

Chiefs dominate Gales in new stadium opener

*Logan defeats Lancaster 35-10;
first win over Golden Gales since 1945*

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News Sports Editor

LOGAN — *His-tor-ee.*

Not only did the Logan Chieftains open their 2008 football season and brand-new Logan Chieftain Stadium in front of a huge crowd Friday night, but they did it in historic fashion over neighborhood rival and longtime nemesis Lancaster.

Friday night's convincing 35-10 Logan triumph marked the first Chieftain victory over the Golden Gales in 17 games since 1945, not to mention their first win over a Lancaster football team in a game played in Hocking County since 1935.

And considering the Purple & White have made the post-season playoffs each of the last two seasons despite a season-opening loss to the Gales — Lancaster had won the first four matchups following renewal of the series, which had been dormant since 1957 — the sky could very well be the limit.

Logan coach Dale Amyx has often said he didn't consider the series with Lancaster a rivalry because the Chieftains hadn't broken through with a win.

Well, game on. Logan-Lancaster is officially a rivalry again.

"Coach (Rob) Carpenter said that to me after the game — 'now it's a rivalry' — so I guess so," Amyx said with a grin.

And he had every reason to be happy. With the exception of the opening drive — on which the Gales drove 66 yards on 10 plays but were held to a field goal — the Chieftains were in control.

In fact, limiting the Gales to just three points after getting pushed back on their heels for more than five minutes was just the pick-me-up the Chieftains needed in front of a loud, boisterous home crowd that was witnessing a Logan home game away from the Hilltop for the first time since 1924.

Following the Lancaster field goal and an exchange of punts — and aided by a 12-yard punt return by Mason Mays and a 15-yard Lancaster facemask penalty — it only took the Purple & White five plays and 46 yards to take the lead for good.

They did so using both the right arm and powerful, quick legs of junior quarterback Patrick Angle. His 20-yard keeper around right end set the tone for the drive, then three plays later he took a low snap from center out of shotgun formation and scrambled 15 yards for a first down at the Lancaster 6-yard line.

He then found Mays, his stepbrother and fellow junior, on a quick-in post pattern for a touchdown pass, giving Logan the lead with 1:45 left in the opening quarter.

Then, two plays later, came what might have been the game-breaker.

On the second play from scrimmage, junior Nathan Carpenter — son of the Lancaster head coach, who was playing in quarterback formation in place of regular starter Ryan Cheek, who didn't dress due to an injury — had a quick pass over the middle tipped and then picked off by Logan linebacker Zach Adams.

Sprung by a crushing block from Clay Morgan, Adams went the distance — 29 yards — for six points. Logan led 14-3, getting touchdowns just 19 seconds apart.

Holding Lancaster to a field goal and then bouncing back on offense was huge, Amyx noted.

“That was big. To me, when I look back, I think (holding Lancaster to a field goal) might have been the difference in the whole football game... because if they scored there, how would we have reacted, and how would they have reacted? Our kids got a big lift off that... our kids were like ‘we stopped them’ and it gave our offense confidence.

“We put the hammer down on them right there,” he added, referring to Adams’ interception. “Obviously, the game wasn’t over, but from that point on — until that last touchdown (after Logan had built a comfortable 28-3 lead) — they barely even got a first down. That was a big lift for our kids defensively. You could see the confidence build in them as the game went along.”

Lancaster got four first downs and 66 yards of total offense on that field goal drive. After that, if you don’t count a 49-yard Carpenter touchdown pass with the outcome no longer in doubt, the swarming Logan defense held the Golden Gales to just 96 yards and eight more first downs.

It was an impressive performance by the Chieftains, particularly considering the quality of their foe as Logan won its season opener for the first time since beating New Lexington 13-12 back in 2001.

“(The Gales) changed their offense from last year and went to single-wing back, which I think makes it easier to read,” Amyx said. “We sold that to our kids... we had some things we put in to their motion and to where we thought they were going to be throwing the ball.

“I know it hurt them not having Cheek in there, but it allowed us to read better because we knew (Carpenter) was going to carry the ball a lot tonight. We really keyed on him all night,” he added. “Defensively I thought our kids really came out and played great, great football.”

Coach Carpenter knew his Gales would be in for a tough game for a lot of reasons.

“We were short-handed a bit, but not taking anything away from (the Chiefs),” Carpenter said. “It was a good effort and big doings here (at the new stadium) and it looks like we’ve got a rivalry going.

“We’re playing some new guys and really didn’t have a cohesive offense,” he added. “It’s been a week-and-a-half kind of deal. We just put the offense in for (Logan). We’ll get better. Logan’s a good team. Last year, after we beat them, they went out and won nine in a row, so maybe they’ll go undefeated this year and get a playoff game back here. That would be great.”

After a scoreless second quarter — Logan drove into Lancaster territory three times but came up empty, once on a fumble inside the Gale 25 — Lancaster opened the second half with some trickery and caught the Chiefs napping.

The Gales went for an onside kick and it appeared they had recovered but, after a long consultation, the officials gave the ball to the Chieftains.

“The official told me I should have told them about (the onside kick) because they weren’t ready for it,” Carpenter said wryly. “Okay, that’s a quote and something I’ll tell (OHSAA commissioner) Dan Ross because he’s sitting right up there (in the press box). But that’s the way football is.

“Dale has a good staff and their kids work hard,” he added. “I’m not happy for them, if you know what I mean, but that’s high school football. They were pumped and ready to go and we told our guys all summer these guys would be sky-high and pumped to the max, and they were.”

Logan senior defensive end Jon Neff, who put a huge amount of pressure on Nathan Carpenter all night, said the opening Lancaster drive helped the Chiefs understand what they needed to do defensively.

“It wasn’t so much a boost as we figured out what we needed to do on defense,” he said. “We finally started doing some stunts and creating some havoc, and we stuck with it.”

And the Chieftains were also playing with a mission... for someone who wasn’t there.

“We came out knowing we had to do this for Corey (Kissling, Logan’s all-Ohio linebacker of a year ago, who died tragically earlier this summer),” Neff said. “A lot of us had a true friendship with him on this team. We definitely felt his presence. We knew what we had to do and we got it done.

“It was about time (to beat Lancaster), and this was the place to do it,” he added.

After dodging the onside kickoff bullet, the Chiefs went on an eight-play, 68-yard scoring drive that spelled the beginning of the end for the Golden Gales.

Angle and Mays hooked up on a pair of 11-yard pass plays and Lancaster committed a huge 15-yard facemask penalty to keep the drive moving before Angle hit Zach McDaniel for a seven-yard touchdown pass with 8:49 to play.

Then, after forcing Lancaster to punt, a big 38-yard run on a keeper by Angle set the Chieftains up in scoring position at the Lancaster 11. From there, Angle hit Mays in the right flat, Mays quickly juked a Gale defender and made a move past a second, and went the distance to make it 28-3 with 2:20 left in the third period.

Nathan Carpenter and Jentzen Rohr hooked up on a fourth-and-one touchdown pass from the Logan 49-yard line with 9:03 left, but Logan put together a time-consuming drive that pretty much left the Gales short on the clock although they punted the ball away.

Michael Snider then picked off a Carpenter pass and returned it 20 yards to the Lancaster five-yard line, Morgan scored two plays later, and Ronnie Burcham followed with his fifth successful placement kick of the night.

“Our game plan was to put our skill kids out in space against their skill kids, and I think it worked,” Amyx revealed. “We have a lot of good kids and (offensive coordinator) Kelly (Wolfe) did a great job with the offensive game plan, like he has the last couple years. I’m really proud of what he’s doing. I would hate to have to defense us and come up with a scheme.”

“The two (offensive tackles) we brought in today, Tim King and Cary Maclaughlin, stepped up and the linemen did a great job,” Wolfe said. “The game plan tonight was to spread them out. We were going to make them chase us, get the ball to our kids out there and let them do what they can do. I think they showed that tonight.

“We knew we had a good (scouting) film... what they would do to a spread, and they did exactly what we were ready for them to do,” he added. “They played the defense we thought they were going to run against us, then we just reacted.”

The game plan was quite effective statistically as well. Logan wound up with 313 yards of total offense, including 218 on the ground as Angle gained 119 yards on 15 carries and Morgan added 61 yards on 16 attempts. Angle also threw for 95 yards, hitting Mays six times for 56 yards. Logan held Carpenter to 56 yards rushing.

“We didn’t play particularly well in our scrimmage (at Sheridan) last week, but we got hit hard and we needed that,” Amyx said. “I was a little worried about our confidence going into this game, especially if they had scored (a touchdown) on that first drive, but I think stopping them, scoring and then getting that pick and scoring again, our kids believe in themselves now.”

Any chance of a letdown next week at Pickerington North, guys?

“Absolutely not,” Amyx said. “These kids know me and we’re not going to let that happen. We’re going to practice even harder next week. I guarantee it.”

“It’s not going to happen,” Wolfe agreed. Pickerington North was “a good team last year and our offense had a difficult time against them last year... but I think our offense is a little different than last year.”

And there’s this note, which an emailer pointed out late Friday night while this game story was being written: the 35-10 final score adds up to 45... Corey Kissling’s uniform number.

A bizarre night/morning of football as Chiefs defeat Panthers, 35-14

*Chieftains survive nearly three-hour
weather delay to top Pickerington North, 35-14*

By Craig Dunn

Logan Daily News Sports Editor

PICKERINGTON — Early Saturday morning, the Logan Chieftains reached down and turned what could have been a potentially devastating setback into one of Logan High School's most determined and hard-fought football victories ever.

The final score — Logan 35, Pickerington North 14 — is somewhat misleading. What the Chiefs had to overcome in northern Fairfield County Friday night... er, Saturday morning... will stand the test of time as a tribute to the determination and intestinal fortitude of a team and its coaching staff.

"I was pleased with the way we played," said Logan coach Dale Amyx. "I'm really proud of the kids. We played a little sloppy at times, but we overcame the delay and got ourselves focused again." Ah, the delay. More about that a little later.

A 2-yard scoring run in the first quarter by Clay Morgan staked Logan (2-0) to a 7-0 lead, and a great interception in the back corner of the end zone by defensive back Jaushua Huntsberger midway through the second stanza preserved that early lead.

Logan then went up 13-0 at halftime after executing a terrific two-minute drill almost to perfection... and on a gutsy roll of the dice by Amyx.

Starting at their own 47-yard line with 2:13 to play in the second stanza, junior quarterback Patrick Angle and his stepbrother, fellow junior Mason Mays, hooked up on a couple quick-out passes to get things rolling.

Moments later, Angle and Huntsberger connected on a 26-yard play down the right sideline, just missing getting into the end zone, and Logan was in business on the PN 1 with 46 seconds to play in the half.

A false-start penalty and three plays later, Logan faced fourth-and-goal from the PN 4 with time running out. Out of timeouts and without time to get the field goal unit onto the field, Logan went for six, but Angle was tackled on a keeper three yards short of the goal line.

PN defenders celebrated — that is, until they saw a yellow flag on the field. The tackler was called for a facemask penalty, giving Logan one last play from the 2-yard line with no time on the clock.

Deciding not to settle for a field goal in an effort take a huge momentum swing into the halftime break, Amyx went for six points... and the Chiefs got them when Morgan scored on an off-tackle run. Logan missed the PAT kick.

It was that halftime break that wound up making the night both bizarre and unreal.

As the bands performed at halftime, word reached the press box that a huge storm, complete with drenching rain, thunder and, worst of all, lightning, was bearing down on Pickerington. Indeed, as the PN band was finishing its show, the storm hit, accompanied by lightning.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association's weather rule clearly states that, at the first sign of lightning, any outdoor event faces a mandatory 30-minute delay.

The storm was so intense that Pickerington North officials informed fleeing fans via the public address system to leave the stadium... not that most of them needed convincing to do so. Most went back to their vehicles,

and many left. But some diehards stayed.

As the rain poured, the lightning continued to brighten the night sky... and with each bolt, the 30-minute delay started anew as per the OHSAA rules.

“Not having ever been in that kind of situation, it’s hard to know what to do,” Amyx said. “Kids are kids. They were hungry so we fed them. I’m not happy with having to wait that long, because it’s hard to keep their minds focused. We learned some things we can do, and don’t want to do, if that ever happens again.

“It was tough on the kids on both sides,” Amyx added.

