Spartans Edged by BA, Visiting Southmoore Friday

By Ron Holt

In a battle between top-ranked, unbeaten football teams, mistakes are often magnified.

Such was the case last Friday night as four Bixby turnovers and a solid rushing effort by Broken Arrow quarterback Shamar Banner allowed the visiting Tigers to edge the Spartans, 17-14, at overflowing Lee Snider Stadium - capturing the Class 6A-I, District 1 title in the process.

The highly anticipated offensive battle between No. 1 Bixby and No. 2 Broken Arrow turned into a defensive slugfest from start to finish. Yards, field position and points were at a premium.

Bixby compiled 270 offensive yards but was victimized by two lost fumbles and two pass interceptions. Broken Arrow, which also threw two pass interceptions and lost one fumble, ended with 252 total yards.

Banner was BA's offensive leader, rushing 25 times for 117 yards and a touchdown but also turned the ball over three times. Bixby's defense constantly came up with big plays to keep the Spartans in the Senior Night game.

The Spartans struck on the game's opening possession, scoring on a seven-yard touchdown dash by senior quarterback Preston Carter, who impressively cut back to find daylight to the end zone with 10:50 left in the first quarter. Senior Lincoln Aragona kicked the extra point for the 7-0 lead.

Highlighting the drive was a stunning 65-yard pass play from junior quarterback Reece Madden to reliable senior receiver Brett Kaste, who was alone in the Tiger secondary. Kaste ran to the BA 15-yard line to set up the TD.

On its first possession, BA traveled 69 yards in 11 plays to tie the game 7-7 on Corey Sango's two-yard touchdown run with 6:33 showing in the first stanza.

The Spartans responded with an 11-play, 71-yard drive which ended in a nine-yard TD burst by senior Tylan Montgomery with 1:35 left in the opening quarter. Montgomery used his speed to turn the corner on pursuing BA defenders to reach the end zone. Aragona kicked the extra point for a 14-7 lead.

Bixby converted a fourth-and-1 from its own 48 when junior quarterback Isaiah Butcher IV broke free for an 18-yard gain, keeping the scoring drive alive.

After forcing a Tiger punt, Bixby put together another lengthy drive before sacks by BA's Colt Conroy and Reid Watkins for 14 yards in losses ended the drive on fourth-and-nine from the BA 26.

Broken Arrow's Banner bobbled the snap on its first play after the defensive stand with Spartan junior lineman Gavin Wilson recovering at the Tigers' 26-yard line. BHS's drive stalled at BA's 19 where Aragona missed a 36-yard field goal attempt with 5:04 left until halftime.

Two plays later, Broken Arrow tied the game on a 16-yard dash by Banner and Everett Bules' conversion kick with 4:20 showing in the half. Highlighting the drive was a 65-yard burst by senior Octavian Roberson.

Butcher fumbled on Bixby's first play after the game was tied and Broken Arrow recovered at the Spartan 35-yard line. BA's ensuing drive was kept alive by a 13-yard pass from Banner to Joseph Williams on fourth-and-two at the Bixby 22.

Bixby's defense rose up when seniors Nathan Hobbs and Jaxon Dorsey stopped Sango for a two-yard loss on third-and-goal from the Spartans' two-yard line which led to a 20-yard field goal by Bules for a 17-14 BA lead with three seconds left before intermission.

There would be no scoring in the second half even though both teams had opportunities.

Bixby freshman Maverick Owens intercepted Banner on the fourth play of the third quarter, returning the ball to the BA 41-yard line. But on the first play, Butcher was slammed to the turf after a short gain causing a fumble that BA recovered at its own 36.

Butcher was seriously injured during the play. He was cautiously treated for several minutes before being carted off the field by medical personnel. Reportedly, Butcher was allowed to go home after x-rays were taken at a local emergency room. His availability for the remainder of the season is to be determined.

Pass interceptions later in the second half by Bixby senior Cole Seager and BA's Braeden Baker halted drives by both teams.

Bixby's final opportunity to tie or take the lead began at the Spartans' one after a punt by Banner. BHS moved the ball downfield before a two-yard run by senior Jack Gill gave Bixby the ball near midfield, but Madden was intercepted by Bryson Brown and the Tigers ran out the remaining time.

"I thought our defense played great, they got us the ball in favorable territory at times tonight … we've just got to capitalize on that," Bixby head coach Loren Montgomery said afterward. "Their quarterback was really good. He extended a lot of drives … being able to run him is another dynamic for them.

"Offensively we've got to figure out our identity and not shoot ourselves in the foot when we have the ball. We had the ball in positive territory at the end. We had four turnovers and you can't beat a team like that.

"The defense gave us a chance to win, and we didn't take advantage of it. What you do with these situations will be to learn from them. That's what we'll need to do," coach Montgomery added.

Bixby's defense battled throughout against Broken Arrow's high-scoring offense, but Spartan defensive leaders took little satisfaction since the effort ended in a loss.

"We still lost so we don't feel great at all," said 6-3, 208-pound senior linebacker, who was credited with 10 total tackles and one tackle for loss. "I give a lot of credit to our secondary. We've been known as a run stop defense, but they ran all over us tonight but our secondary played great.

