By Pastor Vince Carrig
Sports Writer

Elliot Carlson ran for one long touchdown, threw for another and clinched a 14-7 Plainsmen win over the Panthers with a resounding sack from his linebacker position Friday night in Hershey.

The senior quarterback Carlson shattered a 0-0 tie by pulling out of lineman Lane Richardson's tackle-from-behind, dozing through a pile, and backing out of cornerback Josh Margritz's arms to run 70 yards for a first quarter touchdown.

"Nobody stopped blocking for me and everybody kept going, so, I guess persistence is the key [there]. I just tried to keep my feet moving and not go down," Carlson said of his run after the game.

Hooked up with great field position by defensive lineman Alex Malmkar's jarring sack of Hershey quarterback Colton Marshall and fumble recovery by teammate Alex Johnston, Carlson rolled right and hit a fading Austin Thelander with a short pass near the ground for a 14-0 lead.

"You just have to make a good judgment, try to get underneath it, do your job and catch the ball," starting senior receiver Thelander said of keeping the low throw off the ground. "Elliot put it where only I could get it, so, great pass on his part."

Hershey threatened to tie the game with 1:09 left and just 30 yards to go, but Carlson sloughed Landan Maassen's block and threw quarterback Marshall out of bounds to squash a Panthers fourth-and-five.

The 3-0 Plainsmen defense still has not surrendered a single point in the first three quarters of their first three games. The Panthers penetrated inside Perkins County's 15-yard line twice in the first 36:00 and went away empty-handed.

Standout lineman Vinny Ross completely blew up holder Josh Connell's fake field goal attempt in the first quarter, and defensive back Chase Miyamoto cut in front of a Marshall pass and

intercepted it at the Perkins County two-yard line in the third quarter.

"I knew the quarterback was going to throw it to their main receiver, so I just kind of played the way the quarterback was and he sort of threw it right to me," the starting junior cornerback Miyamoto said of his positioning for the interception.

Junior Panthers linebacker Justin Weir made the game very interesting with just under 5:00 remaining, dropping into coverage and one-handing a pass over the middle.

Weir's interception return moved Hershey within 26 yards of the Plainsmen end zone, most of which disappeared after receiver Dylan Johnson leaped between two defenders to grab a long lob left from Marshall six feet from the goal line.

A second-effort run by sophomore Josh Margritz pulled Hershey to within a touchdown with 4:26 to play, but Perkins County's defense stiffened to stifle the Panthers' two-minute drill.

In Hershey's final drive, Thelander cut the legs out from both Johnson and Margritz on sweep plays, and Miyamoto and Matt Sestak covered Hershey's bomb pass attempts.

After Perkins County lineman Ross squashed a quarterback option play half-way through the fourth quarter, Thelander intercepted an underthrown Marshall bomb to thwart another threat.

Ross (10.5 tackles) and Malmkar (9.5) again anchored a Plainsmen defensive line that kept Marshall and Margritz within reach, as no Panthers player rushed for more than 15 yards on one down, and Hershey converted zero fourth downs in three tries.

With a couple of huge exceptions, the Plainsmen found running room at a premium, with Hershey defensive back Josh Connell invading their backfield more than once. Subtracting the touchdown run, Carlson gained 11 yards on 19 carries.

Perkins County running back Tim Johnson picked up the game's other huge gain, patiently waiting for center Vinny Ross to "pull" left to block for his right-to-left reverse and hustling toward the sideline for a 55-yard play in the second quarter.

Hershey actually outgained their guests 285-187, and even benefitted from two punts of shorter than 14 yards (not a printing error–14 yards). However, the 1-2 Panthers lost two fumbles, gained little or no yardage on four other quarterback fumbles, surrendered 46 yards on penalties and gave away two interceptions to help beat themselves.

Senior running back Tyler Brown's 13-yard run helped move Hershey to the Plainsmen 34-yard line right after Perkins County's second touchdown, but the visitors stopped the Panthers' drive by pressuring Marshall to throw a fourth-and-four pass over Terence Whiting's head.

"We made key plays when we needed to, but we overcame a bad night to win," Plainsmen Head Coach Chip Kay said of his team's performance.

Next Action

The Plainsmen welcome the 2-2 Cambridge Trojans to Grant at 6 p.m. on Friday night. The Trojans had little trouble with 0-3 Bayard and 1-3 Kimball, but Decatur County in Oberlin, Kan. ate their lunch (26-0) and Southern Valley took a 26-14 win out of Cambridge last Friday.

PC 14, Hershey 7

Perkins Co.	7	0	7	0	—14
Hershey	0	0	0	7	— 7

Rushing leaders—Perkins County: Carlson 20/81 (70T) TD; Johnson 5/62 (55); Johnston 7/36 (18); Hershey: Margritz 12/54 (12) TD; Brown 7/45 (15); Marshall, C. 14/25 (11); Marshall, G. 7/9 (4).

Passing leaders—Perkins County: Carlson 1-5-5-1-1; Marshall, C. 9-23-151-0-2.

Receiving leaders—Perkins County: Thelander 1/5 TD; Hershey: Johnson 4/90 (33); Connell 3/33 (15); Marshall, G. 1/15; Whiting 1/13.

Tackling leaders—Perkins County: Ross 10.5 (4); Malmkar 9.5 (4); Johnson 6 (4); Thelander 4.5 (2); Carlson 3.5 (1); Johnston, Toner, Sestak 3 (2).