

Gales hand Chiefs first loss in Chieftain Stadium

*Chieftains commit 131 yards in penalties
in 37-24 season-opening loss to Lancaster*

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News

LOGAN — Moral victories don't count on the scoreboard and they certainly don't keep winning streaks alive.

That said, however, on the night when they finally went down to defeat for the first time in their still-new home stadium, the Logan Chieftains could nonetheless look back and be pleased with a lot of things they accomplished — other than a win — Friday night.

Visiting Lancaster outscored the Purple & White 37-24 in the season opener for both teams in Logan Chieftain Stadium and, in so doing, became the first Logan opponent to beat the Chieftains in the two-year-old facility.

Although Lancaster built what turned out to be an insurmountable 23-3 halftime lead, the Chieftains — who were 12-0 in Logan Chieftain Stadium since christening the facility with a 35-10 win over the Gales 24 months ago — came oh-so-close to drawing within less than a touchdown in the second half.

After narrowing the gap to 23-10 late in the third quarter, the Chiefs recovered a Lancaster fumble on the Gales' 33-yard line and appeared to capitalize immediately as quarterback Jordan Jurgensmier connected with Isaac Lindsey, who made a terrific leaping catch over a Lancaster defender in the back corner of the end zone, for an apparent touchdown.

The play was called back, however, due to an illegal block in the Logan backfield and the Chiefs were eventually forced to punt.

Lancaster then regained its 20-point lead on its ensuing drive, capped by a 33-yard halfback option pass from Connor Smith to Justin Sharp — a gutsy call on fourth-and-8.

“We'll see on the film,” new Logan coach Kelly Wolfe said of the devastating penalty. “I know what (the official) was calling, so we'll be looking for it.”

Although the Chieftains only committed one turnover, they were guilty of 13 penalties for 131 yards, negating nearly half of their 256 yards of total offense.

“That's what we talked about at halftime — that we had made way too many mistakes and we had to cut them down. We preach all year it's not about how you start, but it's about how you finish,” said Wolfe, the Chiefs' first head football coach other than the retired Dale Amyx since 1989.

“We finished this game and we won the second half three touchdowns to two — maybe four touchdowns to two (had it not been for the score called back on the penalty),” he added.

“Then it’s a different game.”

The Gales not only snapped a streak of two-straight season-opening losses at the hands of the Chieftains but also became the only varsity team other than Logan (and Columbus Ready, which won a neutral-site playoff game over Portsmouth West in 2008) to win a game in Logan Chieftain Stadium. Plus, it was the 500th football victory in school history.

And although he somewhat downplayed it afterward, it was a game that Lancaster coach Rob Carpenter and his Gales desperately wanted to win for a number of obvious reasons.

“We worked hard,” Carpenter said. “Our kids were focused and we had a lot of extra-effort plays, especially out of our running backs, squirming for extra yards.

“I’m just glad (Jurgensmier) didn’t come out throwing deep in the first quarter like they did at the end,” he added, “because he’s got a nice arm throwing deep.”

The Gales amassed 426 yards of total offense, including 353 on the ground, where three different runners had at least 79 yards — led by Smith with 102 yards on 10 carries — and two others rushed for 43 and 41. Lancaster runners proved elusive once they got past the line of scrimmage, making the Chiefs miss several tackles in the open field.

“That’s the wing-T offense, run inside and get outside, mis-direction plays and try to confuse them,” Carpenter stated. “We don’t have the big power back like we’ve had in the past, but we’ve got some smaller backs who have quick feet, spin, twist and turn and do all the things to get extra yards and first downs to keep our offense on the field. And that’s the key to our offense — staying on the field.”

That’s something Wolfe noted his team will have to improve upon as the season unfolds.

“Defensively we had guys in position, we had guys hit... and then we didn’t get any help and (Lancaster runners) would spin off,” Wolfe said. “We have to get more than one guy to the ballcarrier. We had guys make plays and get hits but we didn’t wrap and didn’t get anyone there to help out.”

Yet he was far from discouraged with his team’s effort. Despite the home winning streak and back-to-back undefeated regular seasons, it was not a game the Chiefs were favored to win.

Logan lost all but two full-time starters from last year’s team while the veteran Gales returned 24 lettermen and several of their starters.

“I’m proud as heck,” Wolfe said, “and I can’t wait to see what we do over the next nine weeks. We challenged them at halftime and we cut out the mistakes. We still had a ton of penalties, but we cut out the mistakes on defense and on offense.

“We just stuck with our original game plan,” he added. “We made some adjustments at

halftime.”

After junior cornerback Kelly Long made a diving interception of Lancaster quarterback Nolan Flowers on the Gales’ third play from scrimmage, the Chiefs were in good enough position to get a couple first downs and set up Derek Montgomery for a 28-yard field goal and a quick 3-0 lead.

“We got the pick on defense and our offensive game plan worked great,” Wolfe stated. “We got what we wanted — we got the 3-0 lead and it was a perfect start.”

Five of Lancaster’s six scoring plays on the night were the result of drives of at least 61 yards, including drives of 84, 79, 79 and 80.

The Gales went 84 yards on 11 plays — aided by a crucial Logan offsides penalty when the Gales were facing third-and-5 deep in their own territory, resulting in a first down — to take a 6-3 lead on a 27-yard scoring run by Christian Long with 2:07 left in the opening period.

Logan then put together a solid drive, keyed by Jurgensmier passes of 15 yards to Dylan Cavinee and 13 to Brandon Graham and a nifty 19-yard run by Graham around right end.

However, on third-and-6 from the Lancaster 21-yard line, Jurgensmier was rushed heavily and a Lancaster lineman hit him as he threw. Christopher Seymour picked off the pass to squelch the drive, and the Gales would capitalize with two touchdowns and a field goal in the last eight minutes of the half to open their 23-3 halftime edge.

“We drove all the way downfield and had a mental lapse (on a penalty on third-and-1), then they get that freaky interception,” Wolfe said.

Graham scored twice in the second half. His 2-yard scoring run with 2:58 left in the third quarter, following an 18-yard keeper by Jurgensmier, pulled Logan within 23-10, then he broke a 45-yard scoring jaunt with less than two minutes to play. Jurgensmier capped off an 11-play, 60-yard drive with a fourth-and-1 QB keeper TD with 3:34 to play.

The halfback option pass, however, proved to be the killer. It was the right call at the right time, according to Carpenter.

“We don’t throw a lot and they know it,” he said. Logan “played 11 guys pretty close to the line of scrimmage most of the night, which kind of hurt them when we threw the halfback pass. It was a well-timed call (by) our coaching staff.”

The Gales open their season with four teams (Logan, West Chester Lakota, Cleveland St. Ignatius and Pickerington Central) who were 38-2 in the regular season in 2009. Their road certainly gets no easier.

“We have to be ready every week, and this (Logan) team is as tough as any team we’re going to play,” Carpenter said, praising the Chiefs for playing “with a lot of heart and a lot

of passion. They were well-prepared and played a really good game.”

Wolfe agreed.

“We told them ‘you got your (bad) first half out of the road — now forget about it and let’s play some ball, and I think our kids did,’” he said. “We won the second half. We got better as a team and we grew a lot, especially in the second half.

“They rose to the challenge,” he added. “They could have quit in the second half, but they didn’t. I’m proud of them for that.”

The Chiefs hit the road for a non-league game next Friday night at Pickerington North, which lost its season opener to Division III powerhouse Youngstown Cardinal Mooney 31-14 Friday night.

Pickerington North defeats Chiefs, 24-3

By Craig Dunn

Logan Daily News

PICKERINGTON — There will be a time later this season — maybe as early as next week — when the Logan Chieftains reap the benefits of the experience gained by opening their football season against rugged competition.

“We may not realize it right now,” Logan coach Kelly Wolfe said after his Chieftains dropped a 24-3 non-league decision Friday night at Pickerington North, “but when you have to play against teams like this — when you have to play up every play — the kids may not feel it or see it at the time, but it’s going to help us down the road.”

Wolfe then lifted his hand to eye level.

“That’s because we’re going to be used to playing up here at this (high) level, and that’s going to help,” he continued. “It’s going to make you better.”

The Pickerington North Panthers (1-1 on the season) were everything they were billed to be: big, quick and athletic. And they were something else, too: deep.

“They have some hosses, to say the least,” Wolfe praised. “Even when they took their first-team guys out, they had enough depth with the guys they were rotating in. They have some serious ballplayers.

“They’d have kids play for two series and they’d bring in fresh kids who were just as deep and just as good as their first-level guys,” he added. “It was an uphill battle all night.”

Pickerington North broke a string of five-straight losses at the hands of the Chieftains, beating the Purple & White for the first time since 2004.

Logan, meanwhile, is 0-2 at the outset of a season for the first time since 2006 — a year in which they lost to Lancaster and Chillicothe and then ran the table, winning their final eight regular-season games.

Coupled with last week’s season-opening loss to Lancaster, the Chiefs should be battle-tested, to say the least, for the remainder of their ‘10 schedule. The Gales and Panthers are expected to be among the Division I elite this season not just in Central Ohio but around the state.

Although the Chiefs started the game in a similar fashion as they did last week against Lancaster — Jordan Jurgensmier intercepted Pickerington North quarterback Zach Olszewski on the Panthers’ fourth play from scrimmage — the Chiefs couldn’t get much to materialize offensively.

