

Fast Start Propels Bixby, No. 2 Broken Arrow Visits Friday

By Ron Holt

Edmond – Any concerns Bixby's top-ranked Spartans might be looking ahead to the upcoming battle of unbeaten this week were quickly dispelled here last Friday night as the Spartans scored early and repeatedly in knocking off district rival Edmond North, 56-7, at Husky Stadium.

Bixby (8-0, 5-0) returns home to entertain second-ranked Broken Arrow (8-0, 5-0) Friday at Lee Snider Stadium with the Class 6A-1 District 1 title on the line.

A team couldn't have taken control of a game any quicker than the Spartans who scored the first two times they touched the ball and continued the relentless pressure in rolling to a 49-7 halftime lead over the Huskies (4-4, 2-3).

Starting the game from its own 20-yard line, Bixby senior running back Tylan Montgomery - exhibiting his power and speed - bolted 80 yards for a stunning touchdown at the 11:46 mark of the first quarter. Senior Lincoln Aragona's conversion kick gave the Spartans a 7-0 lead.

After forcing a punt, Bixby started its next drive at its own 34-yard line. Spartan junior quarterback Isaiah "Q" Butcher IV raced 66 yards for a touchdown and a 13-0 BHS lead after a failed conversion pass with 9:55 showing in the first stanza.

A 38-yard pass from Edmond North senior quarterback Chauncey Cravens to senior Reece Fisher moved the Huskies to Bixby's 27-yard line on their next possession but a pass from Cravens to Domonique Martin II hit off Martin and into the hands of alert Spartan freshman Maverick Owens giving Bixby possession at its own 20.

Sparked by a 22-yard pass from Reece Madden to Connor Arant, a 21-yard run by Montgomery and a 23-yard reception by Nathan Hobbs Bixby moved to Edmond North's 14.

Two plays later, speedy sophomore Hilkyah Sampson impressively maneuvered across the field for a 14-yard TD. Butcher passed to Arant for a two-point conversion and 21-0 BHS lead with 7:30 left in the first quarter.

"The O-line and the other receivers did a good job of getting me a lane so I could get into the end zone," said the 5-11, 175-pound Sampson, who ended with two rushes for 23 yards and a TD while catching two passes for 30 yards. "Getting off to a good start was amazing. I was proud of Ty ... he was fast and the line executed really well for him."

Sampson is capitalizing on being an important varsity contributor this season as he's rushed eight times for 97 yards and two touchdowns while catching a team-leading 30 passes for 245 yards and one TD.

"I transferred to Bixby in seventh grade because I wanted to be in a really good football program ... I just wanted to be in a better environment than I had been in," added Sampson, who also plays baseball for the Spartans.

Edmond North put together its only scoring drive on its next possession as Cravens passed to Fisher, who made a contested catch in the end zone for a 32-yard touchdown. Nick Brown kicked the conversion, trimming the deficit to 21-7 with 6:15 left in the first quarter.

Bixby closed out its first quarter barrage with an 11-play, 55-yard drive which ended in a two-yard TD run by senior Jack Gill. Aragona's conversion kick lifted BHS to a 28-7 lead entering the second quarter.

Bixby opened the second quarter with a 40-yard touchdown pass from Madden to senior Keanu James, who made the catch fighting off a defender. Aragona kicked the conversion as the Spartan lead grew to 35-7 with 10:43 showing in the second quarter.

“That’s what I’ve been waiting for all season,” James, a 5-11, 165-pound senior, said afterward. “The quarterback got it to me. Me and the quarterback have been working on that post route. The defender got into my way a little bit, but I had to come down with that ball.”

James, who missed two games this season with a leg injury, has contributed 228 all-purpose yards this season – catching six passes for 94 yards and one TD while returning four kickoffs for 143 yards.

On the first play of the Huskies’ next possession, Arant intercepted a screen pass by Cravens returning it 25 yards for a touchdown and a 42-7 lead after Aragona kicked the conversion with 10:35 left before halftime.

