



By Pastor Vince Carrig
Sports Writer

Multi-purpose offensive player Daniel Regier crossed the goal line with both a run and a catch and Chase County clamped down on the Plainsmen's running game to thrust the Longhorns to a 12-6 win in Grant Friday night.

Regier hauled down the winning touchdown catch by working himself free of defenders while quarterback Alex Strand scrambled out of a disappearing pocket. Strand fled to the left hashes and then threw back across his body to the right corner of the end zone, where Regier's extended hands attracted the ball. Strand received credit for just a three-yard touchdown pass at 9:19 of the fourth quarter, even though his throw traveled over 20 yards.

Down 6-0, the Plainsmen answered Chase County's scoring drive with their most spectacular play of the year. Quarterback Michael York bombed a pass high and far down the left sideline, and senior wideout Kye Kurkowski ran under it and ran away with it for a 64-yard touchdown play.

Regier opened the game's scoring by barreling up the middle for a 12-yard pickup, and then two yards into the end zone at 9:41 of the second quarter.

Played on a muddy field after the snow that delayed the game for a day melted into the turf, the game looked like a defensive chess match. Both teams' lines and linebackers kept plays close to the line of scrimmage.



Chase County Head Coach Dan Lenners showed the nerves of a bridge painter and confidence in his team in calling for the attempt of three fourth-down plays in the game-winning drive.

Indeed, Strand cheated the death of the Longhorns' drive by rolling left and hitting Regier in the end zone on a fourth-and three. That play never hits the score sheet, though, if running back Michael May does not leap and grab the left-handed Strand's pass nine yards from the line of scrimmage—exactly what Chase County needed.

Both defenses kept this annual contest a low-scoring one, with Plainsman linebacker Nick Turner rolling up to the line and stuffing multiple Longhorns rushers; he recorded 13 solo tackles and 10 assists. Turner broke free on a fourth-down blitz that hurried Strand into an incompleting and gained the ball back for Perkins County's last drive.

"We did a lot of things well; we played great defense, our defensive line and linebackers played outstanding—we held them to three yards per carry. Six times they had to go for it on fourth down—those are great jobs," Plainsmen Head Coach Chip Kay said after the game.

For the Longhorns, senior lineman Tyler Roenfeldt tracked down Perkins County runners throughout the night. Regier also provided a barrier through which no player wearing red ran. Leading rusher Nick Turner gained just 78 yards for the home team, many yards fewer than the

double-digit totals to which he grew accustomed.

Chase County's defense sniffed out and hosed down a Plainsmen fake field goal attempt with 1:37 left in the first half. Holder Michael York popped up and spun away with the snap, running for daylight. The Longhorns, however, influenced York toward the sidelines four yards short of a first down at Chase County's 17-yard line.

"I felt that not coming up with some points in that situation was the difference in the game because really, defensively, we played great the entire game. In a close game, that makes the difference," Coach Kay said.

Regier pocketed a Plainsmen fumble as a defensive lineman, and linebacker Strand invaded the offensive backfield and rustled up a fumble to steal Perkins County's opportunity to answer Chase County's winning touchdown drive.

The Plainsmen tried valiantly to regain possession in the fourth quarter, but on yet another fourth-down play, Longhorns running back Paul Gaschler benefitted from a generous, advantageous, gracious referee's "spot" after his carry. Just the nose of the football poked to the east of the chained first-down pole with 5:48 left in the game, allowing Chase County to gobble almost three more minutes off the clock.

Plainsmen freshman linebacker Alex Johnston delivered perhaps the most memorable hit of the year, extracting the football for his team as a bonus. After Chase County's Misael Garcia steamed 17 yards to his left, Johnston drilled him with pad contact that even those beyond the stands could hear. Perkins County recovered at the Longhorns' 23 to begin the drive that ended in the failed fake field goal.

Early in the third quarter, Plainsman linebacker Max Jones went down with a leg injury. His injury required that paramedics carry him to the ambulance on a stretcher.

"I don't think people in the stands understand [what losing Max] meant to our team. Besides his presence, Max makes the formation calls, and we did not line up as quickly as we needed to; we really missed him there," Coach Kay said of the senior.

With no more Jones in the middle, Strand seemed to take a liking to keeping the ball and running it up the middle as Chase County's quarterback.

Neither team cashed in on extra points: Garcia missed a kick for the Longhorns, and Michael York broke up a Strand pass on a Chase County conversion try. After a "roughing the kicker" call set the ball on the one-yard line and induced the Plainsmen to try for two points, the Longhorns line stuffed their rushing attempt.

Both teams entered the game with 5-2 records. The 6-2 Longhorns must travel to Cambridge to start the playoffs against the 5-3 Trojans, who beat the Longhorns 20-7 on September 18 in Imperial. The Plainsmen will pack their pads and head east to meet the 7-1 North Platte St. Patrick's Irish on Thursday night at 7 p.m. Central time, 6 p.m. MDT

The Plainsmen surrendered 49 points to St. Pat's in a 35-point loss earlier this season in Grant, and look to avenge the loss. "I think we're a better football team than when we played them, but we're going to have to do some things offensively that may take us out of our comfort zone to beat them," Coach Kay said about the playoff game.

Score by Quarter

Longhorns	0	6	0	6	—12
Plainsmen	0	6	0	0	—6

Scoring Summary

Team/Quarter/Time/Play

Chase County, 2, 9:41 Regier 1 run (kick failed).

Perkins County, 2, 4:41 York 64 pass to Kurkowski (conversion failed).

Chase County, 4, 9:13 Strand 3 pass to Regier (conversion failed).

Rushing—PC: Turner 17-73 (18); York 7-22 (12); CC: Gaschler 7-58 (7); May 11-38 (9); Strand 11-34 (5); Regier 7-28 (13) 1.

Passing—PC: York 2-7-61-1-1; CC: Strand 8-15-67-1-0.

Receiving—PC: Kurkowski 1-64 (64) 1; CC: May 4-33 (10); Gaschler 2-16 (12); Burke 1-15 (15); Regier 1-3 (3) 1.

Time of Possession—PC: 15:43; CC 32:17; plays—PC 36, CC 69.