They had their moments, however. After Pickerington North took the lead for good when Olszewski took a keeper around right end for 16 yards and a touchdown with 5:58 left in the first half, the Chiefs drove from their own 16-yard line to the PN 17, getting close enough

for Derek Montgomery to kick a 34-yard field goal for their only points of the night.

Jurgensmier connected with Nate Poling on an 8-yard pass play and took a keeper 10 yards to start the drive, on which the Chiefs amassed nearly half of their 140 total yards on the night. Brandon Graham later had a nice 16-yard run around right end and the Panthers helped the drive along with a 15-yard facemask penalty.

But after that, the Chiefs never really threatened. They reached the Pickerington North 42-yard line in the final minute of the first half when Jurgensmier teamed with Isaac Lindsey on a nifty 26-yard pass-and-run over the middle, but the drive stalled on down in the final seconds.

Logan only crossed midfield twice in the second half, getting no further than the PN 40-yard line.

The Panthers drove 72 yards on 9 plays for their second touchdown less than four minutes into the second quarter. Running back Alston Robertson broke off a 23-yard run and Olszewski connected with Seth Gamby on a 15-yard pass play to get the Panthers into position for Olszewski to hit Devin Lomax with a 16-yard TD pass in the back right corner of the end zone with 8:09 left in the half.

Pickerington North could have done more damage, but the Panthers hurt themselves with 13 penalties for 105 yards on the night.

That's one area in which Logan improved from last week. The Chiefs committed only three miscues for 20 yards compared to 13 for 131 in their season opener.

"We didn't make as many mistakes," Wolfe said. "That was one of the goals I posted on our board tonight for this week: we needed to cut down on the mistakes and we needed to get more guys to the ball. I think we did that. I think in that aspect of the game we got better.

"We had moments on offense," he added. "I thought we came out (and did) what we were trying to do offensively, with our trips package to the short side. Our option was working well in the beginning and we were getting Brandon out on the corner, which was what we wanted to do — and then the chess match started.

"They adjusted in the second quarter, so we had to adjust. There was a lot of that tonight. They were adjusting to what we were doing, and we had to adjust to catch back up."

The second half was pretty much a stalemate except for a 13-second Pickerington North flurry in the third quarter.

A 30-yard pass from Olszewski to Darien Bryant helped set up a 36-yard field goal by Pickerington North's Tyler Ebright with 5:09 left in the third stanza. Then, on Logan's first play from scrimmage after the ensuing kickoff, defensive back Tony Traylor picked off a

Jurgensmier pass and ran it back 29 yards to paydirt.

According to LHS football historian Spencer Waugh, it was the first defensive pick-six by a Chieftain opponent since Chillicothe's Anthony Hitchens returned an interception for a touchdown in 2005.

Logan did hold Pickerington North's talented offense under 300 yards, a far cry from the 426 Lancaster amassed last week.

"I thought our defense played better tonight," Wolfe praised. Pickerington North "didn't have as many big plays tonight (as Lancaster last week). They had some bursts, but you're not going to hold down a team that talented the whole game.

"Our defense didn't give up the big plays and (the Panthers) had to work for everything they got," he added. "Unfortunately, they had enough horses they could do that."

As mentioned, the Chiefs will eventually benefit from playing Lancaster and Pickerington North, especially when Southeastern Ohio Athletic League play commences Sept. 17 at Jackson.

"It's going to help — and that's what we said about (playing) North last year, too. I don't know if we'll see anybody that big and that talented," Wolfe stated. "We made progress. We did some things (and) got better.

"We said (to the players) at the end of the game that we've just went through the toughest part of our schedule," he added. "We play these (tough non-league) games for a reason: to make us better and to get us ready for the league. I think we will be ready for the league... and I think we will be ready for Reynoldsburg next week, too."

A game to forget: Raiders 47, Chieftains 7

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News

LOGAN — Unless you were wearing a Reynoldsburg football uniform or were one of the few Raider fans who made the trip to Hocking County, Friday night was simply a night to forget all around Chieftain Nation.

Oh, it started out fine — the newest members of the Logan High School Athletic Hall of Fame (Dale Amyx, Dick Stevens, Mitch Trucco and Chad Zimmerman) received their plaques in pre-game ceremonies — and the homestanding Logan Chieftains completed two of their first three passes for a first down.

“Then,” as Logan coach Kelly Wolfe said later, “everything fell apart.”

Reynoldsburg blocked a Logan punt and turned it into eight points moments later — and things only got worse as the Raiders dealt the Purple & White their worst loss in five years, 47-7.

“The proverbial wheels fell completely off tonight,” said Wolfe, whose Chiefs are off to an 0-3 start for the first time since 2004. “We had blocked punts, we had dropped passes, we had injuries, we had balls that got deflected and intercepted... it was just a mess.

“Maybe we got all of that out (of our systems) tonight,” he added. “This one stings. This one hurts. This was not what we wanted.”

Friday night's 40-point setback was the worst loss for the Purple & White since a 48-0 shellacking at the hands of Gahanna on Sept. 23, 2005, back at old Bill Sauer Field. It was their second-straight loss in Logan Chieftain Stadium after winning their first 12 games there in 2008 and 2009.

Reynoldsburg (2-1) blocked a Derek Montgomery punt and took over on the Logan 5-yard line less than two minutes into the game, and turned it into an 8-0 lead moments later when Mykel Bennett scored on a 12-yard run and quarterback J.C. Gibson ran for a two-point conversion.

From that point on — with the exception of one nifty two-minute-drill drive by the Chiefs at the end of the first half — the Raiders were in total control.

Reynoldsburg had a huge field position advantage all night long, starting six of its first seven offensive series on the Logan half of the 50-yard line, including series that began at the LHS 5, 19, 15 and 25.

The Chiefs thus had their backs against their own goal line most of the night.

They started all 13 of their offensive possessions on their side of the field — including two

that began on their own 3-yard line and two others on the LHS 4 and 6 — and other than a 7-play, 65 yard drive that culminated on a Jordan Jurgensmier 4-yard TD run with three seconds left in the first half, the Chiefs never got any deeper than the Reynoldsburg 36-yard line.

To give an indication of how much field position came into play in the first half, the Chiefs trailed 22-7 at the intermission and yet out-gained the Raiders in total yardage, 138-126, because two of Reynoldsburg's three scoring drives were less than 20 yards in length.

Oh, yeah, there was also the matter of 5-foot-8, 145-pound Reynoldsburg speedster Stanley Peterson.

Reynoldsburg led 22-0 late in the first half when Jurgensmier guided the Chiefs to paydirt in just 73 seconds, but that still left 3.2 seconds on the clock — enough time for Peterson to nearly take the ensuing kickoff the distance. Montgomery, the kicker, made a saving tackle on the near sidelines at the Logan 43-yard line.

However, no one caught Peterson on the opening kickoff of the second half. He took the kickoff back 90 yards, nearly untouched, for a touchdown to open a 19-point quarter in which the Raiders scored two touchdowns, a field goal, a safety and two extra-point kicks.

(Counting their 2-point conversion following their first touchdown, the Raiders scored every way possible on the night: touchdown, field goal, 2-point conversion, safety and PAT kick).

“Watching them on film, they play up (competition-wise) every week in the OCC and they played that way tonight,” Wolfe said. “Size-wise, we matched up well with them. We thought if we could contain their speed we would be okay. We couldn't contain (Peterson). Special teams had some big let-downs tonight.”

There was one message that rang loud and clear in the Logan locker room during the week:

“Number three (Peterson) wasn't supposed to touch the ball all night — and that didn't happen,” Wolfe said. “We drove (for a TD) in what, a minute-thirty, and marched down and scored? I thought okay, we have momentum and we're back in it — then, like I said, number three wasn't supposed to touch the ball... and you saw why he wasn't supposed to touch the ball.

“He's definitely a weapon, he's fast and we had a hard time containing him tonight,” added Wolfe. “And even if we did have guys in position to contain him when he made the cutback, we didn't have enough guys there.”

In addition to the blocked punt and the kickoff return, Logan also had three passes intercepted — two of them on deflections — and a safety early in the third period when a snap from center went over Jurgensmier's head and through the end zone. The only break they got all night was when the Raiders fumbled the ball away on the Logan 1-yard line

early in the second quarter.

The Chiefs also lost two key players to injury. Junior wide receiver and backup quarterback Kelly Long went down with a sprained shoulder in the second quarter and senior running back Brandon Graham sustained a leg injury in the third stanza. Their status for next week's Southeastern Ohio Athletic League opener at Jackson is questionable at best.

It was feared Graham may have a broken leg, but Wolfe said that while the team doctor didn't think that was the case, it wouldn't be known for sure until X-rays were taken.

And having anyone hurt going into the league portion of their schedule was the last thing the Chiefs wanted.

“Two key players,” Wolfe said. “That's the big thing... we didn't want to get anyone hurt in these (non-league) games.”

The best thing the Chiefs can do now is wipe the slate clean, forget their 0-3 record against Division I schools from the Ohio Capital Conference, and prepare to defend their SEOAL legacy starting next Friday at Jackson.

Logan has won or shared the last six conference titles and takes a league record-tying 34-game league winning streak to Alumni Stadium... and the Chiefs know exactly what's on the line.

