

Quick Start Sparks Top-Ranked Bixby Past Sandites, 56-7

By Ron Holt

SAND SPRINGS – It's fair to say Sand Springs has seen enough of Tyler Wright, Bixby's personable, athletic 5-11, 176-pound senior wide receiver-defensive back.

Like his sophomore year, Wright intercepted three passes by Sandite senior quarterback Easton Webb, returning two interceptions for touchdowns, as the quick-striking Spartans decided the outcome early in a 56-7 victory at Memorial Stadium here last Friday night.

Class 6A-1's top-ranked Spartans improved to 2-0 on the season while Sand Springs fell in its season opener. Bixby has a bye week before making its first home appearance on Friday, Sept. 19, against defending Class 6A-II state champion Choctaw.

As a sophomore, Wright intercepted two Sand Springs passes, returning the thefts 21 yards and 41 yards for touchdowns in a 61-7 road win for Bixby.

He struck again last Friday, returning the second of three interceptions 34 yards for a TD before stepping in front of an intended receiver for another pick-six, this one covering 100 yards. He was credited with three pass interceptions for 137 yards and two pass receptions for 20 yards.

"The first one was overthrown. I just happened to be there. I thought the other one might be 100 yards, but I didn't know ... I kind of blacked out running down the sideline," said Wright, who has five career interceptions against Sand Springs with four being returned for TDs.

"I think we did a lot better tonight, but we've still got a lot to work on. We did get rid of the nerves early and settled in at the start of the game and played pretty good then. I feel like if we put it all together, we're going to be something special," he added.

Bixby's tenacious defense seized the early momentum when Wright intercepted a Webb pass, giving the Spartans their first possession at the hosts 47-yard line. It took two plays to score as senior Braeden Presley ran a reverse 43 yards for a touchdown with 11:15 showing in the first quarter.

A two-point conversion run came up short near the goal line, leaving the Spartans with a 6-0 lead.

A 29-yard pass play from senior quarterback Carson Kirby to Presley highlighted the next Spartan possession, moving the ball to the Sandite two-yard line where senior Carter Bell ran for the touchdown on the next play. Senior Bradley Thao kicked the extra point for a 13-0 BHS lead. Wright returned his second interception 34 yards for a touchdown to end the Sandites' third possession as the visitors rolled to a 20-0 lead with 6:57 left in the first quarter. Thao kicked the conversion point.

Sand Springs went on its first extended drive on its next possession before getting off a 17-yard punt into the wind. Two plays later, Kirby passed to sophomore Connor Arant for a 34-yard TD with 3:26 left in the opening stanza.

Senior Cord Nolan took a pitch from Wright on a fake extra point for the two-point conversion and 28-0 Spartan lead.

Bixby kept up the pressure in the second quarter, scoring on Wright's 100-yard pass interception return for a TD and a one-yard run by Jack Gill sandwiched around Sand Springs only points on a 31-yard TD pass from Webb to Logan Wright as the Spartans led 42-7 at intermission.

"Our plan was to come in here and get off to a quick start and take control of the game," said Presley, who ended with one rush for 43 yards, two tackles and one interception in limited playing time. "I felt like once we did that, we let up a little bit but after halftime we came out here and took care of business."

“It’s week two and we’ve just got to learn from it and move on and take care of our business for our next game. We just need to work on playing together as a team and playing more sound ... just being more fundamental,” he said.

The Spartans wrapped up the scoring parade with a 10-yard TD run by senior Jayson Moll and a one-yard plunge by senior Jamel Holt.

Bixby ended with 385 yards of total offense, attempting 34 passes while rushing 21 times as reserves saw playing time in the second half. Defensively, BHS aggressively limited Sand Springs to 192 total yards - 196 passing and minus-4 yards running the ball.

“We came out and executed really well. I don’t know how many picks we had but to be able to get some takeaways was big. It was a fast start ... we didn’t run a lot of plays in the first half but at times we executed really well and did some good things. I’m pleased,” Bixby head coach

Loren Montgomery said afterward.

“We knew going in they were going to throw on us quite a bit with what we do. We did get some pressure on them. There at the end it got sloppy but overall, it was good,” he added.