So, while the Chieftains and Panthers cooled their heels in their respective locker rooms, it was decided the coaches and game officials would meet at 10 p.m. to make a decision on whether to resume the game. At that time, it was decided to wait until 10:30. Then one last get-together shortly before 11.

While few people thought the game would be resumed, Amyx and his coaching staff faced a dilemma... wait out the storm and delay and finish the game, albeit late at night, or make another bus trip to Pickerington the next day to conclude the game.

Being the road team, the longer the delay meant a shorter night of rest for the Chieftains if the game was ultimately suspended and finished Saturday morning. Along the way, however, a decision was reached that if the game was suspended it would have been finished at 7 p.m. Saturday.

With the rain letting up and the skies clearing, and after one last meeting shortly before 11 p.m., it was decided to resume play at 11:30 p.m. — which, after the last 30-minute delay plus a warm-up period, actually pushed the starting time to 11:38 p.m.

It would turn out to be the first known time in LHS history that a varsity football game would not end on the same day it started.

Logan was already without defensive end/tight end Jon Neff, who had sustained a moderate concussion when he was kicked in the head while making a tackle late in the first half. Then the Chiefs lost Morgan, who had stayed in the game despite injuring a knee in the first half, during the pre-second half warm-up period.

Plus, by the time Pickerington North (1-1) kicked off to begin the second half, the Chieftains had completely lost that hard-earned momentum created by the touchdown at the end of the first half which, by then, had been three hours and nearly a calendar day earlier.

And the Chiefs also had to adjust to playing without both Neff and Morgan, a pair of seniors and two-way starters. The effects showed early.

The Chiefs had a big gain on a pass play nullified on a penalty and were forced to punt following their opening series of the second half, after which Angle — taking Neff’s place as punter — drilled a 50-yarder to get Logan out of immediate trouble.

PN quarterback Sean Flaherty hooked up with Bowling Green-bound receiver Alex Bayer for a 58-yard gain — Mays made a terrific touchdown-saving tackle, albeit temporary, at the Logan 16 — but running back Kevin Duckworth scored on the very next play to pull within 13-7 a little more than a minute into the third period.

“That really woke us up and got us focused,” Amyx said.

The Panthers were hurting as well. Their main running back, Gianni Lynch, missed the game due to injury and Matt Ferguson, who had 47 yards on 10 carries in his place in the first half, went down with an ankle injury midway through the second period and did not return. Duckworth was the Panthers' No. 3 running back.

With Neff and Morgan out, the Chieftains turned to backups such as Ryan Sigler, Zach McDaniel, Seth Sigler and Jordan Rutter, and leaned heavily upon seniors such as linebacker Zach Adams — who himself came back from an injury early in the third period — to turn in a commanding defensive performance the rest of the way.

“A lot of kids stepped up,” Amyx praised. “Our kids played hard and never gave up. The doctors who have looked at Clay think it might be a strain, but we’re looking at being without Jon for a week (Friday at 2-0 Hamilton Township).”

After that quick score, Pickerington North never threatened again until scoring a consolation TD on its final offensive series of the night after the Chieftains had made wholesale defensive substitutions after having finally opened an insurmountable lead.

The Panthers went three-and-out on their next two series; Adams picked off a pass deep in North territory on the third, and PN managed just one first down on its next.

Meanwhile, the Chieftains simply followed through with something Amyx said they would do in the pre-season: they spread their offense. They flanked four receivers, sometimes trips to one side, and Angle played catch with Mays, Adams, Huntsberger, Seth Sigler and Rutter to maintain control of the football.

And control the ball they did. Second-half time of possession was Logan 17:48, Pickerington North 6:12 (see “by the numbers” on this page). The longest the Panthers had the ball on a single possession in the second half was 1:44 while Logan had five possessions longer than that, ranging from 1:47 (when they ran out the clock) to 3:33.

“You have to look at us in terms we have outstanding skill people,” noted Amyx. “Our line is not that big compared to Lancaster and Pickerington North (Logan’s first two opponents) but they got us through. I don’t think we want to be a team that lines up and ‘here we come, three-yards-and-a-cloud-of-dust’ right now.

“But we are creating some new depth with (Tim) King at tackle, (Jeff) Murphy at guard, and moving (Derek) Shirey to tackle and moving (Cary) Maclaughlin to guard,” he added. “It’s worked out real well.”

Pickerington North did have the ball once with a chance to take the lead after forcing Logan to punt on its next series. But the Chiefs stiffened and forced the Panthers to punt the ball back.

Two plays later, Angle hooked up with Mays with a pass over the middle and the junior made a terrific cut and set sail down the right sideline. Aided big-time by a nice block by Rutter, Mays was finally tackled just short of the corner goal-line pylon

Angle snuck the ball over on the next play, then lofted a sweet two-point conversion pass for Adams in the back left corner of the end zone for a 21-7 Logan lead with 4:25 remaining.

That TD came shortly after midnight... no doubt Logan’s first-ever post-12 a.m. touchdown.

Following a PN punt, Logan came up with a game-breaking, 10-play, 73-yard drive that spilled over into the fourth quarter. Passing on nearly every down, Angle hit Seth Sigler (twice), Huntsberger, Adams and Mays (also twice), completing six passes to four different receivers, against a tiring Pickerington North defense, again to the PN 1.

Angle's second QB sneak touchdown, this one with 10:57 remaining, effectively put the game away... and the hundred or so Chieftain fans who stayed behind to witness the end to a bizarre night began to celebrate in earnest.

Adams' 10-yard return of an interception on the next series set the Chieftains up for one last short scoring drive, with Angle hooking up with Ralph Robinson on a quick-in two-yard scoring pass with 7:04 to play.

Backup tailback Dylan Cavinee gained eight yards on the final play of the game at 12:45 a.m. to end the night... or morning, whichever you prefer. Game over. Drive safely.

Well, at least there was very little congestion getting out of the parking lot.

Chiefs blank Rangers, 31-0

Logan records first 3-0 start since 2001

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News Sports Editor

OBETZ — At least this time the rain wasn't accompanied by lightning.

And oh, by the way, the Logan Chieftains are off to a 3-0 start for the first time since 2001.

Neither intermittent rain, a late-game downpour, the gloom of Friday night or the Hamilton Township Rangers kept the Purple & White from their appointed rounds or from a third-straight victory, this one a 31-0 shutout at Hamilton Township High School.

While the undefeated Purple & White were hurting somewhat physically entering the game — they were down two starters on both sides of the football — the players who stepped in and picked things up without skipping a beat.

Hamilton Township (2-1) really only had one player who was any kind of threat — quarterback Dorian Curry, who rushed for 102 yards on 18 carries and who almost single-handedly twice got the Rangers within sight of the Chieftain goal line. But the Logan D turned them back both times for their first shutout of the season.

“Defensively we did a really good job,” praised Logan coach Dale Amyx. “Their quarterback was good and he was slippery. They did some things that hurt us early, but we shored things up.

“We’re playing without basically two (defensive) starters and a kid normally playing at a corner (Mason Mays) coming in and having to make linebacker reads. I thought Mays did a great job with that,” he added. “And Ryan Sigler came in and played well at defensive end. They both did a great job. It showed not having a couple starters in there, but hopefully we’ll have them both back in there next week.”

The Chiefs were missing seniors Jon Neff (moderate concussion) and Clay Morgan (strained knee), players who account for five starting positions, including punter. Both were injured in last week’s epic, weather-delayed victory at Pickerington North.

The rains came again Friday night while Hocking County again remained bone-dry, but that really didn’t bother the Chiefs other than a couple early slips and slides. No three-hour weather suspensions or 12:45 a.m. finishes this week.

What did bother the Chiefs — and, especially, coach Amyx — was a bit of sloppiness on offense. The Chiefs were whistled for eight penalties, seven of them mind-numbing five-yarders that almost drove their head coach nuts.

“Offensively I’m not happy with those procedure calls,” he said. “We weren’t sharp, and against a really good opponent we won’t get away with that. Too many first-and-15 (situations).”

But Friday night the Chiefs more often than not overcame those mistakes.

They took full command of the game on their second play from scrimmage when quarterback Patrick Angle connected with fellow junior Mason Mays with a short pass over the middle. Mays broke a tackle, dodged a couple other potential tacklers, and cut down the right sideline, outracing the Ranger defense to complete a 61-yard scoring play with 9:25 left in the opening period.

“You take the penalties away and we had good drives,” Amyx pointed out. “We just killed ourselves (at

times)... and Patrick, what a great job he did again. He makes plays, and our receivers did a great job.”

Angle picked off a Curry pass on the next series and returned it 44 yards to the Hamilton Township 12-yard line. A Logan receiver dropped a sure touchdown pass on the ensuing play and the Chieftains settled for Ronnie Burcham’s 25-yard field goal to make it 10-0 less than halfway through the opening stanza.

Moments later, Curry had a 22-yard scramble to keep a nice Hamilton Township drive alive, but the drive stalled at the Logan 21 when the Rangers bobbled the ball on a fourth-and-one play.

Junior Zach McDaniel finished off an 80-yard, eight-play drive with a 28-yard scoring run up the middle midway through the second quarter, and on the very next Logan drive the Chiefs went 80 yards again, this time on nine plays, with Angle connecting with Zach Adams on a beautiful 32-yard scoring pass with 1:31 remaining in the half.

“I thought our kids played hard,” Amyx praised. “Zach McDaniel did a great job running the ball (116 yards on 15 carries in place of Morgan at tailback) and the offensive line for the most part did a great job blocking. We had great pass protection.

“I was glad (offensive coordinator) Kelly (Wolfe) went back to our base offense in the second half,” he added. “We need to start getting more physical. We haven’t been doing that a lot. Offensively we’ve kind of been finessing, but there’s going to come a point and time when we’ll need to get physical with somebody.”

Hamilton Township’s last good scoring chance came in the waning seconds of the second period when Curry drove his team to the Logan 14. The drive bogged down and the Rangers lined up to attempt a 31-yard field goal, but the snap from center was bad and the holder was forced to throw. Jaushua Huntsberger picked it off to end the threat.

Neither team was in much of a hurry to do much more than run the ball in the second half — Logan threw just two passes and Hamilton Township only one — and the Chiefs let one great scoring opportunity get away when they fumbled the ball inside the Rangers’ 10-yard line and Curry returned it 33 yards.

Logan fullback Stephen Miller finished off an 11-play, 52-yard scoring drive a little less than five minutes into the final quarter with a one-yard run off tackle to round out the scoring.

Angle finished 9-of-16 passing for 170 yards, hitting Mays four times for 86 and finding both Adams and Jordan Rutter with a pair of passes. McDaniel’s 116 yards led a 215-yard ground attack.

While Hamilton Township had 192 rushing yards, the Rangers’ passing game was almost non-existent. Logan picked off more passes (two) than the Rangers completed to their own receivers (one) in 11 total attempts.

“Some good and some bad tonight,” Amyx said. “I’m pleased with how hard we played and with the effort, just a little displeased with all the penalties. We have to eliminate (penalties) in games coming up. We can’t play like that.”

However, the walking wounded might start getting back into the Logan lineup, something that could spell bad news for future Logan foes.

“We got David (Schneider) back, our left tackle, and Weston Andy’s been cleared and he’ll be back (soon),” Amyx revealed. “Eventually we’ll get our original offensive line back and maybe move (Derek) Shirey back to guard and maybe keep (Cary) Maclaughlin on one side of the ball... and now we’ve developed some depth.

“That was a good game for us after playing two big, physical teams (Lancaster and Pickerington North) to

play somebody more our size,” he added. “We’re 3-0 and going back home for three games in a row. It seems like we’ve been away from home a long time... and it’s only been what, a couple weeks?”

The Chiefs host Gallipolis next Friday in Logan Chieftain Stadium to set in motion a three-game home stand that also includes Southeastern Ohio Athletic League foes Ironton and Zanesville.

Home cooking from now until early October.

Chiefs rout Gallipolis for fourth-straight victory

By Craig Dunn

Logan Daily News Sports Editor

LOGAN — Friday night's week-four football game in Logan Chieftain Stadium came down to a simple equation: too many loaded weapons for the host Chieftains and not nearly enough bullets for the visiting Gallipolis Blue Devils to counter with.

The Chiefs scored on five consecutive first-half offensive possessions, tacking 33 points on the scoreboard in less than 12 minutes' worth of actual game time, and eased to a 40-7 win for their fourth straight victory to open the season.

