

Bixby Romps at Edmond North, 64-7; Hosts Enid Thursday

By Ron Holt

EDMOND – A comfortable, experienced senior Nathan Gonzales has found numerous ways to contribute to top-ranked Bixby's unbeaten start this season. He found another way to contribute here last Thursday night.

Gonzales, the Spartans' punter, returned a fake punt attempt 75 yards for a first quarter touchdown - breaking several tackle attempts in the process – as Bixby erupted early and often in rolling to a 64-7 victory over Edmond North.

The Class 6A-I District 1 win at Edmond North's spacious stadium raised the Spartans' season record to 6-0 and the district record to 3-0. The Huskies fell to 1-5 overall and to 0-3 in the league.

Bixby, ranked No. 20 nationally by MaxPreps, scored 36 first quarter points while adding 21 second quarter points en route to a 57-7 halftime lead. Spartan starters didn't play in the second half, which featured a running clock, as reserves received varsity playing time.

Gonzales, a 5-8, 160-pound wide receiver-defensive back, rushed once for 75 yards against the Huskies, while catching two passes for 33 yards. He also had two tackles and was credited with two passes defended.

Through six games, he has contributed to the Spartans by completing two passes in two attempts for 56 yards, rushing twice for 79 yards and a TD and catching 17 passes for 296 yards and six touchdowns. He also returned a kickoff for a TD.

He's added 160 yards on kick returns for 535 all-purpose yards and 431 total yards. Defensively he was credited with six tackles, five unassisted, while punting seven times for an average of 31.4 yards per punt.

"Nate's a veteran who has played quite a few snaps for us right now. He's doing good stuff each and every week," Spartan head coach Loren Montgomery said afterward. "Being a veteran helps. He played some quarterback when he was younger, so he knows what to do when he's passing. "Nate's option returning the fake punt was awesome. Sometimes we give him the greenlight when it's there."

Gonzales admits being a senior helps as does varsity game experience from previous seasons. He's in a comfort zone this season.

"I feel like I was prepared, we had a week to prepare. Everything just felt right today," Gonzales said. "I feel like it's starting to come together ... it's just coming easy for me right now. I'm just coming out here and having fun along with my boys.

"I thought we played very good but we've got to be a little more disciplined. We had a lot of penalties, but we'll get that coached up."

Being flagged seven times for 80 yards was a problem, creating issues for the Spartans getting into a positive rhythm early in the game.

Bixby scored on the game's opening possession as senior quarterback Carson Kirby passed to senior wide receiver Emory Snyder for an eight-yard touchdown. Highlighting the drive were a 23-yard pass from Kirby to Snyder and a 21-yard pass from Kirby to Braeden Presley.

Junior Jack Gill ran for the two-point conversion and 8-0 BHS lead with 9:12 left in the first quarter.

After Edmond North kicker Nick Brown misfired on a 34-yard field goal attempt, the Spartans capitalized on Gonzales' fake punt return for a TD and a point-after kick by Bradley Thao to lead 15-0 at the 6:24 mark.

On its next possession, Bixby needed two plays to score as Kirby passed to senior running back Jayson Moll, who turned a short pass into a 56-yard TD. Presley passed to Kirby for the two-point conversion and 23-0 Spartan lead with 4:34 showing in the first stanza.

The next Spartan possession ended in an uncontested six-yard TD run by Kirby. The conversion pass failed but BHS led 29-0 with 2:24 remaining.

After Edmond North received a personal foul penalty on the conversion, Bixby went for the onside kick in Husky territory, with junior Ben Puckett recovering the kick. BHS struck quickly on an 18-yard TD pass from Kirby to Presley with 1:23 showing. Thao's kick gave the visitors a 36-0 lead after one quarter.

In the second quarter, Bixby scored on a six-yard TD run by Moll, a five-yard run by Gill and a 38-yard TD run by Moll for a 57-0 lead.

Edmond North averted the shutout as junior quarterback Chauncey Cravens threw a 20-yard touchdown pass to sophomore wide receiver Tripp Jones with 47 seconds left before halftime.

The only score in the shortened second half came on a 12-yard scoring pass from sophomore quarterback Reece Madden to junior Andrew Havens, Thao, who was six-for-six on extra-point kicks, booted the conversion for the 64-7 lead.

"I felt like we scored frequently but we shot ourselves in the foot with so many penalties ... that's kinda irritating," coach Montgomery said. "It wasn't our smoothest game. Last week (win over Moore) everything was smooth. But they've got some good players, they've got a couple of defensive linemen that are really good.

"We'll see what it looks like on tape. I think we did some good stuff, I think we executed well." Bixby's stable of playmakers each contributed to the win, along with another stellar defensive performance.

Kirby guided the offense, passing for 244 yards and three touchdowns while rushing twice for 13 yards and another score. Moll continued as a breakaway threat, rushing nine times for 75 yards and two TDs while catching two passes for 68 yards and one TD.

Presley caught three passes for 46 yards and one score while Snyder had three catches for 44 yards and a TD, Havens had two catches for 51 yards including his first TD of the season and Cetcher DeHart had two receptions for 48 yards.