“We've already got seniors who are saying that, and that's what we need to do,” Wolfe said. “Let's just move on; it's over, and now it's time to focus on the league. These (tough non-league) games are for getting us ready for the league — now it's time to do what we've been doing the last six years. I told the kids we have six years we have to walk out there and defend.

“If anyone else is going to win the league, they have to go through us, That's how we have to practice and play,” he added. “But we need to get better. I don't want to be the negative guy, but we went backwards tonight. We'd been going forward and been able to find some bright spots, but we went backward tonight.

“Like my dad said, we got stuck in quicksand and we just couldn't get out. Everything just went bad tonight.”

Logan's SEOAL win streak ends at Jackson, 49-28

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News

JACKSON — They say you never get a second chance to make a first impression.

Well, Jackson's Klay Arthur got a second chance. Then a third. Then a fourth. And then a fifth.

You get the picture.

After having an 80-yard touchdown burst up the middle called back due to a penalty on the very first play from scrimmage, Arthur simply re-introduced himself to the Logan Chieftain defense time and time again during Friday night's long-awaited Southeastern Ohio Athletic League opener at Alumni Stadium.

Arthur came back moments later to break a 57-yard scoring run on basically the same play to begin the road to one of Jackson's biggest football victories in recent history: a convincing — and historic — 49-28 triumph over the visiting Purple & White.

“Going into the week, we knew we had a shot at this. We had a great week of practice and we told the guys on Monday that, guys, we could make history,” Jackson coach Andy Hall said after breaking the Chieftains' 34-game SEOAL winning streak. “We watch records being broken all the time. They're coming in on that big streak — and we said, 'guys, not on our field.' “

The Chiefs had not lost an SEOAL contest since — you guessed it — Jackson beat them 21-14 in the SEOAL opener for both teams in 2004. That was 34 games and six-straight Logan SEOAL championships ago.

Logan (0-4) was looking to break a tie with Ironton (1973-77) for the longest football winning streak in conference history. So the Chiefs will have to be content to share history with the Fighting Tigers.

The Ironmen, meanwhile, made history of their own with a dominant offensive performance (421 total yards) over a Logan defense that simply struggled all night.

“They had a good game plan,” said Logan coach Kelly Wolfe. “They had some wrinkles, obviously, and when you go against a team you have to have some wrinkles ready — and they had some wrinkles that we obviously hadn't seen before.”

Hall agreed.

“One of our goals is to win the conference championship and be unbeaten at home,” Hall said. “We have to be ready to play. All the credit goes to our players (and) our coaches did a great job preparing these guys this week.

“We had some special things for them, and we waited all summer for some of the things we were going to do against them only,” he added. “And it worked. We did a great job. Our players, our seniors, they wanted to go out as the senior class being the team that beat Logan.”

The Ironmen had stars all around Friday night.

You can start with Arthur, who ran the ball 21 times for 177 yards and four scores, but you don't stop there. Quarterback Kip Winchester completed 6 passes — 4 of them for touchdowns — and 175 yards. And after Jackson saw all but seven points shaved off an early 21-0 lead, they had Drew Ervin, who returned a kickoff 94 yards to set up a back-breaking touchdown late in the third period.

Jackson (3-1 overall) was incredibly effective up the middle, either with Arthur

running the ball or with Winchester completing key passes into that same general area.

“They found something over the middle they liked and something around our right side they liked, too,” Wolfe noted. “We didn’t adjust very well tonight defensively and that was the story: we couldn’t stop them on defense.”

Logan, picked in many quarters to win its record-setting seventh-straight conference title, is riding a 5-game losing streak — including a 2009 playoff loss to Columbus Brookhaven — and has allowed 40 or more points in back-to-back games for the first time since 1981. The Chiefs were beaten 47-7 by Reynoldsburg last week.

After being forced to punt following that opening series, Arthur put the Ironmen ahead to stay a few minutes later when he found a seam up the middle, broke a couple of tackles and went 57 yards to paydirt.

Then, on Jackson’s next series, he caught a swing pass in stride on the left side from Winchester and took it 58 yards to make it 14-0 with 3:40 left in the opening stanza.

Winchester found a wide-open Morgan Landrum with a pass over the middle late in the opening period and Landrum turned it into a 32-yard score and a 21-0 lead.

The Chiefs came back with their best drive of the season — a 14-play, 73-yard effort — to get back into the game, with Jordan Jurgensmier capping it off with a 1-yard scoring run with 8:18 to go in the second quarter.

But Jackson answered with an 11-play, 58-yard drive of its own. Ervin got it started with a big 18-yard run and Winchester teamed with Arthur on a 14-yard scoring pass to finish it off for a 28-7 Ironmen lead at the intermission.

With their backs to the proverbial wall, the Chiefs bounced back with not one but two nifty scoring drives to open the second half.

Kenny Simpson caught a 4-yard scoring pass from Jurgensmier to finish off a 9-play, 71-yard drive after Jurgensmier ripped off a huge 37-yard run to set it up.

Then, after forcing a Jackson punt, the Purple & White went 56 yards on 7 plays as Jurgensmier scored on a 1-yard keeper.; three plays earlier, Jurgensmier and Isaac Lindsey teamed up on a terrific 48-yard pass to get the Chiefs into the red zone.

“We were right back in it,” Wolfe said. “We came back and scored the first two possessions of the second half and we’re down one touchdown. All we need to do is stop them (and) get a three-and-out — and we give up another big kickoff return.”

Ervin took the ensuing kickoff down to the Logan 1-yard line, where a Chieftain made a horsecollar tackle and Logan was penalized. Winchester scored on a keeper, and just like that, Logan’s momentum was long gone.

“They cut it back to a one-touchdown game and all of a sudden the momentum is on their side,” Hall said. “Then we get the kick return by Drew Ervin and that really sparked us.”

“Our kickoff coverage has let us down two weeks in a row,” Wolfe said. “But you can’t give up 49 points and expect to win a game against anybody. Give our kids credit — they fought hard. I couldn’t ask anything more of them. But you just can’t give up big plays, and they were gouging us with big plays. They took away our mo(mentum) in 20 seconds.”

Winchester went over the middle to Landrum on the first play of the fourth period and Landrum converted it into a 55-yard catch-and-run touchdown to make it 42-21 and re-establish the home team’s 21-point advantage.

A 40-yard pass play from Jurgensmier to Dylan Cavinee, who made a great catch inside the Jackson 5-yard line, set up a 1-yard scoring run by Cory McCarty with 8:54

remaining.

But Jackson, as it had done all night long, answered one more time with a patient, 9-play, 59-yard drive capped off by that man Arthur, who took a short roll-out pass from Winchester 8 yards to paydirt and the game's final touchdown.

“Our seniors really stepped up tonight,” Hall said. “If you want to be a champion, as we said all week, you've got to beat the champion.”

For the Ironmen, it was a case of following the game plan almost to a T. Jackson didn't commit a single turnover until the final minutes, when the game was out of reach, and time and time again bounced back when the Chiefs came through with a big play.

“We felt like going in we couldn't have been more prepared if we had two weeks of practice (to prepare for Logan),” Hall said. “The kids came to practice every day with a mind-set. We were no-nonsense and knew what we had to do. We told the kids 'you've gotta believe.’ “

They believed.

“It was just a great victory,” Hall concluded.

Only One Set of Numbers Count: Chiefs 13, Tigers 0

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News

LOGAN — Some numbers tell the truth. Others lie.

The Marietta Tigers ran 60 offensive plays to the Logan Chieftains' 33 in a Southeastern Ohio Athletic League football game Friday night in Logan Chieftain Stadium, not to mention they possessed the ball for 32:24 of the game's 48 minutes, or that they held the Purple & White to one first down in the game's first 30 minutes.

Turns out those numbers were lying.

When all was said and done, only one set of numbers mattered to the Chieftains: 13-0 — as in Logan 13, Marietta 0... the first victory of the season for the Purple & White.

“Hey, this is a win, and we needed a win so bad!” exclaimed Logan coach Kelly Wolfe, who got his first victory as a head coach as the Chiefs broke a season-opening four-game losing streak. “We told our kids all week our backs are against the wall, so you need to come out and get it done, and anything less than a win was unacceptable. We just kept fighting.”

For the longest time, things didn't look good once again for the Chiefs (1-4 overall, 1-1 SEOAL), who were out-gained 163-42 in the first half by Marietta (2-3, 0-2), only had the ball for 6:49 of the first 24 minutes, and registered just one first-half first down.

And the Chiefs saw their quarterback, Jordan Jurgensmier, leave the game with an injury when he picked up that elusive initial first down on a 15-yard keeper with just under three minutes left in the first half.

“It's 0-0 at halftime and our quarterback was down. Things looked a little bleak,” Wolfe admitted, “but we made some adjustments, got some motion going with our offense to open things up a little bit, and got what we needed.”

And it was Jurgensmier himself who returned in the second half to turn in the biggest play of the game, a 60-yard run with just under six minutes left in the third stanza to not only finally get the Chiefs some field position but kick-start their first scoring drive.

Up to that point, Marietta had controlled the ball for long stretches but only had two real scoring chances to show for it.

Matt Morrison missed a 37-yard field goal early in the second stanza after the Tigers drove as deep as the Logan 10-yard line; then, after Marietta recovered a Logan fumble, the Tigers began a series from the Logan 19 but went backward as the result of a costly holding penalty.