Bixby’s next drive, hampered by penalties, stalled at the Spartans’ 38-yard line with the visitors facing fourth-and-11. The Spartans faked the punt as senior quarterback Preston Carter, in punt formation, passed to Sampson for a 34-yard gain to Edmond North’s 28.

Four plays later, Montgomery ran 12 yards for a touchdown and 49-7 Spartan advantage at intermission.

The second half featured a running clock with the only points coming on a one-yard run by junior Jack Knight with 10:49 left in the game.

“I think our first two offensive plays went the distance, and I think when we put the film in, we’ll see some good stuff. We got derailed a few times with a large number of penalties,” said coach Montgomery, noting the Spartans were flagged 12 times for 121 yards.

Madden was Bixby’s passing leader completing seven-of-13 passes for 112 yards and one TD. Carter completed four-of-five passes for 73 yards. Montgomery had three carries for 113 yards and two touchdowns. He averaged 37.7 yards per carry.

James’ one reception for 60 yards led BHS, which had 16 players credited with pass receptions in the game.

Edmond North was led by Cravens’ 98 passing yards and one touchdown on seven-of-19 completions. He was intercepted twice. He also contributed five rushes for 44 yards. Fisher caught two passes for 70 yards and one TD while freshman Tristan Bednar had two receptions for 40 yards.

NEXT GAME – The highly anticipated meeting between No. 1 Bixby against No. 2 Broken Arrow will be played Friday, starting at 7 p.m. at Bixby’s Lee Snider Stadium. Both teams are unbeaten and the winner will be the District One champion.

Broken Arrow, led by second-year head coach Travis Hill, coasted to a 58-0 district win at Southmoore last Friday. This season, BA defeated Springdale (Arkansas) Har-Ber (34-7), won 41-14 at Tulsa Union, downed Owasso (43-22), captured a 55-21 win at Norman North, blitzed Edmond Memorial (44-7), won 61-0 at Westmoore and upended Mustang (35-10) prior to last week’s win at Southmoore.

On paper it appears to be an even matchup. The Spartans are averaging 49.25 points per game while allowing 12.75 points per game. The Tigers average 46.25 points per game while allowing 10.1 points per outing. Both teams feature Division I recruits.

“From the film I’ve seen they’ve got good players, it won’t be like they have weak links or anything like that ... they’ve got good players everywhere,” Bixby head coach Loren Montgomery said following last Friday’s game.

“This won’t be a week where you have to work to get the kids up for practice or get them dialed in.”

Broken Arrow finished 9-3 last year in Hill's first season at the helm, falling 49-17 to the Spartans in the Class 6A-I state semifinals at Catoosa High's stadium. Bixby rolled to a 51-7 win at BA in 2023 and thumped the Tigers 77-17 at home in 2022.

Bixby broke open a close state semifinal game last year behind senior quarterback Carson Kirby's 187 yards passing and three touchdowns along with rushing for 60 yards and one TD. Senior running back Jayson Moll rushed for 123 yards and one TD and Jack Gill scored three times. Senior linebacker Trey McGlothlin led the defense with 19 total tackles.

The Tigers defeated Bixby three times previously during the tenure of Spartan coach Montgomery (2010-2026) – winning 58-19 at home in 2011, capturing a 41-7 road win in 2012 and toppling the Spartans 28-6 in 2013.

Broken Arrow benefited this season by the addition of 6-4, 208-pound senior quarterback Shamar Banner, a move-in from Dalton, Georgia, who has been an effective offensive leader. Senior Octavian Robertson and junior Corey Sango lead the ground attack while senior standout Semaj Stanford, junior Kyran Myers and junior Z. Matthews-Boudreaux are receiving leaders. Senior Bryson Brown, an Oklahoma State commitment, is a defensive leader along with sophomore Caleb Barlow and senior Malik Ross.