The Spartans, who had one turnover with a lost fumble, amassed 576 yards of total offense on 61 plays, averaging 9.4 yards per play.

Defensively, senior linebacker Maverick Nance and junior linebacker Puckett each had six total tackles, pacing 21 Spartans who recorded defensive statistics at Edmond North. Gill, senior Tyler Wright and junior Kaiden Flowers were each credited with four total tackles.

It was the most productive game this season for Puckett, a 6-2, 194-pounder. Besides six tackles, which included five unassisted stops, he was credited with the Spartans' lone sack while also recovering an Edmond North fumble following Bixby's onside kick. He also had six tackles at Sand Springs in the second game this season.

Bixby's starters on both sides of the ball have impressive statistics this season, stats which could be more impressive since the starters seldom play in the second half of high-scoring games involving the Spartans.

So far this season, the Spartans continue being focused despite being heavily favored in several games.

"We had a lot of momentum in the game, and we took it and ran with it," DeHart, who has 13 pass receptions for 176 yards and three touchdowns this season, said of the start at Edmond

North. “We came prepared for the game. Our coaches again do a great job of getting us in the right mindset.

“Even if we’re up by a lot we’ve got to focus in and do our job.”

NEXT GAME – Bixby returns home to host the struggling Enid Plainsmen in a district encounter, scheduled to start at 7 p.m. Thursday (Oct. 16) at Lee Snider Field.

Enid, led by first-year head coach Brad Cornelson, is 0-6 this season and 0-3 in district play.

Enid lost, in order, at Ponca City (65-6), versus Lawton (33-13), at Stillwater (69-0), versus Deer Creek (65-0), at Mustang (75-0) and lost to visiting Norman (56-14) last Friday. EHS, which is on a 13-game losing streak, had scored 19 total points prior to the Mustang game.

Bixby has held the upper hand against Enid in recent seasons. Last year, BHS captured a 79-7 win at Enid and in 2022, BHS defeated Enid 77-14 during a regular season game at home and downed the Plainsmen 63-0 in a state quarterfinal home game.

It’ll be another short week of preparation for the Spartans, who also went through a short work week prior to visiting Edmond North.

“The short week forces us to pare everything down a little because sometimes it takes four practices for the kids to master the game plan,” coach Montgomery said.

NOTABLES – Bixby has won 91 of its last 94 games and won its ninth game in a row. ...

Spartan captains at Edmond North were Cord Nolan, Braeden Presley, Kaden Penny and Gavin Wilson. ... Through six games, Kirby has passed for 1,473 yards, including 21 touchdowns and only one interception. He has a quarterback rating of 151.6. Moll has rushed for 603 yards and 10 TDs this season, averaging 10.6 yards per rush. Kirby and Gill have each rushed for 178 yards. Presley has 14 pass receptions for 345 yards and four TDs. ... Defensively, Nance tops the Spartans with 41 total tackles, averaging 6.8 tackles per game. Senior Cord Nolan has 28 tackles and six tackles for loss; junior Nathan Hobbs has 27 tackles while Snyder is credited with 26 tackles. Senior Dawson Madden leads in tackles for loss with nine while senior linebacker Trey McGlothlin has seven tackles for loss. Bixby’s ‘D’ has intercepted six passes, led by Tyler Wright’s four interceptions. ... Bixby kicker Bradley Thao is 33-for-33 on extra-point kicks this season while missing his lone field goal attempt of 46 yards last week at Edmond North. Thao has kicked off 46 times with 34 of the kicks resulting in touchbacks. ... Quarterback Chauncey Cravens led the Huskies with 150 yards passing and one TD along with 68 yards rushing. Edmond North’s defense was led by junior strong safety Ayden Brown’s 12 total tackles.

Teammate Kourin Love, a junior cornerback, was credited with 11 tackles. ... Scores from other District 1 games last week included: Jenks 55, Mustang 48 and Moore 40, Deer Creek 24. Other District games Thursday include Jenks (5-1, 2-1) at Deer Creek (2-4, 2-1), Edmond North (1-5, 0-3) at Mustang (4-2, 2-1) and Moore (3-3, 1-2) at Norman (5-1, 2-1) on Friday. ... Bixby is ranked No. 1 on the Tulsa World’s Class 6A-I poll followed by Jenks, Owasso, Broken Arrow, Mustang, Norman, Edmond Memorial, Tulsa Union, Norman North and Yukon.

Bixby 64, Edmond North 7

FIRST QUARTER

BHS – Emory Snyder 8 pass from Carson Kirby (Jack Gill run)

BHS – Nathan Gonzales 76 run (Bradley Thao kick)

BHS – Jayson Moll 56 pass from Kirby (Kirby pass from Braeden Presley)

BHS – Kirby 7 run (run failed)

BHS – Presley 18 pass from Kirby (Thao kick)

SECOND QUARTER

BHS – Moll 7 run (Thao kick)

BHS – Gill 5 run (Thao kick)

BHS – Moll 38 run (Thao kick)

EN – Tripp Jones 20 pass from Chauncey Cravens (Nick Brown kick)

THIRD QUARTER

BHS – Andrew Havens 18 pass from Reece Madden (Thao kick)