Logan noseguard Paul Wesselhoeft, who played a terrific game on defense, then pressured

quarterback Justin Futrell into an incomplete pass. The threat then died when the Tigers fell short of a first down on fourth-and-15.

That holding penalty was one of several costly mistakes Marietta coach Craig Farnsworth saw his team make in key situations. The Tigers began the game with an onside kick, but a miscue kept them from recovering the ball.

“Most teams have guys up there (on the kickoff return team) who don’t touch the ball too much, and we almost got it,” Farnsworth said. “We were supposed to have someone block (Michael Simpson, who recovered the ball for the Chiefs) and, unfortunately, that set the tempo for the rest of the night... we have a (costly) mental mistake.”

Jurgensmier’s 60-yard jaunt also set a tone for the Chieftains, allowing them to get onto Marietta’s side of the 50-yard line for the first time since the Tigers’ unsuccessful game-opening onside kick. Jurgensmier then guided the Chiefs into the end zone on four more plays to cap off a 6-play, 83-yard scoring drive.

He hit Jordan Sharb for a 5-yard gain, Cory McCarty ran for 4 more and Jurgensmier then connected with Simpson in the left flat for 4 yards to the MHS 1. From there, Dylan Cavinee scored off left tackle with 3:27 left in the third period.

Derek Montgomery’s PAT kick caromed off the left upright, but the Chiefs led for the first time since taking a 3-0 edge over Lancaster 5 minutes and 30 seconds into the season opener a month ago.

After an exchange of punts — Montgomery boomed a season-best 52-yarder in the final seconds of the third period to pin the Tigers on their own 5-yard line — Marietta put together a time-consuming (7 minutes and 37 seconds) drive, converting 4 first downs, before the Logan defense stiffened.

Marietta had second-and-7 at the Logan 32 when Futrell fumbled a snap from center to make it third down, then Matt McKittrick took a pitchout around the left side, where the Logan defense strung him out and eventually threw him for a huge 11-yard loss. Futrell’s fourth-and-18 pass then fell harmlessly incomplete.

The Chiefs followed with a game-clinching 57-yard, 9-play scoring drive, capped by a 1-yard QB sneak by Jurgensmier with 41.6 seconds left in the game.

“Hat’s off to Marietta,” lauded Wolfe. “We knew that offense was going to be hard to stop. They were averaging 26 points a game, and our guys bent but didn’t break. They moved the ball (the Tigers out-gained the Chiefs 228-189), then we would make a play and would stop them.

“We were pinned deep the whole game and it kind of put the clamps on us, but once we got the chance we got (Marietta) moving on defense a little bit and Jordan found the running

lane and took off.”

After the game, Farnsworth was asked a hypothetical question: what would have been his reaction had he been told in advance his defense would allow the Chiefs only 13 points and 6 first downs?

“I would have been really excited about that, the way we’ve been playing defense,” said the first-year Marietta mentor. “I’d be happy with that — and I would have thought we would have won the game, too. It was disappointing that we didn’t move the ball better, but (Logan) did a good job preparing for us.

“(The Chiefs) know what we could do and what we can’t, and they took away what we were best at,” he added, “and then we had to run the things we’re not real good at. That led to situations where we had to throw the ball and they got a good pass rush on us.”

Take away Jurgensmier’s 60-yard run, and a 24-yard McCarty scamper on the final series of the night, and Marietta held the Logan offense to just 80 yards. So, on a night the offense struggled, Logan’s beleaguered defense stepped forward in a big way... with a shutout.

“Hat’s off to the defense! Hey, that’s a shutout — they came through,” Wolfe praised. “When we needed a play, we made it. We simplified our (defensive) reads for the guys this week, and I thought for the most part it helped. We were getting to the ball. When you get a shutout you can’t complain.

“It would have been very hard to regroup had we lost this game, no doubt about it,” he admitted. “This is what we needed. The kids are excited, the kids are up. A win’s a win. Our kids played hard and didn’t quit. When you pitch a shutout, there’s nothing bad to say about the defense.”

Farnsworth apparently has the Tigers, who played the Chiefs for the final time in the immediate future — Marietta High School leaves the SEOAL for the East Central Ohio League at the end of the current school year — turning the football corner.

“We’re coming off a 1-9 season and trying to get something going here,” the first-year Marietta coach said. “We’re 2-3, which for us is pretty good. We’ve lost by 13, 13 and 19 (points), so no one’s running the clock (continuously) on us this year.”

A running clock was played in the second half each of the last two seasons when the Chiefs defeated the Tigers by an aggregate score of 97-17 when the Tigers were short-handed due to a rash of injuries and illnesses.

They’re still playing shorthanded — the Tigers only have 31 players on their roster, but only about 26 dressed for Friday’s game on a rainy, windy night in Logan Chieftain Stadium — but now there’s one big difference.

“We’ve made major improvement,” Farnsworth said. “Our kids are really upset because

they think they can win now. They put in the effort, so now they're disappointed than they're losing rather than be disappointed that they got embarrassed. Our guys expect to win now, and that's good for us.

"We're kind of ahead of schedule on that," he added. "Now we're to the point where it's 6-0 in the fourth quarter against Logan. We're very pleased with that. Why shouldn't we expect to win? The effort is there, and I'm proud of that — but we have to step back and say 'where did we come from?' We're playing very respectably and we're competitive."

For the Chieftains, who broke a 5-game losing streak — including last season's Division II regional playoff game setback at the hands of Columbus Brookhaven — it was time to let out a collective sigh of relief.

"The monkey's off our backs now," Wolfe said. "You can feel it."

And he and the Chiefs also felt the love and support of the Chieftain faithful even before they stepped onto the field Friday night.

"When we came out of the locker room to start the game and that sidewalk was lined with (Logan) football fans on both sides, and they were cheering and yelling for us as we came down (to the field), that gave our kids such an incredible rush," Wolfe beamed. "I don't know whose idea it was, but it was unbelievable — and I want all of them to know how much it meant to us and how much we appreciated that."

"That was an awesome feeling: a tunnel before the real (field entrance) tunnel!" he added. "That was cool as heck!"

So was the Chiefs' first victory of the season... and they'll try to make it two in a row next Friday night when they host Gallia Academy in the annual Homecoming game in Logan Chieftain Stadium.

Wilson's 4 TDs power Blue Devils past Chieftains

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News

LOGAN — Around 10 p.m. Friday, the Logan Chieftain Stadium scoreboard read Gallipolis 41, Logan 17.

Truth be told, however, the visiting Blue Devils knew the score long before that... courtesy of both their own head coach and a former Chieftain.

“Like I told the kids: there’s a difference between tradition and history,” Gallia Academy coach Mike Eddy said after his Blue Devils snapped a 6-game losing streak at the hands of the Chiefs and dealt the Purple & White their first-ever Southeastern Ohio Athletic League loss in Logan Chieftain Stadium. “Both schools have very rich tradition and a lot of pride, but all those games that were played are history... and history is not tradition.

“This (Gallipolis) team didn’t play those teams,” he added. “Tonight it was about us and (the current Chiefs) and not about what’s happened the last 13 years. And the kids responded to that well. Yes, it’s Logan — but we’re the Blue Devils, and we’re okay.”

“Okay” might not be a sufficient word to use for the Blue Devils’ performance Friday night. There has to be something better.

Led by 5-foot-9, 160-pound running back Austin Wilson, the Blue Devils rolled up 396 yards of total offense, scored 7 of the 10 times they possessed the ball, and didn’t commit a single turnover.

In one way or another, Wilson himself accounted for 276 of those yards, rushing for 167 yards and 3 touchdowns and catching 5 passes for 109 yards and an 80-yard catch-and-run touchdown pass from quarterback and fellow senior Ethan Moore.

Wilson and Moore hadn’t been part of that history, either: they didn’t play against the Chiefs as sophomores or juniors due to injury.

The Chiefs (1-5 overall, 1-2 SEOAL) saw enough of them Friday night, thank you.

“It’s been a short career here (at GAHS) for me,” said Eddy, in his second year at the helm of the Blue and White, “but this is truly a staple win for our program. We’re looking for something to turn the corner and hang our hat on, and this was a big win.

“This was a huge game for coach Penrod (GAHS assistant Alex Penrod is a former Chieftain quarterback), and I’m so happy for him,” Eddy added. “He does a great job — and he kept us up on the stats all week: the point spread the last three years was 137-13 and we were on the negative end of that. We had lost 11 out of the last 13 (to Logan). We knew all the numbers coming in.”

Gallipolis (5-1, 2-0) hadn’t beaten the Chiefs since back-to-back wins in 2002 and 2003;

before that, the Blue Devils' last triumph over the Chieftains was way back in 1996.

The last time a Gallia Academy team defeated a Logan squad by at least 24 points was a 44-20 decision in Gallipolis back in 1974... and the loss was Logan's largest margin of defeat at the hands of a Gallia Academy team in Hocking County since 1953 (47-13) on the old Hilltop.

But in all fairness to the Purple & White, the game was closer than the final score indicates. In fact, it got too close for comfort for the Blue Devils when the Chiefs cut a 24-10 halftime deficit to 24-17 with 9:58 to play in the third quarter.