Quarterback Patrick Angle accounted for five Logan touchdowns — two rushing and three passing, including one when he scrambled about 50 yards before hitting fellow junior Mason Mays with a dump-off pass that turned into a 70-yard scoring play — and the Logan defense limited Gallia Academy (2-2) to just two first downs and 22 yards of total offense in the first half.

It was a night of offensive struggles all around for the Blue Devils who, other than a 67-yard scoring run by Nate Allison in the fourth quarter, managed just 56 yards of total offense otherwise.

Due to injuries, Gallipolis was down to its third quarterback, sophomore Tyler Easton, and senior wide receiver Beau Whaley also lined up in the signal-calling position as the game wore on.

"I was worried all week about focus and all the (Gallipolis) injuries, but it's Gallipolis and they were 2-1," Logan coach Dale Amyx said. "These (Logan) kids haven't been around as long as I have and had as many wars with Gallipolis as I have."

The Purple & White went into this war well-stocked, however, and after misfiring on their first offensive series, went into charge mode the rest of the first half.

"That first series I think we were a little flat, but the kids came out and executed when they had to and got it done," Amyx said.

Angle capped off a five-play, 43-yard scoring drive by tallying on an 8-yard keeper with 6:59 to play in the opening period.

On that drive, however, the Chieftains lost junior tailback/defensive back Zach McDaniel for at least four weeks with an injury. He sustained a separated shoulder when a Gallia defender brought him down by the facemask while making a tackle.

It's been a tough season for Chieftain tailbacks. Senior Clay Morgan missed the last game-and-a-half with a knee injury; he returned Friday night, but played exclusively on defense.

"That knee's still a little stiff and the word I keep getting is let him play through it," Amyx noted. "I thought the best thing to do was play him on the defensive side and see how it felt... and now we're going to need him back on the offensive side."

The Chiefs then turned to Mays, who filled the tailback role quite well, thank you. He led the team with 85 yards on just eight carries in addition to catching three passes for 96 yards.

"Mays plays a great tailback. Before Zach went down, we really felt we had three outstanding tailbacks," Amyx noted. "Now we're down to two. Mason does a great job... now it's his time. He's going to get the reps in there until Clay's knee heals up completely, then he and Clay will be the guys who rotate."

That also gives future Logan foes something more to prepare for when they watch Chieftain game films and look at scouting reports. Mays will likely get the bulk of the carries as Morgan's knee continues to heal, and it's hoped McDaniel will be back for the last couple games of the season.

The Chiefs also got senior defensive end/tight end Jon Neff back Friday night and senior offensive linemen David Schneider and Weston Andy saw some action as well. McDaniel thus goes on the injury shelf while four other walking wounded begin to come back.

"One thing that does for our offense is that it's created some huge depth for our offensive line," Amyx said. "We're three-deep at guard now, four-deep at tackle (and) have kids who can play guard and tackle, so we have a lot things we can do.

"We have to do a little more of that on defense... get some bigger kids (playing) because there's going to come a time, maybe next week, where we're going to have to go with a bigger lineup," he added. "And that's coming. We're getting to the point with (Schneider and Andy) coming in there. They've just missed so much and getting in playing shape takes awhile. David's getting there and this was Weston's first duty tonight.

"We don't want to make too many changes too quick because things have been working pretty good for us."

Gallipolis went three-and-out on all three of its first-quarter possessions, losing one net yard on offense. And it was Neff and fellow senior Stephen Miller who set the tone with a quarterback sack on the Blue Devils' opening series.

"The kids played lights-out all night on defense and swarmed to the ball," Amyx praised. "We're starting to get some more guys rotating in there and creating some depth, although we lost Zach (and) that hurts us for skill positions. That hurts losing a kid like him who can play so many positions. Somebody else is going to have to step up now."

"So far our depth has been a luxury," said Logan offensive coordinator Kelly Wolfe. "Our depth has been seriously tested the last two weeks. We've gotten kids like Korey Swaim and Jordan Rutter in there (and) Mason Mays has played two different positions. We've had to move some people around, but we've got some talented kids who can do a lot of things.

"Like we've told the kids, we haven't missed a beat no matter who we put in there," he added. "We keep running what we want to run and doing things we need to do, and the kids are right there with us. That's a tribute to them, too... they're paying attention and picking up on the offense."

Facing third-and-10 from his own 30-yard line on the Chiefs' second offensive series, Angle went back to pass and was flushed out of the pocket. He scrambled to his right, then cut back all the way across the field to his left, running about 50 yards to find an opening.

He then flipped a dump pass to a wide-open Mays near midfield, and Mays knew what to do with it. He went the distance and the Blue Devils got nary a hand on him.

"Patrick can create so many things in there," Amyx noted. "With him scrambling and buying some time — he was getting some good protection — and everything covered up, he ran and came back and bam, sees a guy wide open. That's fun to watch."

Angle connected with Zach Adams on a pretty 21-yard post-pattern scoring aerial in the latter seconds of the quarter as the Chieftains opened a 20-0 lead.

Then, early in the second quarter, after hitting Jaushua Huntsberger with a 38-yard deep ball down the right sideline, and with Mays taking a pitchout 18 yards, the Chieftains drove deep into Gallia territory again and Angle scored his second rushing TD on a 4-yard keeper.

Angle then topped off his night by hitting Mays in the left flat with a short pass that Mays turned into a 21-yard scoring play after Angle fooled everyone with a lovely fake-reverse to Huntsberger. Mays again scored untouched.

The Chiefs could have led as much as 43-0 at halftime but had another Angle TD pass (also to Adams) called back on a penalty and also missed a field goal.

Neff played some quarterback in the third quarter as Angle took the rest of the night off, and he completed his only pass — a nifty slant-in that Adams turned into a 49-yard scoring jaunt — to finish off Logan's scoring late in the third stanza.

Angle connected on 8-of-13 passes for 186 yards. Mays accounted for 181 yards of offense, and two of Adams' receptions went for six points.

The Chiefs now can focus squarely on Ironton in a huge Southeastern Ohio Athletic League tilt next Friday.

"We'll see where we're at (as a team)," he said. "They're a big, strong physical team, and we've beaten a couple big, strong physical teams this year. We'll see where we stand."

Chiefs pass the test by dismantling Ironton 35-10 in SEOAL grid opener

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News Sports Editor

LOGAN — “You play the way you practice,” Logan coach Dale Amyx told his Logan Chieftains after they had dismantled visiting Ironton 35-10 in their Southeastern Ohio Athletic League football opener Friday night.

And, brother, have the Purple & White taken that lesson to heart.

“There’s so much truth to that,” observed senior receiver/defensive back Jaushua Huntsberger. “Coach Amyx always has us so well-prepared. I think we practice and prepare harder than any team in the state.”

That being the case, Ironton really didn’t stand a chance Friday night as the undefeated Purple & White scored on all four of their first-half possessions and opened an insurmountable 28-3 halftime lead.

Logan began defense of its SEOAL title with its 24th consecutive conference victory and finished the first half of its regular-season schedule a perfect 5-0. The Chiefs have outscored their first five foes 176-41.

“I thought our kids did a great job all week preparing for this game,” Amyx said. “We worked them hard. Sometimes I think we work them too hard. We run hard on Tuesday and Wednesday, and it’s not until Thursday that we start backing down.

“We do a lot of physical work and then a lot of mental work,” he added. “We try to get the kids to buy into that... the blue-collar work ethic and playing together as a team.”

That work ethic produced four really sweet touchdowns in the first half as the result of long scoring drives of 76, 80, 69 and 72 yards.

That’s because quarterback Patrick Angle tied an LHS school record with four touchdown passes on the night — two each to fellow juniors Jordan Rutter and Mason Mays — and threw for 302 yards, second best on the all-time LHS single-game passing list, behind only the 324 yards he accumulated just three weeks ago at Pickerington North.

Angle completed 11 straight passes at one juncture and was 16-of-18 by halftime, finishing 20-of-25 with one interception. He completed passes to seven different receivers.

And therein lies the rub when opposing defenses line up against the Chieftains: just who do you key on?

Not only can Angle throw the ball lights-out, but senior Clay Morgan also made his first appearance in the Logan offensive backfield since midway through the Pickerington North game and ran for 107 yards on just 11 carries. He’s back from his knee injury.

“That’s the big thing right now... (opposing defenses) can’t say that ‘we have to stop this guy’ because Patrick will hit whoever is open. He has such great vision,” Amyx praised. “I’ve said it before, but what I’m so proud of is how so many kids step up when we need them. Steve Miller goes down (with a first-quarter injury) and Taylor Maguire goes in and plays a great game. When Clay was out, Zach McDaniel (who missed last night’s game due to a shoulder injury) plays well, and Clay comes back tonight and plays a great game.

“We’re happy with the depth we’ve created... now if we could just get through a game without someone getting hurt!” he exclaimed. “I’m proud of these kids (like) the Ryan Siglers, the kids who don’t get a lot of glory who come in and do a good job.”

Another weapon the Chieftains unveiled, as they confused the Ironton defense with their four-receiver spread offense (five on a couple occasions) was Rutter, who caught touchdown passes of eight and 45 yards from Angle in the opening quarter.

“My first two touchdowns in what I think was the most important game of the season so far,” Rutter said afterward. “Our passing was the key. We came out strong and we executed well.”

Did they ever. The Chieftain offense was efficiency personified in the first half.

On the game’s first play from scrimmage, Angle hit Zach Adams with a sideline pass that the senior turned into a 40-yard pickup, setting the tone for a long night for Ironton (3-2 overall, 1-1 SEOAL).

Using his arm (completions to Mays and Huntsberger) and his legs (a couple keepers), Angle steadily drove the Chiefs deep into Ironton territory before hooking up with Rutter with an 8-yard scoring pass over the middle with 8:56 left in the opening period.

“I was surprised that I was in the end zone, because it was only supposed to be a five-yard route,” Rutter said. “The guy in front of me fell down, so I took a couple more steps, caught it and looked down, and I was in the end zone.

“I was highly surprised,” he added with a grin.

More smiles and grins were to follow.

Ironton put together its best drive of the night on its opening series, driving 11 plays from its own 28 to the Logan 14, where the drive stalled and quarterback/placekicker Jon Schweickart booted a 31-yard field goal.

On that initial drive, Ironton apparently wanted to use 5-foot-11, 270-pound lineman Tony Murphy (wearing uniform number 62) as a fullback — a battering ram to soften up the Chieftain defense.

“That’s his first time in the backfield,” Amyx said. “I was getting a little worried with that first drive. We brought a couple bigger guys in (to combat the larger Tigers) and then Miller got hurt. We had to makeshift... once the kids (got accustomed) they knew we could stop them. We jumped into some short-yardage defenses.

“We’re not big up front, but we’re aggressive and we’re quick,” he added. “To hold them and to stop them with the size of their running backs, that was a good test for us.”

The Chieftains certainly passed this “major, major test,” as Amyx said earlier in the week.

It took the Chiefs just five plays to cover 80 yards on their next possession, with Rutter again doing the scoring honors when he flew past the Ironton secondary and found himself all alone.

But he later admitted this 45-yard touchdown reception wasn’t as easy as it looked.

“I thought (Angle) overthrew me — and I lost it in the lights — but I just kept running and put my hands out and caught it,” Rutter revealed. “The (Ironton) corners were dropping off to the sides and it leaves you wide open up the middle.”

And it showed how the Chiefs took full advantage of their pre-game preparations.

“I thought the line did great,” Huntsberger said. Offensive coordinator Kelly “Wolfe did a great job. We came into the week knowing what we could do against their defense... and everything we wanted to do, we (found out we) could do.”

“In the game films we saw some things we thought we could take advantage of,” Amyx revealed. “We didn’t put anything special in... we just knew we could run our own passing game against them. We knew there would be a lot of open areas in the zone and in the seams. Kelly did a great job calling plays and exploiting that.

“Kelly’s done a great job getting the offense ready and calling the plays... and all I have to do is sit back and worry about defense,” he said with a chuckle.

And, oh, that defense. Logan has outscored its opponents 112-6 in the first half and has yet to allow a touchdown in the first or second quarters. Ironically, both Lancaster and Ironton kicked field goals on the first possession of their respective games against the Chiefs... and both went on to lose by identical 35-10 scores.

