



By Pastor Vince Carrig

Sports Writer

Plainsmen running back Alex Johnston slugged his second four-yard carry across the goal line with :09 left to blast Perkins County past Chase County 21-14 in Imperial Friday night.

The Plainsmen beat their rivals to the south for the second straight year and boosted their 2011 season record to 6-1. A win over 2-5 Bridgeport on Friday would give Perkins County its second-consecutive NSAA class C2 district 10 championship.

The Plainsmen controlled the ball and the clock for the game's final four minutes, manufacturing a 92-yard drive that left the Longhorns little time and hope of evening the score.

"Our last drive was very special ... you don't find a lot of high school teams who can rebound with a 92-yard drive, with less than five minutes to go, on the road, in a rivalry game, with the district title on the line. Our entire team showed tremendous character and poise," Head Coach Chip Kay said after the game.

Perkins County quarterback Quinton Hite emerged from a timeout with 1:52 left to fake a pitch and keep running for 36 yards, transporting the ball from the Plainsmen's 38-yard line to the Longhorns' 24-yard line.

"Quinton has been growing every week as a quarterback and a leader - he has shown a pretty firm grasp on our offense. We noticed an opportunity in the second half and Quinton executed it very well—you love a quarterback who has great patience and poise in the option game," Coach Kay said.

Hite led the game with career highs of 15 carries and 107 rushing yards.

The junior running back Johnston picked up 19 of those final 24 yards to help Perkins County impose its will on the Longhorns and leave with a highly-valued win.

Longhorns quarterback Kale Gockley rolled left and into the end zone from seven yards away on the drive immediately before the Plainsmen's final one to pull Chase County into a 14-14 tie with 4:06 left.

Four plays after cornerback Steven Fish hijacked a route and intercepted a pass, Gockley capitalized. Fish could see from the left sideline to Enders Lake after making the pick and sped toward open air until Brody Prante hustled to haul him down at the Plainsmen's 16-yard line.

"Brody does everything one speed and he is a great example of selfless hustle, determination, and sacrifice. We have a lot of players who see Brody's leadership by example. One thing this team has given us [coaches] all year is very good effort.

Prante's extra effort only prolonged the inevitable, however, as Gockley hit running back Michael May with a pass after rolling hard to his right to position Chase County at

“first-and-goal” after the interception. The opportunistic strike knotted the game at 14-14 and set up a nail-biting finish.

Perkins County took advantage of a short field for their second score and a 14-7 lead with 13:48 left. Running back Prante burned the Longhorns for an 18-yard touchdown run after Chase County penalties donated 20 of the 58 yards the Plainsmen needed to pull ahead for the second time.

The Plainsmen covered the field in large chunks on their first touchdown drive and took a 7-0 lead into halftime from it. Quarterback Quinton Hite ran for 33 of the drive's 80 yards, slithering through holes, winding into creases, and breaking tackles. Hite also threw to Taylor Boldt on a sideline route and saw Boldt shake a defender to pick up 24 yards.

Johnston rammed in a four-yard carry with 2:30 left in the second quarter to strike first for the Plainsmen; Hite's extra point gave the visitors in white a 7-0 lead.

The quick senior halfback Steven Fish carried the Longhorns to their first retaliatory score and evened the contest at 7-7 just after halftime. Fish polished two pitches into gains of 21 and 11 yards to enable fullback Justin German to barge into the end zone from four yards out just 3:34 into the third quarter.

The Longhorns hooked themselves with some critical penalties that both prevented them from scoring and helped their opponent. A chop block penalty on a lineman melted a first-and-goal situation into a third-and-23 in the second quarter. Steven Fish ran back a kickoff for a touchdown only to have one of the more obvious clipping violations in football history take those points off the board and call the play back to Chase County's 26 yard-line.

Possibly capable of limiting Perkins County to a field goal on the Plainsmen's first touchdown drive, Chase County's false start infraction twisted a third-and-six into a third-and-one on the Longhorns' six-yard line. One simple quarterback sneak gave Perkins County a fresh set of downs inside the Longhorns' five-yard line.

“Longhorns penalties” finished as the Plainsmen's second-leading ground gainer: twelve whistles for 99 yards.

Perkins County doubled Chase County's rushing output, 269-132.

The Plainsmen defense shut the door on two Chase County scoring opportunities early in the game.

With the black-uniformed Longhorns at Perkins County's 25-yard line and driving, Plainsmen linebacker Alex Johnston sacked Longhorn quarterback Gockley, dumping him 12 yards the other way.

Johnston and Prante blew up two pitch and sweep plays that influenced Chase County's David Almanza into kicking a 42-yard field goal attempt just short with 6:52 left in the half.

Johnston led his team in tackles as a linebacker; he and Christian Miyamoto caught Longhorns behind the line of scrimmage four times.

Chase County threatened to even the match before halftime, but two Gockley passes left his hand with too much zip on them and the Longhorns surrendered the ball on the Plainsmen 32-yard line.

Gockley overthrew receivers several times on long “bomb” pass attempts. He could not ignore the presence of opposing safety Christian Miyamoto, who broke up soaring attempts to Kevin German and a halfback option pass from Fish on the same drive third quarter drive.

Miyamoto secured the Plainsmen win by intercepting a “last-gasp” pass from Gockley. He also made an astounding catch as a receiver, taking the ball from his defender, bobbling it, and snagging it while diving to his right.

Hemmed in at their own six-yard line, Chase County used the unusual "quick kick" to escape their own end in the third quarter. Fish punted on third down and got the ball to roll end-over-end to the Plainsmen 42-yard line.

Possibly buoyed by the Longhorns' early surrender on that drive, the Plainsmen made their own breaks and jammed that quick kick into the end zone for a 14-7 lead.

Next Action

The Bridgeport Bulldogs visit the Plainsmen on Friday in Grant. Bridgeport gained its two wins over two teams with combined records of 0-14. Bridgeport has lost its five games by a combined score of 180-28, including a 31-0 home loss to Chase County a few weeks ago.

Score by Quarter

	1	2	3	4
Perkins Co.	0	7	7	7—21
Chase Co.	0	0	7	7—14

Team/Qtr/Time/Scoring Play

Perkins County 2, 2:30 Johnston 4 run (Hite kick)

Chase County, 3 8:26 German, K. 4 run (Almanza kick)

Perkins County 3, 1:48 Prante 18 run (Hite kick)

Chase County 4, 4:06 Gockley 7 run (Almanza kick)

Perkins County 4, 0:09 Johnston 4 run (Hite kick)

Rushing leaders—Perkins County: Hite 15 carries/107 yards; (36 long); Prante 10/57 (18) TD; Johnston 13/55 (10) 2TD; Hatcher 8/42 (16); Miyamoto 1/8; Chase County: Fish 16/77 (21); German, J. 8/24 (5) TD; Sullivan 5/21 (8); Gockley 7/10 (8) TD.

Passing leaders—Perkins County: Hite 3 completed-8 attempts-0TD-1INT; Chase County: Gockley 7-19-69-0-1; Spady and Fish 0/1.

Receiving leaders—Perkins County: Boldt 1/23; Miyamoto, Christian 1/12; Carlson 1/8; Chase County: May 2/35 (18); Spady 2/20 (11); Mays 2/10 (5).

Defensive leaders: Johnston (3 tackles 8 assists); Fosbinder (2/8); Prante (5/4); Hatcher (1/7); Carlson (2/4); Miyamoto (2/4); Ross (1/5); Boldt (3/1).