That's when Logan quarterback Jordan Jurgensmier hooked up with receiver Isaac Lindsey on a pass to the left sideline and Lindsey spun away from a couple would-be tacklers for a 24-yard catch-and-run touchdown.

Gallia Academy took a 27-17 lead early in the final period on a 30-yard field goal by Tyler Hannon — his second field goal of the game — before the Chiefs' Dylan Cavinee brought the ensuing kickoff back 30 yards to the Logan 45-yard line.

Cavinee had already returned a first-half kickoff 90 yards to paydirt for Logan's first kickoff return touchdown since 2004. More on that later.

Then, after Jurgensmier picked up 6 yards on a keeper, he threw a bomb down the middle to a streaking Kelly Long, who made the catch and was tackled on the GAHS 5-yard line for a huge 44-yard gain.

But Logan's jubilation was short-lived when the Homecoming crowd saw yellow laundry on the field. The Chiefs were called for two penalties: an illegal receiver downfield (which Gallipolis declined) and offensive holding (which the Devils accepted), negating the play.

Logan then fumbled the ball away on the very next play and the Blue Devils eventually turned it into a twisting, spinning, fourth-and-1, 10-yard scoring run up the middle by Wilson with 5:50 remaining to make it 34-17.

Wilson added a 31-yard scoring run in the final minute to put the icing on a sweet victory cake for the Blue Devils.

"We bust that (long pass) to Kelly... we had them. We were back in it," said Logan coach Kelly Wolfe, "then it got taken away from us. It would have been a 3-point game.

"You have a (44-yard) bomb taken away from you, and then you fumble on the next play and they go down and score," he added. "It's hard to bounce back from that."

And, to their credit, when the Blue Devils smelled blood in the water, they used a killer instinct to put the game away.

“We talk to the kids all the time (about) when the opponent gets knocked down, you can’t let them get back up,” Eddy said. “We kind of stumbled a little bit there and gave them that bit of breath, but the turnover was huge (for the Blue Devils) to be able to get the momentum back.

“I don’t worry a lot about adversity because I know these kids understand it and how to work through it... but, man, it’s sweet to not have to deal with it!” he added.

The Chiefs went away from their usual spread offense to start the game and went with a variation of power sets in the first half. They attempted only 2 passes, were out-gained by the Blue Devils 258-89, and converted only 3 first downs in the first half.

“Our game plan was to run power in the first half,” Wolfe said. “We didn’t think we’d be behind by two touchdowns, but we came out in the second half and had a completely different (spread) offense. That was the plan. We were hoping it might be the other way around on the scoreboard, but we stuck to the plan.

“It worked,” he added. “We came out and changed the pace on that first drive (of the second half), came down and scored in two minutes, and it was a new game.”

Eddy admitted he was somewhat taken aback by the Chiefs’ game plan.

“It did surprise me a little bit,” he said. “We had prepared for it because we knew it was something they had done in the past, but to see them do it in the first half consistently was a little surprising that they didn’t get out of it. After they watched the Ironton game last week (a 48-7 Ironton win), I could understand why they felt pretty good about lining up and coming straight at us.

“But that’s a whole different week, and I thought what our kids experienced last week was a great learning tool so that we didn’t experience it again this week,” he continued. “By seeing it two weeks in a row, they adjusted to the mistakes they made last week. When (the Chiefs) only had 10 points up there, I thought ‘boy, when are they going to start throwing?’ At some point they had to do it. We knew that second half was going to be the spread.”

Gallia Academy took the lead on a 21-yard field goal by Hannon on the game’s first series, but Cavinee took the ensuing kickoff on the far sideline, cut up the middle and back down the left sideline almost untouched for a 90-yard touchdown return and a 7-3 Logan edge.

However, when facing third-and-12 from the GAHS 20-yard line on the next series, Moore threw on the run deep down the right sideline to a streaking Wilson, who made a leaping catch and went the distance for an 80-yard scoring play.

Logan pulled even with 8:02 left in the second stanza on Derek Montgomery’s 24-yard field goal, but on the next series the Blue Devils drove 59 yards on 8 plays to take a 17-10 lead on a 1-yard run by Wilson.

Then, after forcing a Chieftain punt, the Blue Devils ran a nearly picture-perfect two-minute drill, taking the ball 58 yards on 10 plays and scoring with 15.8 seconds left in the half on a 9-yard touchdown run by Brandon Taylor as the result of a well-executed misdirection inside handoff.

Wilson, the son of GAHS graduate and former Logan coach Brett Wilson, was all that he was advertised to be.

“He is a great runner. He runs low to the ground and he’s hard to tackle, and we had a lot of guys in position tonight who bounced off of him,” Wolfe said. “His center of gravity is about that high (holding his hand around his waist) and (it’s) like trying to wrap your hands around a barrel when he comes through there. He ran hard and he’s a great ballplayer. He’s got it all: speed, good vision, and he’s hard to bring down.”

But as good as Wilson and others ran the ball, there were times the Chiefs just didn’t do a good job of tackling.

“We came out in power and we didn’t block very well in the first half and we didn’t tackle very well,” Wolfe said. “I’m not taking anything away from what (Gallipolis) did — they had a great plan tonight and they did well — but looking at it from what Logan does, we didn’t tackle very good... and it’s something we just haven’t gotten fixed.”

After having their season-opening 4-game winning streak snapped last week at Ironton, Eddy felt his team had something to prove Friday night.

“We felt we hadn’t played well the last couple weeks and we really needed to come out and make a statement,” he said. “Not just because we were playing Logan, but because we hadn’t played to our ability for a couple weeks. We really felt like we needed to answer that.

“To get the opportunity to play Logan, you kind of get a little water in the mouth, you know?” he added with a smile. “It’s one of the great rivalries (in southern Ohio). Overall we did the things we felt we needed to do. The kids executed really well (and) they played hard from start to finish. We have great kids and great coaches, and that’s where success comes from.”

For a second-straight week, there were some glaring numbers that went against the Chiefs. They ran just 40 offensive plays and had the ball just 17 minutes and 47 seconds; Gallipolis, meanwhile, ran 63 plays and had the ball for 30:13. The Blue Devils’ 396 yards more than doubled the Chiefs’ output of 179 total yards.

And the road gets no easier for the Chiefs, who now face a string of games at Warren, Zanesville and Portsmouth before finishing the season at home against Chillicothe.

“It was a downer tonight,” Wolfe said. “You have to be able to do fundamental things to win games. Our kids scrapped and played hard, but the main things you have to do to win ballgames we didn’t do tonight. And Gallia did.”

Chiefs overcome fluke TD, catch some breaks, and earn 15-10 SEOAL victory over Warriors

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News

VINCENT — It's been a season in which the Logan Chieftains admittedly haven't gotten many breaks.

And when the Warren Warriors scored a fluke touchdown on their second possession of Friday night's Southeastern Ohio Athletic League game at Warren High School, one had to wonder if the Purple & White were in store for more of the same.

But the Chiefs finally started making some breaks of their own, the defense and special teams stepped up with big performances, and the offense generated a game-winning, 9-play, 50-yard touchdown drive in the fourth quarter to rally past the Warriors, 15-10.

Nate Poling caught a 2-yard touchdown pass in the back of the end zone from quarterback Jordan Jurgensmier with 7:53 remaining to help the Chiefs (2-5 overall, 2-2 SEOAL) finally overcome one of the freakier plays in recent history.

After the Chiefs took their opening drive deep enough to set up Derek Montgomery for a 34-yard field goal with just under seven minutes remaining in the first quarter, the Warriors (4-3, 0-3) found themselves facing fourth-and-2 from their own 47-yard line on their ensuing possession.

Sophomore quarterback Dylan Leffingwell was stuffed at the line of scrimmage by the Logan defense and popped the ball loose. It bounced backwards into the hands of Warren's best athlete, senior wide receiver Grant Venham, who turned the corner past the surprised Chieftain defense and went 55 yards down the sideline for a stunning touchdown.

Logan made a tremendous defensive play... yet Warren got seven points to show for it.

And although the Chiefs dominated most of the game — they moved the ball up and down the field and the defense technically pitched a shutout — it took the Purple & White almost the entire night to overcome that one play.

With the way the season had went to that point for the Chiefs, Logan coach Kelly Wolfe was asked what he and his team were thinking as Venham put the Warriors ahead.

“It was immediate — all the coaches on the sidelines were right on the kids telling them ‘great job, defense, you stuffed them... you did nothing wrong,’ ” Wolfe said. “It was a fluke. All the coaches were on it and they didn't give the kids a chance to hang their heads. That was big.

“We moved the ball up and down the field in the first half and had two field goals to show for it,” he added.

Montgomery kicked a second field goal with 7:24 left in the second period to end a 16-play, 78-yard drive that started on the Chiefs' 12-yard line and draw Logan within 7-6.

It was the 13th FG of Montgomery's career and set a new Logan High School career record. Matt Shaw held the previous record of 12 from 1997 to 1999.

Warren hit its lone big offensive play on the next series — Leffingwell connected with Jeremy Fivecoait on a 38-yard bomb down the left sideline — but the Logan defense eventually forced the Warriors to turn the ball over on downs at the Logan 33.

Logan fumbled the ball away on its next play from scrimmage, however, and Warren turned it into a 39-yard field goal by Chas Miller with 2:57 left in the second stanza for a 10-6 halftime lead.