NOTABLES – With the win at Edmond North, No. 1-ranked Bixby has won 24 games in a row and has won 106 of its last 109 games. ... The Spartans were ranked No. 35 nationally by MaxPreps last week. ... Spartan captains at Edmond North were Kaeden Penny, Nathan Hobbs, Ben Puckett and Jake Nielsen. ... Friday's game with Broken Arrow will likely be the game of the week in both state newspapers. With that recognition comes hype and distractions, distractions in the form of increased media attention for both teams leading up to the contest. Staying focused will be key. "I think that's something we've got to coach our guys through because there will be a lot of hoopla around the game and all the stuff that comes along with it," said Bixby's coach Montgomery. "At the end of the day as soon as the ball is rolled out, it's football and that'll be our focus. We've got to understand our game plan, understand our roles, play hard and do the things we've been doing to this point where we are 8-and-0." ...

Defensively, despite limited playing time, senior linebacker Ben Puckett led the Spartan effort at Edmond North with eight total tackles and two tackles for loss. Seniors Logan Haddon and Gill each had four tackles while senior Cole Seager and sophomore Colton Treat each were credited with three tackles. ... BHS freshman Maverick Owens finished with a pass interception and recovered a fumble. Senior Gage Cheatham was credited with causing the fumble. Senior Logan Haddon also recovered a fumble. ... Despite leading 49-7 midway through the second quarter, Spartan linebacker Ben Puckett continued his relentless play. North's elusive Cravens scrambled running from his right to his left with Puckett in constant pursuit before tackling Cravens for a short gain. The play was nullified by a holding penalty on the Huskies but was an example of the Spartans focus regardless of the score. ... Broken Arrow's head coach Travis Hill was defensive coordinator when BA won its only state championship in 2018. As a head coach earlier in his career, Hill led Tulsa East Central (Class 5A) and Muskogee (Class 6A-II) to state championships.

SENIOR NIGHT – Prior to kick off Friday Bixby will honor 31 seniors, along with their parents, during Senior Night ceremonies.

"We've got a big group of seniors," coach Montgomery noted. "One of the cool things is a bunch of those guys who are seniors are first year starters for us. Guys like Ben Puckett, Kaiden Flowers, Lincoln Fugate and Cole Seager while on the offensive line you've got Jake Nielsen, Joe Dennis and Jaxon Dorsey while Andrew Havens is another one playing a ton."

“It’s good to see those guys who are seniors and have paid their dues and are working really hard ... and those guys are playing well.”

DISTRICT ONE – In Class 6A-I District 1 play last week, Bixby rolled at Edmond North, Broken Arrow blanked Southmoore on the road, Mustang upended Edmond Memorial (36-22) and Norman North won 74-26 at Westmoore.

Besides the Broken Arrow’s district showdown at Bixby, other district games Friday include No. 7 Mustang (5-3, 3-2) at No. 6 Norman North (6-2, 3-2), Westmoore (1-7, 1-4) visits Edmond Memorial (3-5, 1-4) and Edmond North (4-4, 2-3) travels to Southmoore (0-8, 0-5).

Bixby 56, Edmond North 7

FIRST QUARTER

BHS – Tylan Montgomery 80 run (Lincoln Aragona kick), 11:46

BHS – Isaiah Butcher IV 66 run (pass failed), 9:55

BHS – Hilkyah Sampson 14 run (Connor Arant pass from Butcher), 7:37

EN – Reece Fisher 32 pass from Chauncey Cravens (Nick Brown kick), 6:15

BHS – Jack Gill 6 run (Aragona kick), 1:54

SECOND QUARTER

BHS – Keanu James 60 pass from Reece Madden (Aragona kick), 10:43

BHS – Arant 25 pass interception return (Aragona kick), 10:35

BHS – Montgomery 12 run (Aragona kick), 6:13

FOURTH QUARTER

BHS – Jack Knight 1 run (Aragona kick), 10:49