“I’m very proud of the defense. This was pretty much a smash-mouth game, and maybe we needed something like that,” Amyx said. “The kids got some confidence. Now they know they can stop a good, hard running back or running attack.”

Logan went 69 yards on 11 plays with its first possession of the second period, another efficient, workman-like drive that wound up with Mays doing what he does so well...

catching a short pass, making defenders miss and outrunning them to the end zone. This time, it was a pass he caught in the right flat and took 16 yards to paydirt.

Angle showed more of his great athleticism on Logan's final touchdown of the first half. With under a minute to play, he scrambled to his left — opposite his throwing (right) hand — and heaved a bomb down the left sideline that Jon Neff hauled in for a 56-yard gain to the Ironton 3. Morgan scored on a 2-yard run with 32.8 seconds left to cap off a nearly-perfect half of Logan football.

Logan turned the ball over a couple times in the second half — once on the Ironton 1-yard line — and the I-Tigers got their only touchdown when Lukas Morris took a pass in the left flat, cut back against the grain, and took 74 yards for six points to pull Ironton within 28-10 with 8:29 remaining.

Not to worry. Angle simply led the Chieftains on one last scoring drive, which included a 20-yard pass to Rutter and a nice, twisting 13-yard run by Morgan, before hitting a wide-open Mays on a post pattern with an 11-yard scoring play with 5:55 remaining.

“That was the most physical team we've played — other than Pickerington North, physically — from beginning to end,” Amyx said. “And that might be the case again next week. Zanesville always has a big line and we're going to see some teams down the road with big lines.

“It was our first league game and you want to start off with a win,” he added. Ironton “is one of the top teams in the league. I know Chillicothe's tough and Jackson (was) undefeated... but Ironton is Ironton.”

After the game, Huntsberger, the son of a veteran coach (longtime freshman football coach and varsity softball coach Jim Huntsberger), spoke of how proud he was of his team and starting out the Logan Chieftain Stadium era with three consecutive wins.

How about five home wins, Jaush... or maybe six with a playoff game?

“That would be great,” he said, before stopping and collecting his thoughts. “But Zanesville's next week and that's a really big game. I know coach Amyx and coach Wolfe will have us prepared, and I know we'll come out and play hard.”

Spoken just like the son of a coach. And spoken just like a player who believes in his team, his coaches and the system. You truly play the way you practice.

Chiefs' 16-14 victory over Zanesville much too close for comfort Friday night

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News Sports Editor

LOGAN — Those who felt the Logan Chieftains needed a competitive football game certainly got their wish Friday night... but the Zanesville Blue Devils certainly made the first Homecoming game in Logan Chieftain Stadium much too close for comfort.

Although the Purple & White racked up over 400 yards of total offense, picked up 25 first downs, ran 77 offensive plays to Zanesville's 41, and controlled the ball for nearly 30 minutes of time on the game clock, the stubborn Blue Devils still had the ball on their own 33-yard line with 7:08 left in the game with a chance to pull off an upset.

But the Chieftain defense stiffened and forced a Zanesville punt before the offense ran out the game's final 5:15 with a terrific 14-play, ball-control drive to escape with a 16-14 victory.

The good news for the Chieftains, in addition to remaining undefeated (6-0 overall, 2-0 in the Southeastern Ohio Athletic League), is that when the OHSAA computers figure out playoff points, neither margin of victory nor style come into play... it all comes down to whether you chalk a "W" or an "L."

And getting away with that "W" will suffice for now.

"I kept thinking back to that USC game last night," said Logan coach Dale Amyx. "You leave (the Blue Devils) in it long enough, it's a two-point game there at the end, and I'm thinking 'they have a pretty good kicker' if they get the ball back. He could nail a long field goal."

His thoughts were of Oregon State's 27-21 college football upset of the top-ranked Southern California Trojans on Thursday night — a classic example of the "what can happen on any given night" theme if there ever was one.

"Zanesville's a good team. I knew that when I saw the film," Amyx noted. "I thought they would be one of the best teams we would play this year, and the score is indicative of that. They have a good football team and they're going to win some more football games."

The Blue Devils (2-4 overall, 1-2 SEOAL) have lost to quality competition — Licking Valley, Wheeling Park (W.Va.), Chillicothe and, now, Logan.

While they came to Logan Chieftain Stadium with a solid game plan and made it work — they took away some of the things that have made the Purple & White so successful this fall — it still came down to one key thing: the Chieftains made too many mistakes deep in Zanesville territory.

Logan turned the ball over three times and quarterback Patrick Angle was sacked on three occasions with his team inside the red zone (the Zanesville 20-yard line) that kept the Chieftains from scoring.

"I think a lot of our wounds tonight were self-inflicted," Amyx said. "When we get inside the red zone, we just have to score."

Right off the bat, the Chieftains drove from their own 20 to the Zanesville 5 and had a sure touchdown pass dropped in the end zone on second down. Two plays later Amyx rolled the dice and went for six points on fourth-and-four, and Angle was sacked for an 11-yard loss to finish the drive.

“I’ll take (the blame for) that one,” Amyx said. “We probably should have kicked a field goal. I have a lot of confidence in these kids. I thought we could (score) and we didn’t.”

After holding the Blue Devils to a three-and-out on the next series, the Chiefs again drove to the ZHS 5, but this time a holding penalty ultimately took them out of touchdown range. Ronnie Burcham booted a 29-yard field goal on the second play of the second period to put the Chieftains ahead.

Mason Mays picked off a pass on the next play from scrimmage and an Angle-to-Mays 45-yard pass play got the ball to the Zanesville 5. One play later, however, Angle was sacked for an 18-yard loss and Zanesville forced and recovered a fumble.

Then, after Logan’s Ralph Robinson recovered a Zanesville fumble near midfield, the Chieftains drove still again deep into Blue Devil territory.

They had a 41-yard scoring pass from Angle to Jaushua Huntsberger called back on a penalty, but eventually got the score back when Angle hit Mays in the left flat. Mays made a one-handed catch and went 16 yards to paydirt and a 10-0 lead with 5:32 remaining in the first half.

Zanesville, which only crossed midfield once in the first half — and that was on the fumble that Robinson picked out of midair — got a huge break when the Chiefs fumbled the second-half kickoff and the Blue Devils recovered on the Logan 28.

Two plays later, Zanesville’s Kyle Gladden scored on a 15-yard run and it was a 10-7 ballgame.

“That was (a) soft turnover. We fumble the kickoff return and, bam, two runs and they’re in,” Amyx said. “We’re going to have to work on that mind-set, but it’s hard to drill that situation in practice. That’s twice we’ve done that (Pickerington North scored in a similar fashion at the outset of the second half of a game a month ago), turned the ball over in the red zone and let (the other team) score in a couple plays.”

But the Chieftains quickly got that touchdown back. Facing third-and-four from his own 38-yard line, Angle threw deep down the left side toward senior Zach Adams. When a Zanesville defender went for the interception and missed, Adams made the catch and went the distance to complete what proved to be the game-winning, 62-yard touchdown play.

Logan missed the extra point but led 16-7 less than two minutes into the third period.

Moments later, Logan once again drove to the Zanesville 5-yard line but Angle was sacked and then intercepted by Zanesville’s Wesley Tandy, who would have brought the pick back 91 yards for a touchdown except that Angle brought him down by his shoelaces at the Zanesville 41.

The Blue Devils pulled within 16-14 less than a minute into the final stanza when quarterback Cole Hudson hooked up with wide receiver Michael Lynn on a 45-yard scoring pass down the left

sideline, and it looked like the Chiefs were in trouble.

The Chieftains wound up maintaining possession of the ball for 9:17 of the game's final 12 minutes, limiting Zanesville to just one first down before forcing the Blue Devils into a punt and taking over at their own 24 with 5:15 remaining.

Though what followed wasn't exactly Logan's vintage grind-it-out ground attack, the Purple & White steadily drove the ball downfield, with Angle or Clay Morgan running the ball 10 times in all, as the clock steadily drained.

Zanesville called all three of its timeouts towards the end in an effort to hold off the Chieftains, but Angle converted a fourth-and-one-foot QB sneak for a first down at the Zanesville 20 with a little over a minute to play and Logan ran out the clock.

"That was our drive to win the game," Amyx said. "If you're going to win a championship, you have to be able to do that somewhere down the road. We did it tonight.

"But we did it (ran out the clock) out of the spread," he added. "The spread is what we are and that's how we move the ball."

Angle threw the ball 31 times (completing 16 for 242 yards) and ran the ball 31 times (for a team-high 84 yards), meaning he was fully involved in 62 of the Chieftains' 77 offensive plays. Adams (84 yards) and Mays (77) both had four catches and a touchdown.

Fortunately for the Chieftains, Zanesville matched Logan's three turnovers and only managed 172 yards of offense — 84 rushing and 88 passing — and over half of those passing yards came on the Blue Devils' fourth-quarter touchdown pass.

"We didn't show up for a couple (defensive) plays, but we played lights-out defense otherwise," Amyx said.

The Chieftains play three of their final four games on the road, starting with next Friday's SEOAL contest at Marietta, which dropped a 35-28 decision to Jackson on Friday night.

"We can use this game to motivate and get mentally ready," Amyx said. The victory "is the main thing, but we definitely have some things we have to address."

Chiefs romp past Marietta, 49-14

*Morgan scores
four touchdowns,
Neff blocks two
punts in easy win*

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News Sports Editor

MARIETTA — Coming off a too-close-for-comfort victory over Zanesville last week, the Logan Chieftains wanted to send a message — to the host Marietta Tigers, the Southeastern Ohio Athletic League and, in a sense, to themselves — Friday night.

Message received. On all fronts.

The Tigers, before they really knew what hit them, found themselves down 27-0 less than nine minutes into Friday's SEOAL game at Don Drumm Stadium. And while the final score wasn't nearly as bad as the 56-point beat-down they absorbed last fall at Bill Sauer Field, it was lopsided enough as the Purple & White scored an easy 49-14 victory.

"The kids really came out and played," said Logan coach Dale Amyx. "We were on them hard about our performance last week and we wanted to come out and prove we could play a lot better. I think they did. Defensively and offensively we played like we're capable of playing. Now hopefully we can work from there, get back to where we were, and keep improving each week.

"I think we took a step backward last week — even with the win — and the kids were focused and we had great practices all week," he added. "That (narrow 16-14 win over Zanesville) woke a lot of people up. I think we got their attention this week. I think the focus on the game plan all week was great and it carried over into the game."

The Chieftains, ranked fourth in the state in Division II, remained undefeated both overall (7-0) and in the SEOAL (3-0) and appear to be on a week-10 collision course with Chillicothe (4-0) for the conference title.

And while the Purple & White aren't looking past 4-3 Warren or 5-2 Jackson the next two weeks, they know what awaits them — if they maintain their focus — can and will be very special.

"The kids realize this could be a very special season... we don't want to stub our toe," Amyx said. "We had to battle through a lot of things last week and hopefully that will serve us well down the road. We also proved we can come back and play the way we're capable of playing."

They did just that. The Chiefs rang up 27 points in the space of 191 seconds midway through the opening period to put the game away before it even reached the second quarter.

The Chiefs drove 46 yards on eight plays, with quarterback Patrick Angle (12-of-17 passing for 185 yards) completing a couple key passes to Mason Mays (five receptions for 70 yards)

and Zach McDaniel (three for 33) and tailback Clay Morgan (85 rushing yards on 12 carries) looking sharp in the backfield. Morgan scored on a 1-yard run with 6:50 to play in the opening stanza.

Logan's special teams — particularly Jon Neff — then took over. Just 55 seconds later, Neff blocked a Marietta punt that fellow senior Jaushua Huntsberger recovered in the end zone; then, on the very next series, Neff blocked still another Marietta punt and Ralph Robinson recovered at the Marietta 20-yard line.

From there, it was a matter of Angle making a twisting, churning 18-yard run to get the ball into scoring position for Morgan, who scored his second touchdown of the night on a 2-yard run with 5:00 left in the quarter and a 20-0 lead.

It would not be Morgan's last six-pointer, either.

One play and one Marietta penalty into the Tigers' next series, Morgan picked off a Cody Westbrook pass and easily brought it back 27 yards to paydirt. It was 27-0 with 3:39 left in the opening stanza.