Early in the third period, the Chiefs caught their first break of the night when the Warriors coughed up the ball at the Warren 43-yard line and Jurgensmier immediately connected with a diving Dylan Cavinee on a 40-yard bomb to the Warrior 3.

Warren's defense stiffened, however, and faced with fourth-and-goal from the Warren 5 Wolfe and the Chiefs elected to go for the touchdown instead of a chip-shot field goal by Montgomery, which would have been a school-record third of the game. Jurgensmier was stopped for no gain, however, and Warren took over.

Still, field position took its toll on the Warriors. After getting a first down at the Warren 16, the snap from center went over Leffingwell's head and into the end zone. The sophomore had the presence of mind to kick it out of bounds for a safety, pulling Logan within 10-8.

"We went for it on fourth down and got stuffed and I was kicking myself for it," Wolfe admitted. "It would have been 10-9. Fortunately, we got the safety — but it was like every time we got (deep in Warren territory), chaos would ensue and we couldn't do anything.

"We should have kicked the field goal but I thought darn it, we're going to score here," he added. "Things work out funny like that — and it worked out for us. We finally put together a whole drive when we needed it at the end."

Logan immediately drove to the Warren 13, where the ensuing series stalled on downs, but the Warriors broke through to block a 30-yard field goal by Montgomery early in the fourth quarter to hold onto its precarious two-point lead.

Then, after forcing the Warriors to punt, the Chiefs took over — and Jurgensmier led them to the promised land.

He connected with Cavinee (13 yards), Isaac Lindsey (12) and Cavinee again (12) on successive second-down plays to drive the Chiefs to the Warren 8.

Then, after picking up a yard on a keeper, he went up the middle for 5 more to the 2-yard

line, where it looked like the Chiefs caught another break. The ball squirted loose and went into the end zone, where Warren recovered it, but the play was whistled dead.

On the very next play, Jurgensmier found Poling in the back of the end zone to put the Chiefs ahead with 7:57 remaining.

“That little pass play has been a staple for Logan football for a long time — we’ve run that play for a lot of years,” Wolfe pointed out. “The coaches were in my ear saying ‘we need to run some play action. If you’re thinking pass, we need to do some play action.’ Well, this has been our money play, so we went with it and it worked out great.”

The game wasn’t over, however. Leffingwell patiently drove the Warriors from their own 13-yard line to the Logan 36 with under five minutes remaining, helped along by an awful pass interference call against the Chieftains on an obviously uncatchable ball when the Chiefs appeared to have the Warriors stopped on fourth-and-5.

No worry, however. Three plays netted a like number of yards, then Tim King broke in to sack Leffingwell on fourth-and-7 and the Chiefs took over on downs. They picked up two first downs, including a 16-yard run by Jurgensmier on third-and-5, to run out the final four minutes.

“They were moving the ball on us at the end of the game, but we told our kids all week ‘stay back, give them the short stuff, make them work all the way down the field,’ because we didn’t believe they could work all the way down the field against our defense,” Wolfe said. “They beat us deep once, but we were giving them the little hits and the short routes up front.”

“I challenged a lot of our boys before the game,” he added, “and for the most part we put together a great game. Seven (Warren) points were a fluke fumble pickup by their best player. Take that seven off the board and they got one field goal — and we fumbled and gave it to them down there.”

In other words, the Chiefs defense pitched a de-facto shutout.

“The kids stepped up and played well — and you can’t point out just one kid, because so many of them made plays tonight. That’s what we want,” said Logan defensive coordinator Pat Walsh. “We thought (Warren) might try to run the ball against us. We wanted to stop the run, get them in the spread and put some pressure on them. But we didn’t want to give them the big play... and our kids did that.

The Warriors “went spread right from the start, which we thought they might,” he added. “Our kids did a good job adjusting. It was good to see all of them come together as a group and play well.”

Despite the loss, Warren coach Andy Schob was proud of his team’s performance.

“We competed,” Schob said. “Logan plays a brutal schedule and is a good team... they just made a few plays when they needed to.”

The lack of a consistent running game also hurt the Warriors. The Logan defense held Warren to just 26 ground yards on 22 attempts (even adding in the 16-yard team loss for the bad snap and safety, Warren still only had 42 yards on the ground), by far a season-best for the Purple & White, who have been allowing more than 200 rushing yards per game.

“We have been trying different schemes,” Schob said. “Our opponents the past three weeks have controlled the line of scrimmage. These are the types of games that we have to learn to win.”

So while the Chiefs finally got some breaks, they made some as well.

“To be honest, we got some breaks tonight (and) we got some turnovers,” Wolfe noted. “I told the kids we had to make our own breaks, we had to get after it and make some things happen. Our kids did that.

“I felt like the offense controlled the ball tonight, the defense stepped up and played well, and special teams got us seven points,” he added. “The guys did the game plan coach Walsh and the guys put in to keep everything in front, (to) let them catch those little dinks, but not let them beat us deep. And we got some penetration on the quarterback. That was key. The way they do things (in the shotgun), you have to get some pressure on them because they get rid of it so quick.”

Having lost five of their first six games, Wolfe admitted the Chiefs could have just folded their tents and mailed in the Warren game and the rest of the season as well. But they didn’t, and for that he was extremely proud.

“This is awesome,” he praised. “The kids had every reason to just hang it up this week and go through the motions — but they didn’t do that. They didn’t give in. They worked so hard this week, and tonight they got rewarded for their efforts.”

The Chiefs continue a three-game road swing with a non-league game at Zanesville (6-1) next Friday night.

Editor’s note: Warren coach Andy Schob’s comments are courtesy of The Marietta Times.

Chiefs absorb punishment in 39-10 loss at Zanesville

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News

ZANESVILLE — Not only did the Logan Chieftains get beat Friday night by the Zanesville Blue Devils, but they got beat up as well.

The Chiefs lost no less than four players, including three of their four captains, to injury during the Blue Devils' 39-10 victory in Sulsberger Stadium.

“This is what you don't want to have happen, especially late in the season,” said Logan coach Kelly Wolfe, who saw captains Jordan Jurgensmier, Dylan Cavinee and Tim King leave with injuries in the first half and also lost senior Tyler Dement. “We got beat up a little bit. You don't want to lose and then get beat up on top of it... you sure don't want to lose three captains and maybe another senior.

“We scrapped as long as we could,” he added, “but they just basically beat us down.”

While the game was a little closer than the final score indicates, it also could have been much worse.

Zanesville (7-1), which broke a 10-game losing streak at the hands of the Chieftains, had two touchdowns called back on penalties, missed a field goal, had an extra point blocked and failed to convert a pair of 2-point conversions. The Blue Devils may have left 21 points or so on the Sulsberger Stadium turf.

Zanesville's Braily Blair, a converted tight end, returned the opening kickoff 44 yards to the Logan 36-yard line and scored the Blue Devils' first touchdown 9 plays later on a 3-yard run. It was the first of 3 TDs for Blair on the evening.

The Chiefs (2-6) countered early in the second quarter with a 44-yard field goal by Derek Montgomery — the kick had plenty of distance and would have easily surpassed the school record of 47 yards (set by Josh Jackson in 1991 against Zanesville, ironically) had it been necessary — but that was the Chiefs' only good scoring opportunity of the first half.

Meanwhile, the Blue Devils not only put together a couple second-quarter touchdown drives to take an 18-3 halftime lead — Blair went up the middle and then cut down the left sideline for a 38-yard scoring run and J.T. McFarland followed moments later with a 12-yard scoring run when he went in motion and took an inside handoff around right end to paydirt — but they were in the process of physically beating up the Chiefs.

Just as Wolfe predicted earlier in the week, the Blue Devils hit hard, and they hit often, both on offense and special teams. Senior linebacker/running back Gary Ransom especially dealt out plenty of punishing hits.

Jurgensmier went down with a leg injury prior to McFarland's scoring run and was unable to return. Junior Kelly Long came on to finish the first half and played the rest of the game

at quarterback.

Then King, followed by Cavinee and Dement, went down with injuries. Both Cavinee and Dement may have concussions... and, if so, “they won’t be playing next week,” Wolfe said.

So when the Chiefs returned to the field to open the second half, they were, to say the least, somewhat short-handed.

“Short-handed? We didn’t have three of our four captains on the field in the second half — three of our four leaders were out of the game,” Wolfe said. “Everybody in (the locker room at halftime) knew the situation — Cavinee had a bad concussion (he had to be taken to the hospital) — and that we had some adversity.

“But I told the kids a lot of times when things look their bleakest, somebody steps up and makes a big play and things get going,” he added. “And we got that. Everyone needed to reach a little deeper and pull together and see if we could get something done.”

Something did get done, at least momentarily.

The Chiefs got a huge break on their first possession of the second half when, after being forced to punt on fourth-and-1, the ball hit the heel of a Zanesville player downfield who was not watching the play and Logan recovered on the Zanesville 33-yard line.

Long — the Chiefs’ 2011 quarterback-in-waiting behind senior Jurgensmier — then connected with Brian Cook with a beautiful pass down the middle for 26 yards and a first down at the ZHS 7.