"It's not good to lose, it sucks and you hate it, but we can learn a lot from this. We haven't been punched in the mouth this year … but it happened tonight. So, we'll watch film and get after it … we'll be ready," he added.

Cain Brackney, a 6-3, 235-pound senior linebacker, added: "It's hard to take satisfaction from a game like that. I believe we played hard and we were physical. I think we're a bend-but-don't-break team. We've got some things to clean up … I think we'll see them again.

"We fought and never gave up … it was a dogfight. It was a tough loss, but we'll be back here in the morning doing our squats then get ready for next week and the playoffs," added Brackney, who recorded 10 total tackles.

While the passing game was ineffective except for one lengthy play, Bixby's offense had its moments running the ball, but more consistency will be needed going forward.

"We prepared good, but we've just got to execute better," said Bixby's 6-1, 252-pound senior left guard Joey Dennis. "We've got to come back and prepare and do better next week. You can't turn the ball over against a good team, but I feel we'll get better."

Dennis is a first-time starter in Bixby's offensive line this season after paying his dues in past seasons. "This is my first year to start. I've gotten stronger, I've worked hard in the weight room and gotten bigger.

“It feels good being a starter this year. You’ve just got to trust the process and work at it,” Dennis noted.

NEXT GAME – Bixby wraps up the regular season Friday at winless Southmoore with kickoff scheduled for 7 p.m. at SaberCats Stadium. The game will be broadcast by The Sports Animal, 97.1FM, with Shawn Tiemann providing the play-by-play and Ethan Roe handling color commentary.

Southmoore is 0-9 this season after falling 53-14 to visiting Edmond North last Friday night. The SaberCats of head coach Bryan Freeman posted a 6-6 record in 2025 in Class 6A-II, winning 21-14 at Ponca City in the first round of the state playoffs before losing at Stillwater (34-9) to end the season.

This season, Southmoore losses have been to Tulsa Bishop Kelley (57-0), at Piedmont (48-7) to Moore (70-0), at Westmoore (26-8), against Mustang (48-0), at Norman North (49-10), to Edmond Memorial (41-0) and at Broken Arrow (57-0).

Bixby and Southmoore have met twice in the past with the Spartans winning 56-0 at Southmoore in 2023 and blanking the SaberCats 80-0 in 2022 at home.

The Spartans are heavy favorites against the SaberCats but don’t expect Bixby to take the game for granted. “We’ve definitely got to take care of business at Southmoore and into the playoffs,” added Spartan offensive lineman Joey Dennis.

NOTABLES – With the loss to Broken Arrow, Bixby’s 24-game winning streak ended. …The Spartans have now won 106 out of their last 111 games. ... Bixby’s Senior Night captains were Kaeden Penny, Ben Puckett, Nathan Hobbs and Kaiden Flowers. … Bixby’s last loss came in 2024 when the Spartans lost 31-20 at home against Norman in the regular season finale. BHS later rolled in the playoffs in winning the state championship. … Bixby senior running back Tylan Montgomery scored his seventh touchdown this season against BA. … Senior Cole Seager recorded his second pass interception this season while freshman Maverick Owens had his fourth pass interception. … The standing room only crowd at Lee Snider Stadium Friday night was likely a record crowd as the bleachers on both sides were packed while fans also watched from the walkways. And since the final score wasn’t decided until the waning seconds, few fans, if any, left early. … Bixby’s 6-0, 211-pound junior linebacker Hunter Cox recorded his first sack of the season when he sacked Banner late in the third quarter. … This season, senior linebacker Ben Puckett leads the Spartans with 77 total tackles, including 45 unassisted stops, 14 tackles for loss and four sacks. Senior defensive back Kaiden Flowers has recorded 60 total tackles with five tackles for loss and three pass interceptions. Senior Cain Brackney is credited with 44 total tackles, nine tackles for loss and four sacks and senior Nathan Hobbs has registered 42 total tackles, four tackles for loss and two sacks.

DISTRICT 1 – While Broken Arrow’s win over Bixby gave the Tigers the district title last Friday there were other important district outcomes as Mustang won 49-21 at Norman North, Edmond Memorial blanked Westmoore, 35-0, and Edmond North won at Southmoore.

Class 6A-I District 1 standings ending the final week of the regular season include Broken Arrow (9-0, 6-0), Bixby (8-1, 5-1), Mustang (6-3, 4-2), Norman North (6-3, 3-3), Edmond North (5-3, 3-3), Edmond Memorial (4-5.2-4), Westmoore (1-8, 1-5) and Southmoore (0-9, 0-6).

Broken Arrow 17, Bixby 14

FIRST QUARTER

BHS – Preston Carter 7 run (Lincoln Aragona kick), 10:50

BA – Corey Sango 2 run (Everett Bules kick), 6:13

BHS – Tylan Montgomery 9 run (Aragona kick), 1:35

SECOND QUARTER

BA – Shamar Bonner 16 run (Bules kick), 4:20
BA – Bules 20 field goal, 3.3