Game over, for all intents and purposes The Chieftains increased their margin to 41-0 at the intermission after Angle threw a pair of second-quarter touchdown passes — one to Mays (29 yards) and the other to Morgan (19 yards) for his fourth touchdown of the night — giving him 17 for the season and marking his seventh-straight game with a scoring toss.

“The special teams (played well). The blocked punts... we've been close (to blocking one) all year,” Amyx said. “And on the second one we didn't even have the block on... that was just (supposed to be a regular) punt return and (Neff) got in there and blocked it again. He blocked both (punts), and how many passes did he bat down? He played a heckuva game tonight.”

Logan led 41-0 at the intermission despite turning the ball over three times, but Neff's two blocked kicks and interceptions by Morgan and Huntsberger more than made up for them.

“That (the turnovers) was a little disappointing — we carried that over a little from last week — but I think overall the execution and blocking was pretty crisp,” Amyx said. “Clay ran the ball hard (and) we tried to limit Patrick's carries a little tonight. We knew if we got (a lead) we didn't want him carrying it at all. He carried too much (31 times) last week and we're trying to get back where we're spreading it out more.

“We're back to what we were doing before, mixing things up... I don't think people can sit there and say ‘they do this’ or ‘they do that’, they're not going to know what we're going to do, and that's what we want,” he added. “We're pretty balanced.”

One other thing the Chiefs did — or, rather, didn't do: they were whistled for just one penalty for five yards.

Logan again held an opponent without a first-half touchdown — the Chiefs have now outscored their opponents 163-6 in the first half, including 71-0 in the second quarter alone — and the Chiefs pressured Westbrook, the Tigers' top all-time passer, into a 10-of-35 night passing for just 116 yards. They also limited his record-setting receiver, Sean Munfield, to just two catches.

Westbrook sets up so deep in the Marietta shotgun that he's hard to track down, and sacking him thus became a team goal. Stephen Miller and Robinson brought him down for a 9-yard loss and a sack late in the opening quarter.

“That’s something we haven’t done in the past and that was a big goal for us to sack him. The kids were excited about that,” Amyx said. “That tells me the (pass) coverage was good. He didn’t have a chance to throw right away.”

Logan led 49-0 less than four minutes into the second half following a Michael Snider scoring run and a two-point conversion pass (off a bobbled placement hold) from holder Huntsberger to Robinson.

The win not only marked Logan’s sixth-straight over the Tigers, but it also extended their SEOAL winning streak to 26, tying the school record, which is second all-time to Ironton’s 34.

The Marietta players, in a terrific show of class and respect, sported purple stickers with a white number “45” to honor Corey Kissling, the standout Chieftain linebacker who died tragically earlier this summer.

Amyx and the Chieftains truly appreciated the gesture.

“Their whole team wore stickers for Corey. I went into their huddle and told them how much we appreciate it,” Amyx said. “I knew it was tough for them tonight, but that was a heckuva thing for them to do. That’s what makes high school football so great, when you have one team that supports another team in a time of need.”

The Chieftains move on to host Warren, which has a winning record this late in the season for the first time in several seasons, next Friday in Logan Chieftain Stadium. It will be the Chiefs’ final regular-season home game — a potential week-11 home playoff game notwithstanding — and Senior Night for the Purple & White.

Logan has beaten Warren 10 consecutive times.

“We’re not going to take anything lightly,” Amyx said. “It’s our last home game. (The Warriors are) a wing-T team, and that’s something we haven’t seen a lot this year. It’ll be Senior Night and another important league game for us.”

Seniors pace Chiefs to 42-0 victory

Logan sets school record for consecutive SEOAL wins

By Craig Dunn

Logan Daily News Sports Editor

LOGAN — Many accolades have been accorded the Logan Chieftains and their spread offense this season, and deservedly so. The Purple & White were once again diverse and potent in their Senior Night regular-season home finale against visiting Warren Friday night in Logan Chieftain Stadium.

The Chiefs have gained almost 400 yards and scored nearly 35 points per game this season. But it was the Logan defense that particularly impressed both head coaches after the Purple & White blanked the Warriors 42-0 in a Southeastern Ohio Athletic League game.

“We thought we were going to be able to run the ball,” said Warren coach Jim Pifer. “Up front their nose guard just manhandled our center, their defensive end (Jon Neff) hurt us and we couldn’t get outside. Their quickness was too good for us, and plus they were a lot stronger than we thought they were.”

The Chiefs limited Warren to 120 yards of total offense and forced the Warriors to punt on all six of their first-half possessions en route to their eighth-consecutive victory and a school-record 27th-straight SEOAL win. Warren only crossed the 50-yard line three times all night and its wing-T offense was held to just 100 yards on the ground.

“That’s the first time all year we haven’t been able to generate offense on the run,” Pifer said. “I take my hat off to them. They have a nice defensive team.”

The undefeated (8-0) Chiefs, ranked No. 5 in Division II of this week’s Associated Press state football poll, scored two plays into the game on Clay Morgan’s 52-yard run and never looked back.

Morgan ran for two touchdowns and junior quarterback Patrick Angle threw for three touchdowns and ran for another, setting an LHS single-season record with 20 TD passes. His 13 completions (in 22 attempts) went to eight different receivers.

The four-time defending SEOAL champion Chiefs (4-0 SEOAL) also kept pace with conference foe Chillicothe (5-0) and, if the Purple & White win at Jackson next week while the Cavaliers defeat visiting Warren (4-4, 1-3), it will be Logan at Chillicothe in a winner-take-all week-10 championship game.

“I really think they’re a pretty good football team,” Logan coach Dale Amyx said of the Warriors. “If we were running the stuff we used to run, the I-formation (and) just grind it out, it would have been a different game.

“I think they had a lot of trouble with our spread,” he added. “We executed well on both sides of the ball and defensively we played lights-out all night. I thought they really ran the wing-T well. The films we saw on them they moved the ball on people, and that worried

me.”

But the Warriors really didn't move the ball until the second half — they only had 26 yards rushing at the intermission — and by then the Chiefs had the game well in hand. The Chiefs scored 14 points in each the first, second and third quarters and were never really threatened.

“Kelly (offensive coordinator Kelly Wolfe) did a nice job mixing the offense up, and that's the biggest thing: you don't know what's coming from us now,” Amyx noted. “It could be pass, it could be option, Clay on a quick trap... there's just too much there and we need to keep making sure we're not our own worst enemy (and make mistakes).

“We need to score and get ahead,” he added. “For us, it's do it quick and get the ball back and do it quick again. That's kind of been our forte this year and hopefully we can keep that up. That really puts the other team in a hole... and the way our defense plays, a 21-point lead is big.”

A couple of those Chieftain standouts on offense agreed.

“We can spread everything out,” said Morgan, who had another solid game on both sides of the football. “Every player can do everything — they can run (and) they can catch — and I think that's why we've been so good.”

Morgan finished with a season-high 142 yards rushing on just 11 carries and was one of those eight players on the receiving end of an Angle pass.

“We put in a couple new plays that gets me out into the open field to catch the ball, and I like that,” he said. Opposing defenses “have to cover everybody... they can't just focus on one or two people, and I think that's great.”

And no one knows that better than Angle.

“We have receivers who can do something after the catch,” Angle praised. “Jordan Rutter, Jaush Huntsberger, Zach Adams, Mason Mays, Clay Morgan out of the backfield, Jon Neff, Zach McDaniel... a lot of people who, when they get the ball, can do something with it. It's nice knowing we can throw a short pass and gain five or six yards after the catch.”

Angle threw a touchdown pass for an eighth-consecutive game and his 21-yard scoring pass to Adams with 19 seconds left in the first half broke Keith Myers' 23-year-old school record of 19 set in 1985.

“Right now I'm just focused on hopefully leading us to an undefeated regular season, a home playoff game and making a run in the playoffs,” said Angle, who is just a little more than 200 yards behind Joey Conrad's all-time single-season mark of 1,902 yards. “The records are nice, but I couldn't do it without an offensive line and all those great receivers

we have. They all do a great job.”

Angle led the Chiefs on an eight-play, 64-yard scoring drive late in the opening quarter, capped by a 32-yard bomb to the back left-corner of the end zone where Adams out-leaped a Warren defender to bring it down for six points.

Midway in the second period, Neff partially-deflected a Warren punt and Seth Sigler recovered at the Warren 35. On the first play from scrimmage, Angle found a wide-open Huntsberger down the right sideline and the senior spun away from a potential tackler at the 5-yard line for his first touchdown reception of the season.

The 21-yarder to Adams in the waning seconds of the second period was a thing of beauty. Angle scrambled to avoid an almost-certain sack, rolled right and saw Adams coming back toward the right sideline and hit him in stride near the goal line. That made it 28-0 Logan at halftime.

Angle led the Chieftains on a nine-play, 68-yard scoring drive — with all nine plays on the ground — to begin the third quarter. He scored on a 5-yard keeper to cap it off and put the game on ice. Morgan rounded out the scoring later in the stanza with a 21-yard TD run, and Ronnie Burcham was a perfect 6-for-6 on extra-point placements.

“I was pleased with all areas of the game... offense, defense, special teams,” Amyx said. “Pretty much workman-like. The kids knew we had a job to do and everybody got it done. Patrick had another great game, Clay had another great game and our offensive line did a great job blocking.

“Kelly really doesn’t want people looking at us and saying ‘if we stop this guy, or take this receiver away, we’re going to hurt them’... they (opposing defenses) can’t do that,” he added. “We have so many people who can do something with the football. The biggest guy they’re going to have to key on is number seven (Angle)... when they try to gear to stop him, Clay has a big game or we spread the ball around. We’re seeing some different things and we’re kind of evolving.”

Despite the 42-point loss, the Warriors continued their steady improvement under Pifer, now in his second year at the helm of the Warriors.

“We’re in tenth place in our computer rankings (region) and we have to get to eighth (to make the playoffs),” he said. “We know we had to win the Logan game, the Chillicothe game or the Ironton game and then maybe we could sneak in at 5-5. We’re getting better... but we’re not at the Logan level yet.”

After the game, the Logan seniors continued an LHS tradition by making their Senior Walk across the field, which usually signifies the final home game of their careers.

But these Chieftain seniors know that may not be the case this fall.

“I kind of didn’t want to walk tonight,” Morgan admitted, “but then maybe we thought that was being a little cocky (and) saying that we’re going to have (another) home game. That’s probably right... but I’m glad we walked. Hopefully, a couple more weeks and we’ll be back on our home field again (for a playoff game).”

Angle, who won’t stage his Senior Walk for another 12 months or so, agreed.

“Hopefully we’ll be back here (at Logan Chieftain Stadium) for week 11,” he said. “That would be real nice.”

Chiefs melt down Ironmen, 48-7

Sets up showdown at Chillicothe with league title on the line

By Craig Dunn

Logan Daily News Sports Editor

JACKSON — While it wasn't necessarily the turning point of the season, it was no doubt the turning point of Friday night's game. And, for the Logan Chieftains, it was indeed a Kodak moment.

Leading the host Jackson Ironmen by just a touchdown early in the second quarter, the Chiefs faced third-and-41 from their own 35-yard line. Long odds, at best, for any football team at any level.

But not for the Chieftains. Not on this night. Nor, for that matter, not this season, either.

Tailback Clay Morgan took a short pass in the right flat from quarterback Patrick Angle and quickly found plenty of open space under the bright lights of Jackson's Alumni Stadium. He zigged and zagged through the Jackson defense, taking the ball all the way to the Jackson 10-yard line, converting third-and-41 with 14 yards to spare.

Then, on the very next play, wide receiver Mason Mays took a short pass from Angle in the left flat, spun away from two potential tacklers, and scored the touchdown that broke the collective backs and hearts of the Ironmen.

The Chieftains were never threatened from that point and rolled to a 48-7 Southeastern Ohio Athletic League victory.

The Logan win officially set up an SEOAL championship showdown between the Chieftains (9-0 overall, 5-0 SEOAL) and Chillicothe Cavaliers (7-2, 6-0) next Friday at Chillicothe High School. The Cavs kept their end of the championship-game bargain by demolishing Warren, 57-7.

"I dreaded this game all week," admitted Logan coach Dale Amyx. "I knew that if we came out and played the way we think we're capable of playing that we could beat them... but I'm still in that old frame of mind — (playing) Jackson at Jackson — and it's hard to get out of that."

