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CENTRAL VALLEY ROUTS SKYLINE IN 4A QUARTERS

Bears defense shuts down 7-time champs

By Mike Vlahovich

FOR THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

An early mistake by visiting Skyline proved a harbinger of things to come Saturday in their State 4A quarterfinal football game hosted by the Central Valley Bears.

Midway through the first quarter, the Spartans punted. A special teams defender touched the football and, apparently thinking the ball was dead, left it as he ran to the sideline. It was left for Jase Edwards to pick up the free ball and run 22 yards for the game's first touchdown.

It was the first, but by no means final gaffe for the state perennials who made their 15th state appearance since 2000, including 10 finals appearances and seven state titles.

They were intercepted twice leading to scores, muffed a punt for another and by the time the carnage was over, the clock was left running for several minutes of CV's 41-0 rout.

"Our defense did what it's been doing all year," CV coach Ryan Butner. "I mean they're just so resilient. They got the opportunity and put us in great field position."

That field position was so good that after quarterback Grant Hannan raced 84 yards on a read option to put the Bears ahead

17-0 one minute into the third quarter, the floodgates opened.

"His job is to take what the defense gives them," Butner said. "He pulled the ball out a couple of times and hit the gap. He found that other gear."

An interception by Jacob Lewis led to a short drive and field goal for a 10-0 lead after one quarter. The Bears had first possession in the third quarter.

A huge kickoff return set up the Bears and CV increased the lead with Ryan Harper's slicing burst 1½ minutes into the third quarter and it was 24-0. A sack of the Skyline quarterback Joseph Green forced the team to punt from its 16-yard line.

A 42-yard march capped by a 13-yard run by Hannan made it

31-0. Following the muffed punt, Hannan hit Kyle Parkman on the first play of the fourth quarter. Landon Rehkow invoked the mercy rule with his 34-yard field goal.

"We didn't get a ton pressure on him, but our secondary was just in the right spots," Butner said about Green. "Our defensive line is incredible, but I can say over the last few weeks our back seven have studded up."

Having Hannan at quarterback hasn't hurt. The two-dimensional senior was expected to split time at QB, but after Matt Gabbert was injured to begin the season (he took a few snaps in this game), Hannan became the man.

Hannan rushed for 273 yards

and scored eight times on the ground in the GSL. He was second in passing with 1,213 yards on 66 percent completions and a dozen TD completions and was second in total offense with 1,486 yards.

"We've got so many options in our offense they have to cover," said Hannan, ticking off the names of his targets. "Sooner or later, something's going to open up. We certainly thought it was going to be a hard fought game."

Then he turned to the defense.

"Holding them to zero points, that's amazing."

Next week it's off to last year's 4A runner-up, Richland, a 28-21 victor at Gonzaga Prep, with a berth in Gridiron Classic at stake.