

By Pastor Vince Carrig

Sports Writer

Quarterback Michael York finished three drives with touchdown runs and an intrusive Perkins County secondary swiped four interceptions so the Plainsmen could wrestle a 31-13 win from the Bayard Tigers Friday night in Grant.

York singed Bayard's defense for 154 yards on 23 carries. He completed his mastery of the Tigers' defense with a last-second play-call change that positioned him into 22 yards of wide-open field for an uncontested touchdown run in the fourth quarter.



The Plainsmen secondary spied on and surged toward Bayard quarterback Brandon Stuart's passes, taking four of them away. Linebacker Elliot Carlson and safety Quinton Hite tipped balls for each other, with Carlson hauling down a Hite midfield deflection at 4:15 of the second quarter and Carlson setting up Hite's heist at 11:14 of the third frame.

"Looking at what [the Tigers] were capable of doing, it was a game where we had to be at our best," said Head Coach Chip Kay said of his Plainsmen after the game. "Defensively, our players stuck to the game plan, executed the way they needed to, tackled well, flew to the ball, and we got some big plays. They played with enthusiasm; they were fired up and motivated.

Perkins County even picked Stuart off on consecutive drives, as Christian Miyamoto leaped and fully extended both arms for an interception that led to a field goal.

York's long touchdown run put a comeback out of reach for Bayard, who pulled within four points at 17-13 with 12:39 left in the game.

Perkins County's coverage and rush mostly kept elusive Tigers receiver Spencer Jobman and the NSAA class C2's most potent passing attack (1412 aerial yards) in front of them all ballgame.

Stuart did not hook up with Jobman when Bayard did not have the ball, and that obviously made up a large part of the Plainsmen plan.

The home team let Alex Johnston pound and punish the Tigers for 66 yards early, then sent in Brody Prante to slip by and speed past Bayard defenders for 119 yards and a touchdown.

Prante continued to pay visits to the second level of Bayard's defense in the fourth quarter, finally breaking out for a score from 20 yards away. Prante hit a crease in the left side of the line, broke a tackle at the 10-yard line and sped for the end zone's corner with 5:32 left to move Perkins County ahead 23-13.

The junior running back Prante then set up York's long score, gnawing off consecutive runs of 10 and 18 yards before York called his own number with 3:35 remaining.

Senior placekicker Jeremy Hagan booted a 33-yard field goal to surge Perkins County ahead 17-7 in the third quarter; conservative estimates had his kick juiced with enough boost to clear the upright from another 10 yards away.

Hagan also drilled all four extra points through, running his 2010 count to 16 of 17 (94 percent) for the year.

"That came at such a crucial time; what a weapon to be able to put together... not a great drive and be able to score some points and make it a two-score game," Coach Kay said of Hagan's kicking.

Statistically, Alex Johnston led the disciplined Plainsmen defense by working himself into 10.5 tackles on the 34 plays Bayard ran. Johnston saw through the Tigers' "trips left" formation and blew up Mikah Schmall's misdirection run for a three-yard loss in the second quarter.

Perkins County's defense as a unit did a great job limiting Bayard's favorite "tunnel screen" play, where a flank receiver like Jobman likes to catch the ball coming toward the slot and cut to the middle of the field.

Jobman (10 receiving TDs and nine rushing TDs in 2010) quickly served notice that he needed attention, slashing for a 26-yard gain to set up Bayard's first score and give the Tigers a 7-0 lead 8:07 into the game.

After that success, however, Bayard advanced just 65 yards on their next 31 pass plays. Miyamoto yanked a pass away from Jobman with 2:40 left to claim his second interception of the game. Bayard had averaged 480 yards of offense in their first four games.

"We wanted to force [Stuart] into making tough decisions, because most of the season he's thrown to a lot of open receivers," Coach Kay said. "We designed our defense to funnel his throws into one spot. We thought if we played our defense right, we thought we could dictate where he threw the ball; most of the time we were funneling him into the throw we wanted him to make."

Perkins County's running game racked up 362 yards, averaging a dominating 5.5 yards per carry. York, Prante and Johnston controlled the ball, the clock, and Bayard's scoring opportunities by working persistently upfield, with no run longer than 23 yards.

Besides his deflection and interception, Quinton Hite pinned Bayard back to its own three-yard line with a critical, "coffin corner" punt in the third quarter.

The Plainsmen defense then stopped Bayard deep in its own end, setting up a short 44-yard drive on which Prante scored.

Next Action

Probably without a blizzard dumping snow on the field this year, the Plainsmen travel 180 miles northwest to push the hapless and winless Morrill Lions. The Lions have lost their five games by a combined score of 192-18, with Chase County and Bridgeport posting back-to-back shutouts on the Lions the last two weeks.

PC 31, Bayard 13

Bayard Tigers 7 0 6 0—13

PC 0 14 3 14—31

Team/Quarter/Time/Play

Bayard 1 3:53 Jobman 3 run (Rice kick)

Plainsmen 2 10:42 York 8 run (Hagan kick)

Plainsmen 2 5:10 York 1 run (Hagan kick)

Plainsmen 3 3:24 Hagan 33 FG

Bayard 3 0:39 Krantz 6 pass from Stuart (kick failed)

Plainsmen 4 5:32 Prante 20 run (Hagan kick)

Plainsmen 4 3:35 York 22 run (Hagan kick)

Rushing—Plainsmen: York 23-154 (23) 3TD; Prante 14-119 (20) TD; Johnston 23-66 (8); Miyamoto 1-10; Schulze 1-7; Hatcher 3-6 (4); Bayard Stuart 6-43 (13); Jobman 3-9 (4) TD; Schmall 4-0 (3).

Passing—Plainsmen: York 1-5-2; Bayard: Stuart 17-37-119-1-4.

Receiving—Plainsmen: Boldt 1-2; Bayard: Jobman 6-62 (26); Schmall 4-22 (19); Krantz 4-13 (6) TD; Parriott, R. 2-20 (11).

Tackling leaders—Plainsmen: Johnston 5.5/5; York 5/2; Schulze 3.5/3; Miyamoto 3/4; Hagan 3; Carlson 2.5/5

Interceptions—Plainsmen: Miyamoto (2), Hite, Carlson; Bayard: Rice.

Fumble recoveries—Bayard: Jobman.