***By Pastor Vince Carrig***
***Sports Writer***

Nick Turner plowed through the Lions' defense and heavy snow for 240 yards and five touchdowns and Jeremy Hagan returned a punt for a touchdown as the Plainsmen found easy sledding in Morrill in their 47-8 win Friday night.

The teams played with four to six inches of snow on the field and in a blizzard throughout the game. Volunteers constantly needed to shovel along the field lines every five yards so players could see the markings.

Turner took the opening kickoff and five of the Plainsmen's first six carries to make the score 6-0 immediately. His focus on ball security and his balance helped him rip off consecutive runs of 20 and 41 yards right away.

"Nick had a lot of room to run because some things were getting done up front; his blocking did a good job. In a game where nobody was having a lot of success hanging onto the ball, he hung onto the ball, and he did not slip and fall down when he got into the open field; he was patient behind his blocking and did a good job," Plainsmen Head Coach Chip Kay said of the team's leading rusher after the game.

He did more than just [hit the holes]; he did a lot extra and took advantage of the things he could. He did an amazing job," Coach Kay continued about Turner.

Holding onto the frozen, wet, slippery football challenged both teams. Combined, the teams fumbled nine times. One time in the fourth quarter, they actually exchanged consecutive fumbles.

The Plainsmen defense rendered the Lions' offense completely ineffective. Quarterback James Burford completed zero passes in his eight attempts, Skylar Manville led Morrill in rushing with just 26 yards, and the Lions managed only three first downs.

Alex Johnston did most of the heavy lifting to get the Plainsmen their second score, blocking Taylor Lackey's punt at the Morrill 10-yard line. Nick Turner covered those yards in two runs for his second TD, then Johnston caught a screen pass from Quinton Hite to complete a two-point conversion and make the score 14-0.

The Lions' defense actually put its only points on the board, courtesy of a gift-wrapped Christmas present: tackle Trevor Schneider fell on a Plainsmen fumble in the end zone for instant points.

After Turner's third touchdown and a 20-8 Plainsmen lead, Jeremy Hagan stepped into the spotlight with a 42-yard punt return for a touchdown. Taking the ball in the center of the field and starting out right, Jeremy Hagan made Codi Ulrich and Manville miss as he reversed field toward the left. He outran punter Lackey and entered the end zone at its left corner. "Once I got by the kicker I knew I could make it," the younger Hagan said of his exciting touchdown run.

Thanks to Turner, the Plainsmen's lead snowballed to 35 points, triggering the continuous clock. This proved valuable to every breathing creature enduring the reported 20-degree temperature and 8-degree wind chill; it shortened the game time to about two hours flat.

Kye Kurkowski burglarized Morrill's backfield, frequently breaking in and stalking Lions runners to record 4.5 tackles for loss-of-yardage.

"It was a better defensive game for me than usual–that was nice," Kurkowski said.

Turner converted two fourth downs in the second quarter, including one for an 11-yard touchdown. Facing a fourth-and-four, Turner blasted Morrill for 19 yards to set up a "keeper"

touchdown for Hite.

Overall, Perkins County won the game "in the trenches," where offensive linemen opened holes for Turner and Johnston, and defensive linemen kept big fullback Larry Uttecht within reach.

"Kye [Kurkowski] and Eric [Hagan] did a really good job on the strong side, and Vinny Ross continues to do an outstanding job every week as a freshman at tackle. He and Max Jones did a good job on the inside, and on the weak side Riley Kosmicki did a good job at outside linebacker," Coach Kay said.

"We saw one of the better games out of Austin Gaston at defensive end. Looking at some of the things we were able to do in terms of alignment and coverage–we're doing a lot of good things," Coach Kay said in summary.

Although no player made a snow angel or slid with a toboggan, jumping and even falling into a thick layer of fluffy snow sure looked inviting.

"It was fun—I don't know if I'd want to do it every week, but yeah, it's a good experience," Kurkowski said.

"It was fun—we had a lot of fun out there. Once you're playing out there, you stay warm; it didn't bother me, but, I'm sure if you're standing on the sideline, it would be different."

Due to the one-sided score, most every player who put on pads and a uniform competed on the snowy mat. But football uniforms and team overcoats likely did not provide enough protection from the cold air and wet, melted snow for those standing on the sidelines.

Mercifully, Perkins County got the continuous clock to run with 15:10 left in the game and spared everyone there from more exposure to the elements. But no one will soon forget the football game-wrapped-in-a-blizzard Friday night in Morrill.

Next Action

The 4-2 Plainsmen finish their regular season with two games at home, taking on the 1-5 Bridgeport Bulldogs this coming Friday at Haenfler Field in Grant.

Bridgeport's only win came against Morrill, a 22-0 home victory. The Bulldogs braved the blizzard and bused to Imperial on Friday, only to endure a 40-0 loss to Chase County.

The Plainsmen traveled to Bridgeport last year and left with a 41-7 win.

The season ends with a visit from 4-2 Chase County, whose performance against common opponents has in many ways mirrored Perkins County's.

Score by Quarter

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| Plainsmen | 14 | 19 | 14 | 14 | —47 |
| Lions | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | —8 |

Team/Quarter/Time/Play

Perkins County, 1, 9:20, Turner 4 run (conversion failed)
Perkins County, 1, 8:24, Turner 3 run (Hite pass to Johnson)
Morrill, 2, 11:33, Schneider 0 fumble return (Uttecht run)
Perkins County, 2, 7:32, Turner 11 run (conversion failed)
Perkins County, 2, 5:40, Hagan, J. 42 punt return (Hagan, J. kick)
Perkins County, 2, 0:17, Hite 2 run (kick failed)
Perkins County, 3, 9:12, Turner 22 run (Hagan, J. kick)
Rushing: PC, Turner 29—240 (41) 5; Johnston 10—28 (15);
Morrill: Manville 9—26 (32); Uttecht 9—21 (16)