Sultz's pass was swatted away by Gavin Stewart to give the Broncos the ball back with 8:11 to play in the third.

Lake's ensuing drive made it as far as the McNeil 33. However, a holding penalty sent the drive backward, and Peters' 18-yard punt gave the Mavericks the ball at their own 23.

Six plays later, Gary's three-yard touchdown plunge concluded the drive. Wilson's point after set McNeil's lead back to seven with 1:24 left in the third quarter.

Harness' 35-yard kickoff return gave Lake the football at their own 40-yard line to start the drive. However, the Broncos were only advance the ball to the McNeil 49. Peters' 41-yard punt flipped the field and gave the Mavericks the ball at their own 23.

Sultz's 67-yard pass to Gary set up a three-yard touchdown plunge by Gary. The Broncos' special teams put good pressure on the PAT, which forced a wide left kick by Wilson to keep the Mavericks on top by 13 points, 34-21, with 7:07 to go.



The Broncos marched 75 yards in eight plays, highlighted by a 48-yard pass from James to Harness. Cope hauled in a James pass for a 17-yard touchdown. Lassich's extra-point kick pulled the Broncos to

within six points, 34-28, with 5:17 to go.

McNeil got the ball back at their own 12 and salted away the clock, having picked up a critical fourth down and one at their own 42 with a four-yard gain by Gary late.


"We are not going to hang our heads," Cope said. "We are going to get after it again tomorrow. We are going to get better, and we get a home opener on Thursday."



The Broncos will host Killeen at 7 pm on Thursday evening at Tiger Field.

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**Nov 07 / 07:00 PM**  
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**Sep 11 / 07:00 PM**  
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**Sep 26 / 07:00 PM**  
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