

SPORTS



JESSE TINSLEY/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Mead running back Kannon Katzer (20) celebrates after a touchdown that iced the win over University High on Tuesday.

Mead marches to district

Panthers defeat University in three-way tiebreaker after Titans knocked out LC

By Dave Nichols
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

The players were at Albi Stadium on Tuesday, as were the coaching staffs. The officials, scorekeepers and media were there. Even the cheerleaders were there. Student fans? Parents? Not so much.

A 4 p.m. start time made it tough on anyone not directly involved in the games to attend the Greater Spokane League 4A minigame tiebreakers between Mead, Lewis and Clark and University.

The stands filled up a little as the games went on, but it still was a peculiar setting for what amounted to playoff football.

Regardless, the games went on.

Kannon Katzer culminated a long drive with a 32-yard touchdown run on fourth down and Mead topped University – which beat Lewis and Clark in the early game – 17-7 to earn the third 4A seed to the district playoffs.

“Our squad hasn’t been in the playoffs since 2009, so it was special for our guys,” Mead coach Benji Sonnichsen said.

“It was a dogfight until the end, but we came together,” Mead quarterback Ryan Chan said.

The format was simple: LC faced U-Hi in two 10-minute halves. The winner took on Mead in another 20-minute game for the third and final seed to the 4A District 8 playoffs and a date against Richland (9-0), the Mid-Columbia Conference

champ, on Friday at Edgar Brown Stadium in Pasco at 7 p.m.

It’s the first time since 2009 – and seventh in league history – that a three-way tiebreaker was necessary to determine the final playoff spot.

The GSL used to use a “Kansas tiebreaker,” in which the teams play in a setting similar to college football’s overtime, trading possessions. But the league decided to go to minigames in an effort to simulate regular games as closely as possible.

Mead, host of the second game because of a coin flip, took the opening kick and systematically went the length of the field and scored on Katzer’s 19-yard touchdown run.

U-Hi moved the ball into Mead’s territory on the ground, but Terrell Sanders coughed it up on an inside run and Mead’s Jackson Matuszeck recovered at the 29.

Mead moved the ball to the U-Hi 23 with 4 seconds left in the half and called timeout to discuss the play. The Panthers opted for a 40-yard field-goal attempt and Eli Eldridge nailed it with leg to spare for a 10-0 lead at halftime.

On its first possession of the second half, U-Hi faced fourth-and-8 from its 40. Gavin Wolcott faked a pitch and hit Kye Duplessis on a streak for a 60-yard touchdown catch to pull the Panthers within 10-7.

But Mead responded, fighting through

a couple of penalties to set up fourth-and-5 on the U-Hi 32. Katzer busted one to the outside and rumbled 32 yards for touchdown to make it 17-7 with 2:51 left.

Katzer ended up with 126 yards rushing in 20 minutes of play.

University will face Southridge at Lampson Field in Kennewick on Friday in a Week 10 crossover matchup.

University 21, Lewis and Clark 14:

In the first game, the Titans played ball-control offense and beat the Tigers.

On the fourth play, Terrell Sanders ran off-tackle, then cut inside and took it 58 yards for a touchdown and a 7-0 Titans lead.

The Tigers marched the ensuing possession 67 yards on nine plays, with the benefit of a pass interference penalty on third-and-short, culminating with Michael Flaherty’s 5-yard keeper for a touchdown to tie it.

U-Hi forced LC to punt on its first possession of the second half, and then pounded its way up the field, going 74 yards in eight plays. Hunter Gregerson went up the middle for a 7-yard touchdown run and put the Titans up 14-7 with 5:32 left.

LC went for it on fourth-and-8 from its 22 and an incomplete pass gave U-Hi a short field. Two plays later, Gavin Wolcott scored on a quarterback sneak and the extra point made it 21-7 with 3:50 left.

LC will wrap up its season in a crossover against Walla Walla on Friday at 6 p.m.

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