And for good reason. While they've struggled of late, the Ironmen (5-4, 2-4) have always been a tough foe for the Purple & White. However, due to the SEOAL's rotating schedule, the two teams hadn't met since 2005 — a narrow 14-7 Chieftain victory — not to mention Jackson was the last SEOAL team to beat Logan, which registered its 28th-consecutive league win in the process,

Ironically, the Chiefs were leading Friday's game 14-7 when they converted that third-and-41 situation.

“When you have athletes like that to throw it to... even on the sideline, you’re thinking ‘I don’t want to punt here’ because (the Ironmen had) just scored, but even when it was third-and-whatever I just felt confident we were going to do something and get a first down, or at least get close,” Amyx said. “Wow!”

“Wow!” aptly described most of what the Chieftains did in all phases of the game Friday night.

Not counting a drive cut short at the Jackson 41 as time expired in the first half, the Chieftains scored on their first six drives; Jackson, other than putting together a nifty 11-play, 75-yard touchdown drive late in the opening quarter, went three-and-out on five of its first six offensive series; the Chiefs scored a special-teams touchdown when Jordan Rutter brought back a third-quarter punt 68 yards to paydirt; Mays made an electrifying 65-yard punt return to set up Logan’s second touchdown, and Logan never punted the ball all night. Not once.

Not to mention that Angle completed 15-of-19 passes for 240 yards and two touchdowns and had scoring runs of 42 and 36 yards, and that Mays caught seven passes for 84 yards... and that Angle set an LHS single-season record for passing yardage (1,938) and that Mays set a single-season school record for pass receptions (45), breaking marks previously owned by Joey Conrad (2000) and B.J. Hughes (2004), respectively.

“Patrick was really on the money tonight with his passing, (the offensive line) gave him great protection, and the receivers did a great job,” Amyx praised. “Offensively we pretty much did what we wanted to do, and our special teams really helped us out a lot tonight with some great returns. Jordan Rutter and Mason Mays had great returns.

“It was fun to watch, and the kids executed well,” he added. “I told the kids coming down here that we needed to be clicking on all phases — offense, defense and special teams — and I think we did that tonight.”

They did. But the Ironmen, to their credit, gave the Chiefs all they could handle in the early going despite being without two starters who were suspended for the game earlier in the day.

Logan took the opening kickoff and drove 74 yards to a quick score. Angle hit Zach McDaniel on a 40-yard pass-and-run down the left sideline to set up the touchdown, a 1-yard run by Morgan, with 8:53 left in the opening stanza.

Then, after Logan held the Ironmen on their first series, Jackson’s Ryan Mullins boomed a 50-yard punt that Mays muffed at the 19-yard line. He scrambled back to the 10, where he picked it up, then scooted past the Jackson coverage down the right sideline and nearly went the distance. Only a shoestring tackle by Mullins at the Jackson 16 saved a touchdown.

Well, temporarily, anyway. Four plays later, Stephen Miller scored on a 1-yard plunge and

the Chiefs led 14-0 a little more than halfway through the opening period.

Jackson then came up with one of the best sustained drives by any team against the Chiefs this season.

Keeping the ball exclusively on the ground, quarterback Josh Brown and running backs Nathaniel Haller and Cody Huff steadily pushed the Chieftains back until 44 seconds were left in the opening period, when Brown faked a dive and instead ran the ball off the option, made a quick cutback and went 25 yards for a touchdown.

It was the first six-pointer allowed in the first half by the Chiefs this season, and it pulled the Ironmen within 14-7.

Amyx was asked if the touchdown served as a wake-up call to his team's defense.

"I think so," he said. Jackson's running game "was something we worked on all week and we weren't reading the right keys. I think we had a little bit of a letdown (after) we scored so quick and were up (14-0) on them so fast.

"I think a wake-up call would be a good way to put it," he added. "Once that happened, I think we pretty much put the hammer down on them defensively the rest of the night."

The Ironmen didn't cross midfield again until the second half, and by then the Chiefs had a six-touchdown lead.

More about that third-and-41 situation: officially, the scoring drive was 80 yards on 10 plays... but due to 25 yards in penalties, the Chiefs actually had to cover 105 yards and also had to overcome an 11-yard loss as the result of a high snap from center.

And it was actually second-and-41 when Angle went deep for senior wide receiver Zach Adams, who had his defender beat... but had to slow down when an official got in his way and couldn't make the catch. Logan may very well have tallied a 65-yard touchdown on the play.

Amyx could laugh about it later.

"I told that official 'get out of the way' and he just laughed at me," Amyx said with a laugh. "I think (Adams) would have at least caught the ball."

After another Jackson three-and-out, Angle scored on a 42-yard keeper, taking the ball up the middle, cutting down the right sideline and going the distance untouched to make it 28-7. Then, moments later, Angle hooked up with a wide-open Mays on a 30-yard scoring aerial for a 35-7 halftime bulge.

Rutter's nifty 68-yard punt return and another option-keeper TD run by Angle, this one for

36 yards with 4:32 left in the third quarter, closed out the scoring.

In addition to passing for 240 yards, Angle also led the Chiefs with 93 yards on seven carries and moved within striking distance of the school record for single-season pass completions and completion percentage. Jaushua Huntsberger caught three passes for 31 yards and McDaniel had two early catches for 56.

Logan once again had great balance yardage-wise — 240 passing and 161 rushing — for 401 total.

“(Offensive coordinator) Kelly (Wolfe) did a great job mixing it up,” Amyx said. “It’s going to be hard to defense us.”

Jackson actually out-gained the Chiefs on the ground, amassing 163 rushing yards, led by Brown with 60, Klay Arthur with 43 and Haller with 41.

However, Huff — Jackson’s leading rusher on the season — was hurt on his second carry of the night during the Jackson touchdown drive and did not return. He had missed the previous game and all but the opening play of the game two weeks previous at Ironton due to an injury.

So now there’s no more looking ahead to a championship-game showdown with Chillicothe. Championship week is officially here, and to the winner of next Friday’s game go the SEOAL spoils.

“Now we can finally concentrate on Chillicothe,” Amyx said. “They’re having a great season and they have a great team. This is what you want — both teams playing for a league championship, and both (teams) having playoff and home-field (playoff) implications. There’s a lot riding on it.”

The Chiefs probably clinched both a playoff berth and a home playoff game Friday night, but you get the picture.

“This is what you work for all year,” Amyx added. “This is what you dream about during two-a-days and what you talk to the kids about early in the season... about your goals and playing that last game for a league championship and a chance to be in the playoffs. We’ve earned (playing for the title). Now we have to go (to Chillicothe) and do it.”

Chiefs claim fifth-straight SEOAL football championship

By Craig Dunn

Logan Daily News Sports Editor

CHILLICOTHE — Late in the third quarter of a championship game that featured championship plays on both sides of the field all night long, it looked like Chillicothe quarterback Caleb Knights was on his way to the biggest play of all.

With his Cavaliers trailing 16-13, Knights took a keeper up the middle before cutting down the left sideline to find what appeared to be a wide-open lane to the Logan end zone 72 yards from the line of scrimmage.

And there's no catching the league's top football athlete in the open field, right? Right? Wrong.

Chieftain cornerback Mason Mays, not giving up on the play, chased down the Chillicothe standout five yards short of the goal line to preserve Logan's precarious lead. Then, four plays later, the Logan defense kept Knights out of the end zone on a fourth-and-a-foot quarterback sneak to completely snuff out the scoring threat.

There were more obstacles along the way, but the Chieftains had turned away the biggest threat to their dominance of Southeastern Ohio Athletic League football. They held on for a 23-13 victory Friday night at Chillicothe's Herrnstein Field for their fifth-consecutive league crown.

It also marked the 29th consecutive SEOAL win for the Chieftains, who earned the school's 24th all-time conference championship — four better than Jackson's 20 — for top honors in the league's 84-year history.

The 2008 Chiefs (10-0) thus finished a regular-season football schedule undefeated for the sixth time in school history, joining the 1934, 1964, 1977, 2000 and 2001 teams in reaching that rare achievement.

And the football fun isn't over — hopefully not by a long shot — as Logan hosts a Division II Region 7 playoff opponent still to be determined next Friday night in Logan Chieftain Stadium.

The Chiefs will enter the post-season tournament as the region's No. 3 seed and will host the No. 6 seed, which appears to be either Columbus Watterson (5-4) — if the Eagles knock off state powerhouse Youngstown Cardinal Mooney tonight — or Dublin Jerome (6-4) if they don't.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association will announce official playoff pairings Sunday morning.

But today's the time to celebrate one of the hardest-earned championships in school history. Nothing about this winner-take-all game was easy for either the Chieftains or a very talented and game Chillicothe (7-3) team which, despite the loss, will still host a Division III playoff game next weekend as well.

First off, the weather played the biggest role. It rained nearly all day in southeast Ohio, including Ross County, and the game was played in a steady rain until early in the second half.

"The weather was a big factor tonight," said Logan coach Dale Amyx. "I think it affected us quite a bit on fumbles and things like that... but it worked both ways."

The weather and field position pretty much spiked Logan to a quick 8-0 lead.

Backed up to the shadow of their own goal line, the Cavaliers were forced to punt and Logan's Seth Sigler blocked punter Drew Basil's kick through the back of the end zone for a safety with 9:52 left in the opening quarter.

Chieftain sophomore Zach McDaniel then returned the ensuing free kick almost untouched 64 yards for a score and an 8-0 Logan lead just 12 seconds later. Logan missed the extra point... but were the Chiefs on their way to winning in a rout?

Uh, no.

Both teams put together good drives later in the half — the Chiefs had a potential touchdown pass from quarterback Patrick Angle to fellow junior Jordan Rutter broken up at the goal line by Chillicothe's Casey Oates on a fourth-down play early in the second stanza — and the Chiefs took that 8-0 edge into the intermission.

But, boy, did things get interesting in the second half.

With field position meaning so much in a game between two evenly-matched teams played on wet, slippery turf, the Purple & White gave six points away on the opening series of the second half.

The Chiefs went away from their spread offense on the final series of the first half and the opening series of the second to try to play power, ball-possession football. But Chillicothe forced the Chiefs to punt.

With the ball on the Logan 29, a fourth-down snap from center sailed high over Angle's head. He tracked the ball down in the end zone, but made an inexperienced mistake and tried to kick it away. Chillicothe's Eric Young blocked it and Isaac Beverly recovered in the end zone to draw the Cavaliers within 8-6 with 10:02 left in the third period.

"We got the ball back at the end of the first half and got pinned deep," said Logan offensive coordinator Kelly Wolfe. "We went to the base (offense) because we didn't want to make

any mistakes there (and) got a couple first downs. We all felt we matched up well with them and we could push them around a bit and run the ball.

“We gave it a couple of attempts and it worked a little bit, but it wasn’t getting what we needed done,” he added. “So we went back to what we do best. That’s what we told the kids... we tried it, it didn’t work, and we’re going back to what we do best.

“Nobody panicked. Everything was hard tonight... but our kids kept playing and we gave ourselves a chance to make plays. That’s what we did.”

Angle began atoning for the miscue by blocking Basil’s extra-point kick — the first PAT missed by a Logan opponent all season — to keep the score 8-6.

“At first I didn’t think they were that close to me (and) I thought I could get it off,” Angle said afterward. “I probably should have just kicked it out of the end zone for a safety. That was my fault. I’ll learn from it... hopefully it won’t ever happen again.”

Chillicothe’s defense forced the Chieftains to punt on the ensuing series and the Cavaliers needed just four plays to score the lead touchdown.

Knights (147 yards on 23 carries) took a keeper around left end for a 15-yard scoring jaunt and, with Basil booting the PAT, the Chieftains trailed 13-8 — their first deficit since Lancaster kicked a field goal against them on the very first series of the season opener way back in late August.

“I was worried — I’m not going to lie about it. After they took the lead I was kind of nervous but I still thought we could pull it out,” said senior offensive and defensive lineman Cary Maclaughlin, who has played such a vital role on both sides of the ball for the Chieftains. “But when we get down I just think I’m going to be even more intense and try to fire up everybody else. I’m elected captain... that’s my job and that’s what I try to do.”

Whatever he and his teammates did certainly worked, because the Chiefs — who had been behind for all of five minutes and three seconds all season — only let that total reach 5:25.