On the very next play, Long connected with Isaac Lindsey, who was wide open at the goal line on the far side of the field, on a 7-yard scoring pass. Montgomery’s placement kick pulled the Chiefs within 18-10 with 9:30 to play in the third quarter... and the Chiefs were within one possession (a touchdown and 2-point conversion) of drawing even.

Then, on the next Zanesville series, it all came apart for the Chiefs.

The Blue Devils, facing third-and-4 from their own 41, handed the ball to Blair, who went around the left corner and down the sideline, cut back to the middle, eluded a couple Chieftain tacklers and again cut back to the left sideline for a huge run to the Logan 10-yard line. He ran about 70 yards to pick up 49.

It took four plays, a Logan personal foul penalty and a fourth-and-goal run from the 2-yard line for the Blue Devils, specifically Blair, to get that Logan touchdown back with 6:21 left in the third period and make it 25-10.

“We came out and got exactly what we needed in the beginning of the second half,” Wolfe said. “We drove down and got the touchdown and put ourselves within striking distance and made it a one-touchdown game. Kelly Long makes a great pass, Brian Cook makes a big

catch to get it down there, and Ike Lindsey makes the touchdown catch. I'll give the kids credit... when three captains go down, our kids came out with some spunk and scored to get back in the game.

“...and then (Blair) zig-zags all over the field and makes a big play,” Wolfe added.

The Chiefs had one more great scoring opportunity. Sean Wotring picked off a Weston Hudson pass at the Zanesville 43 — Logan's first defensive interception in 81 opponents' pass attempts since the second game of the season — and Long immediately connected with Lindsey on a 37-yard bomb to the Zanesville 5-yard line as Lindsey out-leaped two Zanesville defensive backs to corral the ball.

But the Chiefs were unable to punch the ball across the goal line. On fourth down, Zanesville's Austin Craig picked off a Long pass deep in the end zone and ran it back 52 yards.

Logan never recovered. Zanesville's Ian McFarland stepped in front of a would-be Chieftain receiver and ran an interception back 22 yards for a touchdown late in the third period, then Talen Hutchison scored on a 3-yard run with a little more than a minute remaining in the game.

Blair (7 carries) and Hutchison (20 carries) both rushed for 101 yards for the Blue Devils, who survived shooting themselves in the foot several times with costly penalties and miscues to still come away with a 29-point victory.

“They are a huge team, they are a physical team, and they are a good team,” Wolfe said of the Blue Devils. “I think they're going to make the (Division II) playoffs and they're going to make some noise in the playoffs.”

Now it's a matter of seeing how many of Friday night's injuries carry over to the Chiefs' final two games of the season, including a battle of beaten-up teams next Friday at Portsmouth. The Trojans, who have had injury woes of their own this season, were pummeled 63-20 last night by Gallia Academy.

Chiefs ride McCarty's record night to 31-28 victory

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News

PORTSMOUTH — It didn't take the Logan Chieftains long Friday night to discover they had a young horse to ride against a team nicknamed, ironically enough, the Trojans.

Sophomore Cory McCarty scored four touchdowns and became the first tenth grader in Logan football history to rush for more than 200 yards in a game as the Purple & White held off a late Portsmouth flurry to edge the Trojans 31-28 in a Southeastern Ohio Athletic League game at Portsmouth High School's Portsmouth Coliseum.

McCarty's 212 rushing yards rank No. 33 in a single game in LHS history. He became the first Chieftain to score at least three rushing touchdowns in a game, let alone four, since Justin Frye did the trick three years ago at Portsmouth on a night he also rushed for 216 yards, the last Chieftain to clear the 200-yard mark on the ground.

“We wanted to be balanced, but when we found out we could run the ball against them out of power in the first half, that's what we needed to do,” said Logan coach Kelly Wolfe.

In a huge breakaway from their normal spread and passing sets, Logan ran the ball 51 times and passed only 12, throwing the ball only twice in the second half.

McCarty, who became the Chiefs' starting running back after Brandon Graham was injured for the season in week three, tallied on a 48-yard run late in the opening period, only to see the Trojans (3-6 overall, 2-4 SEOAL) take the lead in the final minute of the stanza on a 27-yard touchdown pass from Mason Jordan to speedster Jonathan Royster.

It was the first of three TD aerials for Jordan, who completed 10-of-25 passes for 249 yards and almost single-handedly pulled out the victory for the Trojans late in the fourth quarter. More about that later.

However, after the Chiefs (3-6, 3-2) drove deep into Portsmouth territory, only to turn it over on an interception, the Purple & White got the ball right back on a three-and-out and a short 20-yard punt by the Trojans.

Taking over at the Portsmouth 25-yard line, McCarty carried six-straight times and put the Chiefs ahead for good with a 4-yard TD run with 4:30 left in the first half.

“We got behind but we answered — and that's when we realized they couldn't stop power and they couldn't stop Cory,” Wolfe said. “The coaches said 'just keep feeding him the ball, coach.' And that's what we did.”

Quarterback Jordan Jurgensmier rolled out to the right and added a 2-point conversion to give the Chiefs a 14-7 lead with 4:30 left in the half. That was their lead at halftime, but it should have been 17-7.

The Logan defense forced another Portsmouth three-and-out and another short punt gave the Chiefs the ball on the Portsmouth 37 with 2:44 left in the half.

Having already used all of their time-outs, the Purple & White put together a nifty two-minute-drill drive, helped along by a nice 12-yard gain on a roll-out pass from Jurgensmier to Kermit Berry and a few more solid runs by McCarty

Faced with fourth-and-10 from the Portsmouth 11 and with time running out, the Chiefs rushed Derek Montgomery onto the field to kick a 28-yard field goal, and that he did with six seconds left.

But the officials called Portsmouth for being offside on the play and, rather than give the Chiefs the option of taking the points or the penalty, marked off the five yards and then started the clock. Montgomery then had to rush a 23-yarder that missed to the right.

“Our kids didn't panic,” Wolfe said. “I think the coaches were more worried and upset (than the players) at halftime thinking we should have had three more points. We should have been up 10 instead of just a touchdown.

“But we told the kids at halftime that we're putting it on the line,” he added, noting the players saw that the Trojans “can't stop our run. We're going to run the ball at them and keep pounding.”

Then, as they have several times this season, the Chiefs scored on their opening possession of the third quarter, driving 55 yards on nine plays — aided by a 15-yard hookup between Jurgensmier and Nate Poling — to take a 21-7 lead when McCarty scored from three yards out.

“Imagine that, we score right after halftime,” Wolfe said with a grin. “We kept mixing up the groupings and kept (Portsmouth's defense) off-balance because the coaches upstairs and the coaches (on the sidelines) could see we had them confused.”

Most of the third quarter was a comedy of errors for the Trojans. They had to attempt the opening kickoff of the half three times (two went out of bounds) then, after a 70-yard bomb from Jordan to L.J. Adams on which it appeared Adams shoved off a Logan defensive back, the Trojans turned the ball over on downs after either fumbling or mis-handling three consecutive snaps.

However, after getting the ball back late in the period, Adams took a pass from Jordan on the left sideline and took it 29 yards to paydirt to draw Portsmouth within 21-14 with 37 seconds left.

Montgomery atoned for a missed extra point (which hit an upright) and his hurried miss (which wasn't his fault) at the end of the first half by drilling a 40-yard field goal that clanged off the Portsmouth locker room wall just beyond the end zone for a 24-14 lead with

8:44 to play in the game.

Little did anyone know at the time that Montgomery's field goal would account for the final margin of victory.

Moments later, McCarty took a pitch around right end, broke a tackle and out-raced the Portsmouth secondary to the end zone for a 37-yard TD and what appeared to be an insurmountable 31-14 lead with 6:49 remaining.

Jordan, who at one time was at minus-29 yards rushing on the night, then came alive. He scrambled twice for gains of 15 and 13 yards, connected with Royster on a 26-yard pass, then took the ball up the middle for 14 yards and a touchdown with 5:56 left in the game.

Logan's special teams, which came through with some key plays in the second half — including a big 45-yard kickoff return by Isaac Lindsey to help set up Montgomery's field goal — recovered the ensuing onside kick. But the Portsmouth defense came alive as well, forcing a Chieftain punt, and the Trojans took over on their own 22-yard line with 4:08 to play.

It took Jordan less than two minutes to drive the Trojans 78 yards on eight plays to the end zone. Helped along by a 15-yard pass interference call on the Chiefs and a 36-yard pass-and-run from Jordan to Royster, Portsmouth marched into the Logan red zone and, on fourth-and-6 from the Logan 11, Jordan found his top threat, Wayne Evans, in the back left corner of the end zone for an 11-yard touchdown with 2:22 still to play, drawing PHS within 31-28.

“We had a 31-14 lead and I thought we were safe,” said Wolfe. “But nothing comes easy.”

Portsmouth elected to squib the kickoff rather than onside kick and Lindsey picked it up for the Chiefs at their own 18-yard line.

The Trojans were out of time-outs and could not stop the clock, but they held the Chiefs on three plays to force one last punt and took over at the Logan 42 with 13.3 seconds to play.

Jordan threw deep and incomplete twice, with the clock stopping with six-tenths of a second to play. He wanted to go deep again on the Trojans' last play, but a host of Chiefs forced him to scramble and didn't let him get far, stopping him at the 40-yard line as time expired.