NEXT GAME – Bixby is idle this week and will spend the week fine-tuning execution on both sides of the ball in preparation for Choctaw in the Military Appreciation Night game and final non-district outing at Lee Snider Field.

Choctaw, 1-0 this season, was idle last week. The Yellowjackets opened the season with a 44-23 win at Lubbock (Texas) Monterey and returns to action Friday, Sept. 12, at Hays, Kansas.

“We’ll cut back practices and work on executing our stuff,” coach Montgomery said of bye week plans. “We know what Choctaw does so we’ll get a head start on them, getting our game plan in.”

SPARTAN ‘D’ – Bixby’s defensive effort at Sand Springs was led by senior Joe Peters who was credited with seven total tackles followed by senior Maverick Nance and junior Ben Puckett with six tackles each. Junior Jack Gill and junior Kaiden Flowers ended with five and four tackles, respectively.

Senior Vincent Incremona finished with two tackles for loss while senior Trey McGlothlin, Gill, Nance, Peters and senior Ben Savant each had one tackle for loss. Incremona recorded two sacks and Peters had one sack.

“We were just sticking to the game plan the coaches gave us ... I was just doing my job. I was glad to get the first one (sack) this season ... I hope to get more,” said Peters, a 6-2, 248-pound defensive lineman. “Yes, for the most part, I thought we played well but we’ve got a lot of work to do.

“We’ve just got to watch film tomorrow and get better for the next one,” he noted.

NOTABLES – Kirby passed for 200 yards and one TD at Sand Springs and has 456 yards passing, four TDs and one interception through two games. ... Senior Nathan Gonzales was one of nine Spartans catching passes as he led the way with four grabs for 34 yards. ... In his career against the Spartans, Webb, a two-sport standout and ranked No. 5 in the Tulsa World’s top 10 football players in the state list, has been intercepted eight times with five interceptions returned for touchdowns. ... In the regular season finale in 2015, Bixby was shutout 20-0 at Sand Springs. Three weeks later, the Spartans downed the Sandites 38-28 in the Class 6A-II state championship game. Since the 2015 loss at Sand Springs, Bixby has won 12 straight games in the series, outscoring the Sandites 603 points to 150 and recording two shutouts. That’s an average of 50.25 points per game to 12.5. ... Moll leads the Spartans in rushing after two games with 15 carries for 122 yards and two touchdowns. Presley tops the receivers with five catches for 125 yards and two TDs. ... Captains for BHS last Friday were Presley, Nolan, Kaden Penny and Hector Garcia.

... In this week's Tulsa World poll, Bixby remains the No. 1 team in Class 6A-1 followed by Jenks. Last week the Spartans were ranked No. 2 in Rivals Composite Rankings behind No. 1 ranked Mater Dei of California.

OPPONENTS – Here's a look at how other Bixby opponents this season fared last week: Jenks (2-0) defeated Owasso ((0-2), 31-21; Edmond North (1-1) beat Edmond Santa Fe, 30-7; Enid (0-2) lost to Lawton, 33-13; Mustang (1-0) defeated Yukon, 44-20; Deer Creek (0-2) lost to Edmond Memorial, 35-7, and Norman (1-0) topped Norman North, 19-13. Moore was idle.

In other games this week involving Bixby opponents: Owasso hosts Sand Springs, Jenks hosts Tulsa Union, Moore visits Southmoore, Edmond North hosts Edmond Memorial, Mustang visits Broken Arrow, Enid visits Stillwater, Deer Creek goes to Norman North and Norman hosts Edmond Santa Fe.

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First Quarter

BHS – Braeden Presley 43 run (run failed)

BHS – Carter Bell 2 run (Bradley Thao kick)

BHS – Tyler Wright 34 pass interception return (Thao kick)

BHS – Connor Arant 34 pass from Carson Kirby (Cord Nolan pass from Wright)

Second Quarter

BHS – Wright 100 interception return (Thao kick)

SS – Logan Wright 31 pass from Easton Webb (Tanner Copeland kick)

BHS – Jack Gill 1 run (Thao kick)

Third Quarter

BHS – Jaylon Moll 10 run (Thao kick)

Fourth Quarter

BHS – Jamel Holt 1 run (Thao kick)