Mays, a big-play man all night, took the kickoff 43 yards straight up the middle to put the ball in good field position at the LHS 48. Angle then connected with Mays over the middle on the very first play and, with senior split end Jaushua Huntsberger throwing a terrific screen block to keep a potential tackler at bay, took the ball down the right sideline 52 yards for a touchdown... just 22 seconds after the Chiefs had relinquished the lead.

“I give credit to my teammates,” Mays said. “They did a great job blocking. I knew we needed to make a play, and I was able to get it done.”

Angle then connected with McDaniel in the right flat for a critical two-point conversion that gave the Chiefs the lead by a field goal’s margin, 16-13.

Two Chillicothe plays later, Knights set sail toward the Logan goal line and the go-ahead score. Mays was having none of it.

“I could have sworn we had him in the backfield, but he slipped through somehow,” Mays said. “He’s a great athlete. He broke free... and I wasn’t going to stop till I got him.”

Knights may have let up just a bit as he neared the goal line, not thinking anyone would catch him. But when Mays hauled him down from behind at the Logan 5-yard line, it was a stunning turn of events.

Three plays got the Cavaliers about a foot from the Logan goal line and, instead of trying for a chip-shot, game-tying field goal, the Cavs went for the Chiefs’ jugular on fourth down. But Knights slipped a bit on the exchange from center and linebacker Zach Adams knocked him down short of the goal line to give Logan the ball on downs.

“The kid’s a great runner, no doubt,” Adams said. “That goal-line stand was the definition of the game and that turned it all around. We figured out how to tackle him.”

However, the Chiefs were not out of the woods by any stretch of the imagination. The game reached the end of the third quarter with the Chiefs still in danger after two running plays netted nothing and two false-start penalties kept them bottled up on their own goal line.

On the opening play of the fourth quarter, Angle rolled deep to his left in the back of the end zone — precariously-close to the back end line — and hit tight end Jon Neff with a pass around the 15-yard line. Although he stepped out bounds at the Logan 40, the play continued and he was caught over 95 yards away near the Chillicothe 5-yard line. But the rest of the play was called back.

“That was huge,” Angle said. “They thought we were running, they were all stacked inside (and) all my options were open. Jon was wide open, Ralph Robinson was wide open coming across the middle, and I just hit Jon Neff.”

“Kelly told me he was going to run that,” Amyx said. “I said ‘okay... we’re not getting anything with the QB sneaks.’ I was all for it. It was a great call by Kelly.

“I think we turned the ball over right after that, but that got us out of a hole big-time,” he added. “That may have been the play of the game for us on offense. On defense it was hard to count how many big plays we had.”

Oates picked off an Angle pass that was tipped by a Logan receiver on the next play, but at least the Chiefs were out of the shadow of their own goal line. The Cavaliers then drove to the Logan 22, where the series stalled, and brought out Basil for a potential game-tying field goal.

But the snap from center was high and Basil slipped on the wet grass. His kick fell a few

yards short of the crossbar, enabling the Chieftains to dodge another bullet.

Chillicothe still had one last round of ammunition to fire as Logan fumbled the ball away two plays later and the Cavs took over on the Logan 37 with 8:04 remaining.

Two running plays put Chillicothe at the Logan 28, facing third-and-one, before the Cavs were called for a five-yard illegal procedure penalty — and the Chiefs gave those five yards right back by jumping offsides.

But Knights fumbled the snap on third down, losing a yard, then Young was stopped a yard short on fourth-and-two and Logan took over on downs.

Angle then showed great determination in leading the Chieftains to a game-clinching insurance touchdown.

He took a keeper for 25 yards, crossing into Chillicothe territory, and picked up two more rushing first downs during the drive as the clock ticked down. He also hit Rutter with a key pass and connected with Clay Morgan in the right flat for a huge 14-yard gain and another first down.

Finally, Morgan put the icing on the championship cake by scoring on a 1-yard off-tackle run with 2:33 remaining, and Ronnie Burcham drilled the PAT kick for a 10-point lead. Mays then picked off a long third-and-14 pass by Knights, ending the Cavaliers' final threat.

“What was good is that the kids never panicked, even when momentum was on (Chillicothe's) side,” Amyx praised. “I never saw anybody hanging their head or anything like that. They knew we had to go out there and get to work... and they did.

“They executed on both sides of the ball and we finally got the offense going and kept the ball in our hands and not theirs,” he added. “And that (last) score was big. We drove down and scored and ate a bunch of clock. With the game on the line, how many times did our kids come through tonight?”

Plenty of times.

“That goal-line stand (and) those two fourth downs,” Amyx said, and the game “could have went the other way very easily. If Mason doesn't make that tackle (and) if we don't make that goal-line stand, it's a different game.”

“It was a battle,” Maclaughlin said. “That Knights is a good, good quarterback and he's so shifty. But we did really good shutting him down.”

Make no mistake about it, SEOAL championships don't get old. Not for Amyx, not for the coaching staff, not for the fans, and certainly not for the players.

Obviously, not all of them have been in uniform for all of the last five titles. But they are quite aware of how much blood, sweat and tears go into winning a championship.

“Man, our hard work has paid off,” Maclaughlin said with a huge grin. “We practice really, really, really hard. I get home and I’m exhausted! They’re hard practices — and it pays off!”

“I’m just overwhelmed with emotion... I’m still crying,” Sigler said in the locker room afterward. “There’s nothing better. Time after time our defense came through and held them. It shows our character as a team... that’s what a championship team should be.”

Adams agreed.

“It shows our ability to overcome anything and we’re going to keep on doing it,” he said.

“Everybody had to contribute to this win tonight,” noted Wolfe. “Every little thing mattered. That last drive Jordan Rutter had a big catch, broke a tackle and got us into a third-and-short situation to keep a drive alive... things like that. Everybody had to contribute tonight... everybody had a part.”

Amyx has now coached the Chieftains to 12 SEOAL championships in his 19 years at the helm. While every title is special to him, he also knows how hard the Cavs pushed his team in this winner-take-all season finale.

“That Zanesville game (a 16-14 week-six win) was fairly close, but this was a big test tonight,” Amyx said. “Not that I want a game like this every week, but it’s a good game right before the playoffs. That was a playoff-type game out there tonight.”

“Tonight was a team effort, the kids played their hearts out and they weren’t going to be denied,” he added. “They wanted that league championship and they wanted to be 10-0. This was a tough one earned. Chillicothe’s an outstanding football team with a lot of weapons. I feel fortunate we were able to beat them.”

Now the Chiefs play the waiting game to find out their opening-round playoff foe.

“We have a new season starting next week,” Adams said. “We’re going for 15-0... we’re not stopping this train.”

The Chiefs have already attained three of their pre-season goals: an SEOAL championship, an undefeated regular season and a playoff berth. Now they want more.

“(Goal) number four is take (the playoffs) one game at a time,” Amyx said. “The (regular) season’s over. Next week is a new season and we want to start 1-0.

Logan Daily News correspondent Spencer Waugh contributed to this story.

Chiefs earn first-ever home playoff victory

Advance to regional semifinals

by defeating Dublin Jerome 23-7; unbeaten Louisville next

By Craig Dunn

Logan Daily News Sports Editor

LOGAN — Players and coaches who make up the immediate Logan Chieftain football family didn't necessarily share in the playoff excitement that enveloped Logan Chieftain Stadium Friday night.

And that was just fine with them. The Chieftains fully expected to be in the state Division II playoffs when they got under way Friday night, and they fully expect to achieve plenty of success along the way.

They dispatched visiting Dublin Jerome 23-7 for the Chieftains' first-ever home playoff victory and for just the third post-season win in school history.

Yet while that is all well and good for the undefeated (11-0) Chieftains, they have bigger fish to fry.

"We got them out of that mode about being excited just being in the playoffs... I've been preaching that all week," Logan coach Dale Amyx said afterward. "I said to them 'you expected to be here... we expected you to be here... and everybody in the stands expected you to be here. This is another game, and we need to win and move on.

"They bought into that," he added. "There was no (celebratory) soaking the coaches or anything like that after the game. They all feel this is the first step (in the playoffs) and now we have to take another step."

That next step is about as big as it gets. The Chieftains, seeded third in Region 7 and ranked No. 5 in the final state Associated Press poll, play second-seeded and second-ranked Louisville (also 11-0), picked by many to win the state title, next Friday in a regional semifinal. The neutral site for that game will be announced Sunday.

Dublin Jerome (6-5), which squeaked its way into the region's No. 6 seed despite a mediocre overall record, gave the Chiefs all they could handle most of the game.

The Celtics even became the first team to score on the Purple & White in the second quarter all season when Connor Rosenbaum capped off an 11-play, 73-yard scoring drive with a 7-yard run at the 10:39 mark.

That touchdown and subsequent extra point drew the Celtics within 13-7, and the Chiefs knew they were in for a tight game.

"We came into this game knowing we could win," said senior defensive end Jon Neff. Jerome "played some pretty good teams in the (Ohio Capital Conference) around

Columbus, and when you get into the playoffs anything can happen.”

What happened Friday night was that the Logan defense, with Neff recording three quarterback sacks and chasing Jerome signal-caller Kevin Jackson practically down nearby state Route 328, shut the Celtics out the rest of the way.

Jerome had a couple more scoring opportunities, but Logan forced six punts, stopped two drives on downs and picked off a pass on the Celtics’ final nine offensive series. All told, Jerome punted the ball nine times Friday night.

“(Jackson) is a great runner and he got outside me a few times — he made me get yelled at when coach Amyx ripped me a couple times — but I did what I could,” Neff said.

“(Assistant) coach (Pat) Walsh told me to get some pressure on him, and I tried.”

And he succeeded. He also had plenty of help from fellow defenders Cary Maclaughlin, Stephen Miller, Zach Adams and Michael Snider, among others.

“Our defense just played great,” Amyx beamed. “We bailed ourselves out holding them on a fourth down (and with an) interception, and I think holding that team to seven points is big. The defense has just done a great job, especially the last two weeks.

“(Jerome) had good coverage and did some things we hadn’t seen,” he added. “That was probably the first team we played this year, maybe other than Chillicothe or Zanesville, that had enough skill to match us.”

Logan tailback Clay Morgan ripped off a 60-yard run on the Chiefs’ second possession of the game to get the Purple & White deep into Jerome territory before quarterback Patrick Angle went 26 yards with a keeper to the Jerome 2-yard line.

Morgan then bulled off right tackle for a touchdown with 6:18 left in the opening period to give Logan the lead.

“We went in thinking we could run the ball and that’s what we came out doing,” Amyx noted. “Then they began putting more (defenders) in the box and that kind of hurt us, so we went outside and hit the quicker passes and started moving the ball that way.”

It looked like the Chiefs might be on the verge of breaking the game open when they went 75 yards on nine plays to paydirt on their next possession.

Angle hit Jaushua Huntsberger with a big 29-yard pass play down the right sideline to get the Chiefs into scoring position. The duo hooked up again moments later, with Huntsberger making a tough catch in traffic at the goal line, to complete a 5-yard scoring play.

Logan led 13-0 with 1:51 to play in the opening period.

The Jerome defense stiffened the rest of the half, however. After the Celtics pulled within

13-7 and then forced a Logan punt, Miller and Neff snuffed out a Jerome drive by sacking Jackson deep in Dublin territory.

Logan's punt-return team then pressured Jerome punter Eric Ruhl into a 3-yard punt and the Chiefs took over at the Jerome 18. But they couldn't punch the ball across, however, and settled for Ronnie Burcham's 31-yard field goal with 1:27 left in the half.

They took that subsequent 16-7 lead into the locker room at the intermission when Huntsberger picked off a Jackson pass at the Jerome 30-yard line in the waning seconds of the half.

"I've been waiting all year for someone to start picking on me," said Huntsberger, listed generously as a 5-foot-10 cornerback. "I'm the smallest guy out there. I figured when the playoffs came that would probably happen."

On offense "we felt pretty confident we could do most of the things we wanted to do (but their defense adjusted really well," he continued. "We ran the ball well on them early and they adjusted. We tried to go back to our passing game and their defense did a great job stopping us.

"But our offensive line got back into gear, Patrick and Clay ran the ball great, and our receivers made a lot big plays."

So did the defense.

"With the way our defense is playing, (if) we get a decent lead on a team we'll be able to seal the deal and get the job done," said Amyx. "I like the way our team kept its composure, even after (Jerome) scored.