“I told the kids I was proud of them because it's been a rough year and we won two of three on the road,” Wolfe said. “It would have been real easy not to get up for these games, but I credit the kids and I credit the seniors for hanging in there. My hat's off to them.”

The Chiefs were mathematically eliminated from a chance to claim their seventh-straight SEOAL title Friday night.

Jackson (5-0 SEOAL) clinched a share of the crown when, trailing visiting Chillicothe (3-2)

14-7, the Ironmen scored with 58 seconds left and went for a two-point conversion and got it for a 15-14 victory. Gallipolis (4-1) won 41-27 at Warren, setting up a chance to tie the Ironmen for the championship next Friday night at Gallia Academy High School.

Thus, the winner of next Friday's Chillicothe at Logan game finishes no worse than third... and if Jackson defeats Gallipolis, the Logan-Chillicothe winner would tie the Blue Devils for second.

Logan has finished no worse than third in the SEOAL each and every season since 1997, so the Chiefs have that incentive to play for next week on Senior Night.

“That's good because we still have something to play for,” Wolfe said. “I'm happy for our kids. I told them this week it's all about how we finish — and we want to finish strong with two wins.”

Chiefs can't overcome turnovers in loss to Chillicothe

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News

LOGAN — Winning a football game becomes much, much easier when you only have to drive 81 yards to score three touchdowns like the Chillicothe Cavaliers did Friday night.

The Cavs took advantage of terrific field position, including a scoring “drive” of five yards for the winning touchdown in the fourth quarter, to rally past the Logan Chieftains 21-18 in the season finale for both teams in Logan Chieftain Stadium.

Chillicothe (4-6 overall, 4-2 Southeastern Ohio Athletic League) — which, like the Chiefs (3-7, 3-3) opened the season 0-4 — thus wound up in a tie for second in the SEOAL with Gallia Academy, which lost Friday night to league champion Jackson, 41-18.

The Chiefs finished fourth in the SEOAL, their lowest finish since 1996.

“Those short fields were the whole difference,” said Chillicothe coach Ron Hinton, who completed his first season at the helm of the Cavaliers after a great run at Amanda-Clearcreek, during which he won two state titles. “If we had to drive the ball 80 yards? No way.

“We got the ball on the (Logan) 35 and scored from there and got the ball (on the Logan 5) and scored from there” in the second half, he added. “And that's basically how (the Chiefs) scored. We fumbled the ball twice and gave them short fields” in the first half.

Trailing 18-7 at halftime — the Chiefs scored all 18 of their points in the second quarter, 11 also the result of a short field — the Cavs turned a short Logan punt into a four-play, 35-yard scoring drive in the third stanza.

Quarterback Max Corcoran hit running back Brandon Whittaker with a screen near the right sideline. Whittaker made a nifty cut to the inside to evade a tackler and went 22 yards to paydirt with 3:44 left in the third stanza and pull Chillicothe within 14-10.

Logan drove deep into Cavalier territory on the ensuing drive but fumbled the ball away at the Chillicothe 25-yard line... and, for bad measure, also gave up 15 yards as the result of a personal foul.

Although Chillicothe didn't score on its next possession, a Dylan Osborne punt of 53 yards took a great Cavalier bounce and rolled all the way to the Logan 4-yard line.

Three plays later, the Chiefs fumbled again (Logan had five turnovers on the night, including four in the second half) and the Cavs took over at the Logan 5.

Chillicothe moved the nose of the ball within inches from the goal line on its first three plays before Corcoran eked his way into the end zone on a fourth-and-goal QB sneak to put

the Cavaliers ahead with 8:27 remaining.

“Too many missed opportunities,” lamented Logan coach Kelly Wolfe. “We probably should have had another touchdown in the first half. We had a pass dropped that probably should have been a touchdown. We couldn't establish any momentum on offense and kept putting pressure on our defense to make plays.

“It's hard to overcome five turnovers, let alone they pinned us deep a couple times and we also pinned ourselves back there once, and that made it worse,” he added.

On the ensuing kickoff, a Logan player made a mental mistake and fielded the ball inside his own 1-yard line and stepped out of bounds, putting the Chiefs 99 yards, two feet and six inches or so away from the Chillicothe goal line.

And while the Chiefs never totally recovered, they did get one last chance.

The Logan defense — which held Chillicothe to 156 total yards — forced the Cavs to punt with less than two minutes remaining. The Chiefs went for the block and missed, but junior Isaac Lindsey still made a terrific 36-yard return to the Cavalier 39-yard line.

Quarterback Jordan Jurgensmier was sidelined at the end of the previous drive when he injured his leg after throwing an interception and did not come back into the game for the final series.

Junior Kelly Long, likely to be next year's quarterback, came on and threw deep down the near sideline for Lindsey but Chillicothe's Jalen Jones came down with the under-thrown pass to dash the Chiefs' final chance on Senior Night.

“Ike busted that (long punt return) and he's pumped up,” Wolfe explained, and “my philosophy right there is that Ike's ready to make another big play. We threw it up and went for it. I guess we could have (tried to) get a few first downs and kick a field goal and make it a tie ballgame.

“(The interception) was the worst-case scenario,” he added. “I thought either Ike catches it, or it would be an incomplete pass and we would keep going. We just kind of fell apart in the second half, and it snowballed on us.”

The Cavaliers took advantage of a snap from center that went over punter Derek Montgomery's head to set up their first touchdown, driving 41 yards on 11 plays and scoring on a Corcoran QB sneak with 3:01 left in the first quarter.

However, on the opening play of the second period, Jurgensmier connected with a wide-open Lindsey on a beautiful pass down the middle for 30 yards and a game-tying touchdown.

Then, after the Cavs fumbled the ball away on their first play from scrimmage, the Chiefs

used the short field to their advantage and drove 30 yards on seven plays, with senior Dylan Cavinee scoring on a 2-yard dive over the mass of humanity stacked along the line of scrimmage, to make it 13-7.

Logan then caught a break on the ensuing extra point when sophomore holder Gaven Jourdan turned a bad situation into a 2-point conversion run, making a couple outstanding moves to slip into the end zone, for a 15-7 lead with 9:23 left in the half.

Montgomery booted a 40-yard field goal with 1:09 remaining — his eighth of the season, tying the Logan single-season record he established last fall — for an 18-7 lead at the intermission.

Montgomery, who finished the season with 40 points, became the first player who was exclusively a kicker to lead the team in scoring in Chieftain football history.

“I’m proud of my coaching staff and I’m proud of these young men for battling back,” said Hinton. “It wasn’t the prettiest sight in the locker room (at halftime), but to come back and win — it wasn’t a pretty win, but it was a good win. We’ll take it.

“They were up 18-7 at halftime,” he added, “and if you had told me we were going to beat them 21-18?!”

As it turns out, Chillicothe was less than a minute away from tying Jackson for the SEOAL title. The Cavs lost 15-14 at Jackson last week on a touchdown and 2-point conversion by the Ironmen with 58 seconds remaining. Had the Cavs held on to win that game, both would have finished 5-1 in the league.

“We (would have been) right there battling for the league title,” Hinton said.

While certainly not rookies when it comes to coaching, a pair of first-year head coaches at their respective schools thus completed their rookie seasons in different ways.

“We have a lot of work to do over the winter,” Hinton said, “but we’re going to enjoy this and celebrate this (win) and try to build off this. It’s we — it’s all the people around me. I’m not a very good coach... I’m just smart enough to get a lot of great people around me and let them go to work.”

“(Logan) finished 3-7, (but) you look at their non-league schedule and the tradition here, the facilities here (and) they still have great athletes and great coaches,” he added. “It’s a solid, solid win for the Chillicothe program.”

“This game is a lot of fun when you’re winning and have momentum. It’s easy and it’s fun,” Wolfe stated. “This year was hard, to say the least, and week after week after week when (the Logan players) got knocked down, they just kept coming back. They didn’t want to fold. They came in on Mondays ready to work.

“I told them all that I respect them all from the bottom of my heart because they kept coming back,” he continued. “It's not an easy sport, and to go out and invest all that time week after week and all that physicalness out there on the field every day. There were a lot of guys who turned into men this year because they answered the bell.”

The Chiefs had streaks of six-straight SEOAL championships and 34-straight conference wins (tied for the all-time best in the league) snapped this season. They finished with three wins, the school's lowest total since going 3-7 in 1996, and they won't be going to the state playoffs for the first time since 2005.

Wolfe admitted the off-season is going to be tough and the 2010 season will sting for a long time.

“For the older guys, for the seniors who are going out, they've learned to overcome. I hope that's something they can use,” Wolfe said. “For the younger guys, they know what it's like to fight and, if nothing else, they've learned from these seniors that you don't quit.

“They learned not to give up on themselves and to keep getting after it,” he added. “It was a big learning experience. The coaches learned a lot about things we need to do and need to do better.”

And personally?

“This year's going to burn for a long time,” Wolfe revealed. “I don't want to sound selfish, but (being) a first-year coach you want things to go well and to have that great banner season... and it didn't happen. There are a lot of things I want to redeem next year. For me, it's going to sting for a long time.

“I think, if nothing else, I saw a lot of emotion from the younger guys — and (next year) I don't think I'll have to talk as much about what Logan football means to people,” he added. “I think our younger guys got it tonight — if they didn't already — when they watched that Senior Walk after the game.”