"We were able to come back with a nice drive and kick a field goal," he added. "That's a two-score difference... and with the way our defense was playing, that was big."

The two teams combined for four punts, one Logan turnover and one big Chieftain fourth-down defensive stand during a scoreless third quarter.

After Jerome's Allan Wagner picked off an Angle pass and returned it to the Logan 45-yard line, the Celtics worked their way to the Logan 20, where they were faced with fourth-and-2. But the Logan defense stopped Steve Mehrer inches short of the first down — it looked like the officials spotted the ball short of where he appeared to go down — and Logan took over.

Jerome got to the Logan 30 late in the quarter but was hurt by a 10-yard holding penalty and never really threatened again. Jackson threw 10 consecutive incomplete passes at one juncture of the second half and finished 11-for-39 on the night.

Meanwhile, the Chiefs finally started a clinching touchdown drive late in the third period,

going 86 yards on eight plays and scoring a little more than a minute into the final stanza.

With the ball at the Jerome 22, Angle threw high and deep for Mason Mays in the left corner of the end zone. Mays made a leaping catch — his school record-tying 13th TD reception of the season — to put the game away.

Morgan finished with 127 yards rushing on 19 carries while Angle completed 18-of-31 passes for 206 yards, hitting six different receivers in the process and continuing his streak of throwing a TD pass in each game this season. The Chiefs finished close to their season average with 376 total yards.

To a man, the Chieftains know they have their work cut out for them next week against Louisville, last year's state runner-up, which has scored 415 points this season, including 53 in the first half alone Friday night against Independence.

And also, to a man, they also exude not only confidence but a desire to get back onto the practice field and start making preparations.

“We're 11-0. We want to be 12-0, and (the players) want to keep it going... they know they get another week of hard practice,” Amyx said. “They're excited about doing something only one other Logan team has done in history, and that's get to the second round.

“We got into some tough spots tonight and had to dig our way out,” he added. “The game wasn't in hand like we've had in some games. We had to fight through it. But that's playoff football, and it gets tougher and tougher every week.

“We've told them from day one ‘your goal is to be state champions.’ Our motto — stealing it from Ron Hinton at Amanda-Clearcreek — is ‘if you're in it, you can win it.’ “

Neff and Huntsberger both agreed.

“We're going to come in Monday ready to work,” Neff said. “The coaches will have film ready and we'll be ready to go.”

“I'm really proud to be a part of this team and a part of this program,” Huntsberger said. “Eleven-and-0... that's awesome. Now we have to keep it going. We know Louisville is a great team and we'll have to come ready to play next week. We'll have to study the film hard.

“But this is why we put all the time in during two-a-days and put in all the hard work during the off-season,” he added. “For next week's game.”

Chiefs season ends with heartbreaking 7-0 loss

Offense sputters in rainy conditions

By Craig Dunn
Logan Daily News Sports Editor

ZANESVILLE — Many high school football pundits expect the Louisville Leopards to win the state Division II championship.

But to do so, the Leps still have to vanquish three opponents... and you can bet your bottom dollar any and all future Louisville foes will line up get their hands on a video of Friday night's regional semifinal game against the Logan Chieftains.

That's because the Logan defense, which has been outstanding all season, was stellar Friday night. The Chiefs held the high-octane Leopard offense to a scant four first downs — including just one in the second half — and under 200 yards of total offense.

However, because the Louisville defense proved equal to the task by forcing seven Logan turnovers and put far more pressure on Logan quarterback Patrick Angle than he or his teammates had seen all season, it all came down to which team would make a big play. That team would be Louisville.

The Leopards made a 74-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Neal Seaman to end Brandon Mathie early in the second quarter stand up for a harrowing 7-0 victory before a crowd of over 6,000 fans at Zanesville High School's Sulsberger Stadium.

Louisville (12-0), a state finalist last season, gets a regional final rematch with Columbus DeSales (12-0) next Friday night back at Sulsberger Stadium in a meeting of the top two teams both in Region 7 and in the state. DeSales finished first and Louisville second in the final Associated Press poll of the regular season.

Meanwhile, the Chiefs saw one of the most successful seasons in school history come to an end at 11-1.

“The big difference was their defensive line against our offensive line — we couldn't do anything all night,” said Logan coach Dale Amyx. “We couldn't run the ball, and when they came after us we couldn't stop them.”

That was the Leopards' game plan, according to their head coach.

“Our number-one goal was to take their running game away and make them a complete passing team — which is what we did in the second half — then we pinned our ears back and tried to send more (defenders) than they could block,” Louisville coach Paul Farrah stated. “I don't think they've seen a defense as quick as ours, and that was the difference.”

And so it was. For the first time in several years, the Chiefs were held to negative rushing yardage (-13) and, as Farrah said, had to depend totally upon their spread offense and their defense.

Angle was rushed, harried and harassed all night long. Not only did the Leopards sack Angle five times (for 47 yards' worth of losses), but 14 Logan plays went for negative yardage, 20 others were incomplete passes, and Louisville intercepted five Logan aerials.

The Leopards threw Angle for a 15-yard loss on the Chiefs' very first play from scrimmage to set the tone on a rainy, wind-swept night at Sulsberger Stadium. Logan never crossed midfield until the final minute of the third quarter.

Meanwhile, with the exception of one fateful play, the Chiefs bottled up Seaman and his excellent corps of receivers all night.

Facing third-and-four from his own 26-yard line, Seaman went deep down the right sideline for Mathie. A Logan defender bit on the play and tried to get back but couldn't, and Mathie made the catch in stride and went the distance with 9:59 left in the second quarter.

That play resulted, statistically, the Leopards' second first down of the game. They would earn no more the rest of the night; their last two came as the result of Logan penalties. That's how good the Logan defense was Friday night... with or without downpours and wind gusts.

“It came down to one play,” Amyx said. “We're in man coverage all night — it's what we've done all year. You live by it and you die by it. (Mathie) got a step on (the Logan defender).”

Still, even at that, no one expected a 7-0 game.

“I really thought we could score,” Amyx said. “I didn't think we could stop them, but maybe slow them down. I don't know how much the weather had an effect, but our kids just played lights out.

“Our philosophy was to be aggressive and I think that helped us all night long,” he added. “With man coverage, you're playing with a double-edged sword... eventually, if you don't play smart, something's going to bite you and it happened on that one play.”

“We ran a stop-and-go and hit (Mathie) on it,” Farrah revealed. “We run the stop to Brandon a lot, and if we see the corners are going to be nosy, we're going to try to pump and go... and if (Mathie) is not open (Seaman) is taught to throw it out of bounds.

“The wind and the weather was tough for both teams,” he added, “but it's like I tell the kids, when we play in this weather it's like playing on Thanksgiving with your family at home.”

There was method to the Chiefs' defensive madness, and to be sure it's what future Louisville foes will want to copy.

“Other than stay in our man coverage — which is something we always do — we sent a lot of people,” he said. “We put in a couple fronts we haven't ran all year... we ran a 6-1 (front) and we crossed both inside tackles, and that gave them trouble all night. A lot of crosses up front, a lot of blitzes, and we tried to mix it up as much as we could.”

It worked. After scoring their touchdown, the Leopards missed a 34-yard field goal attempt on their next series after picking off an Angle pass — Logan's Seth Sigler deflected the kick — and came up empty on their last 10 possessions of the night.

Not that Louisville didn't have some chances. Twice the Leopards dropped a potential touchdown pass — once in the end zone, and once when a wide-open receiver bobbled, and then dropped, a fourth-quarter bomb well behind the Logan defensive secondary — and one other time the Chiefs got a fingernail on a pass into the end zone that threw the receiver off just enough to drop it.

The Chiefs came up empty on all 15 of their offensive possessions on the night and had few good scoring chances.

Jon Neff took a catch-and-run from Angle in the waning seconds of the third period 41 yards to the Louisville 38-yard line — marking the Chiefs' first penetration into Louisville territory — before a sack ultimately ended the threat.

When Mason Mays returned a Louisville punt 22 yards to the Louisville 37 midway through the final period, the Chiefs began their best drive of the night.

Angle hit Zach McDaniel for a 16-yard gain before three-straight passes fell incomplete, the last a deep ball that Bobby Swigart batted away from Mays deep in the corner of the end zone.

But on fourth-and-10, Angle hit Jaushua Huntsberger on the right side and the senior made a nice catch before being brought down at the Louisville 9.

However, on the ensuing play, Angle's pass over the middle was picked off by Swigart at the goal line to end the threat. Swigart and Mathie both picked off two passes on the evening, and this one was a killer.

After forcing Louisville to punt — the Leopards did manage their only first down of the second half when Logan jumped offside as Louisville was preparing to punt on fourth-and-five — the Chiefs took over with 3:27 to play. Two plays lost nine yards, then the Chiefs called a timeout to set up a gadget play but Swigart picked off a long option pass by Neff at midfield.

Louisville still couldn't seal the deal with a first down and the Chieftain defense

forced Mathie to punt. His ninth kick of the night rolled dead at the Logan 12 with 40 seconds remaining.

The Chiefs made the Leopards squirm. Out of timeouts, they went with short sideline passes to Huntsberger, who caught three balls as Logan worked its way to its own 36-yard line, then Angle threw a ball over the middle that Neff somehow juggled and caught and turned it into a 26-yard gain to the Louisville 38.

Angle spiked the ball to stop the clock with 4.4 seconds to play, then his last-second desperation pass was knocked down by a Louisville defensive back inside the 10-yard line.

“They have a great football team,” Farrah praised of the Chieftains. “We were able to get to the quarterback, hurry him and pick them off five times, and that was the difference in the game.”

For a team averaging 38 points per game, seven was enough on this rainy night.

“Our kids made plays,” Farrah said. “We didn't make the plays on offense, so we might as well do it on the defense, and our kids did.”

“It's like I said last week: (the Chiefs are) a mirror image of us — they're quick, they're fast, they have great skill (and) their quarterback is really a super football player. We knew that coming in and that this was going to be a hard matchup for us,” he added. “We respect everybody, but we don't fear anybody. This was a great game.”

Amyx agreed.

“It was a great football game between two great football teams,” he said, “and I can see them going on to win (the state title). I'm very proud of the way our kids played on defense — I think we shut them down better than anybody who played them, but offensively we really couldn't get anything going.”

“The story of the game was their defensive line against our offensive line,” Amyx added. “Their defensive line was more athletic than our offensive line, more physical. When they wanted to get to the quarterback they pretty much did. We had guys open many times tonight but their pressure was just too much.”

Angle still finished 19-of-38 passing for 194 yards, with Huntsberger catching six balls for 48 yards to lead the way. Meanwhile, take away Louisville's touchdown play, the Leopards managed just 116 yards of total offense. Seaman was just 6-of-20 passing for 123 yards — 49 without that big play.

Problem is, that big play counts.

“To hold a team like that to seven points...,” Amyx said, his words trailing off. “I at least would have liked to have gotten to overtime and see what would have happened.”

“I think we were playing behind the (field position) eight-ball all night long,” he continued. “In the second half, we finally got ahead of it a little bit and got that one drive going. All year long we've taken advantage of that and scored, but this time we didn't. Obviously we hadn't played a defense like that, either, and I have to say that's one great defense.

“They're probably saying the same thing, but they had that one big play.”

“If Louisville is a state-championship football team,” Amyx was asked, “what does that make the Chieftains?”

The 19-year Chieftain head coach thought about that for a moment.

“I think you'll see this (Louisville) team go on and win (the state title) — and there's no doubt in my mind we could have, too,” he said. “Had we gotten by these guys, I think we could have, and I think the kids believe that. Hopefully that's something to build for the future... they know they can play with a team like that.

“(Louisville's) goal was to get back where they were last year and win (the state championship), and ours was to get there for the first time,” he added. “It's a heartbreaker, but that's the playoffs. You're either going to win a state championship, or you're going to lose somewhere down the line.”

Amyx knows the loss will sting the players and coaches for a little while.

“It's kind of a bummer, but I think in a day or so it will kick in... now we can look back and see what we accomplished this year,” he said. “An undefeated (regular) season, SEOAL champions (and making the) second round of the playoffs.

“It'll be disappointing for awhile,” he added. “It always is. But there's a lot of pride here.”

And Chieftain Nation is most certainly proud as well.