Spartans Take Care of Business at Southmoore, 64-7

By Ron Holt

MOORE – In business-like fashion, Bixby's second-ranked Spartans quickly took the suspense out of the regular season finale here last Friday night while enabling reserves significant varsity playing time down the stretch during a 64-7 romp over outmanned Southmoore at chilly SaberCat Stadium.

The defending state champion Spartans (9-1, 6-1) are idle this week after receiving a first-round bye in the upcoming Class 6A-1 state playoffs while struggling Southmoore (0-10, 0-7) ended its season.

Bixby was dominating against the young SaberCats, finishing with 30 first downs to four and with 469 total yards while holding the hosts to 41 total yards. And the Spartans intercepted three passes.

"We were coming off a difficult loss, and I thought the guys responded well. Tonight was sloppy but sometimes that happens when you are playing a team that's struggling to find an identity a little," Bixby head coach Loren Montgomery said afterward.

"The kids prepared well, came on the road and took care of business."

On Southmoore's third play on the game's opening possession, Spartan senior free safety Lincoln Fugate intercepted a pass by Southmoore's freshman quarterback Boston Lippe and returned it 24 yards for a touchdown. It was Fugate's fourth interception this season.

Sophomore quarterback Jax Rice threw a two-point conversion pass to junior Connor Arant for an 8-0 lead at the 10:34 mark of the first quarter.

Bixby senior Lincoln Aragona missed a 40-yard field goal on the Spartans' next possession but the visitors used a six-yard TD run by Preston Carter and two-point run by Rice and a 19-yard touchdown pass from senior Reece Madden to senior Nathan Hobbs with a two-point conversion run failing as BHS led 22-0 with 4:02 showing in the first stanza.

Late in the first quarter, a 15-yard run by Carter and a 24-yard dash by BJ Jones set up a one-yard TD plunge by senior Jack Gill and a conversion kick by Aragona for a 29-0 lead with 21 seconds left in the opening stanza.

A leaping pass interception by Bixby senior strong safety Kaiden Flowers – his fourth of the season - set up the Spartans' next scoring drive which featured a two-yard TD run by Rice and conversion kick by Aragona for a 36-0 lead with 8:17 left in the first half.

Southmoore put together its lone scoring drive on its ensuing possession as Lippe connected with sophomore Brennan Barnett for a 40-yard TD. Greyson Caudillo kicked the extra point making it a 36-7 deficit with 3:21 remaining.

A 30-yard TD sprint by Bixby senior Tylan Montgomery and Aragona's conversion kick lifted the Spartans to a 43-7 lead with 2:08 left before halftime. Montgomery ran through a trio of tackle attempts to the end zone.

Rice scored on runs of four and 20 yards in the third quarter with sophomore Caden Hill kicking the conversions after both scores for a 57-7 Spartan lead. Senior Matthew Kohnstamm caught a one-yard TD pass from Rice for a TD early in the fourth quarter for the final points.

It was a productive night for the 5-9, 173-pound Rice, who was 12-of-17 passing for 115 yards and one touchdown while he also rushed nine times for 48 yards and three TDs. Rice now has two passing TDs and three rushing scores this season.

"I thought I might play more because we knew coming in, they probably weren't the best team … I expected what I got and I was happy with the outcome," Rice said. "I feel I've improved but

it's not just me but our whole team has improved since the start of the season. We just need to work to get better.
"It's a little easier," Rice said of playing quarterback. "I haven't played quarterback in my whole life but it's getting better. I've got a lot to learn. I thought we prepared well, we made sure we practiced well.
"I think our second and third guys came in and did what we needed … everyone did their job tonight," added Rice, who has passed for 293 yards and two touchdowns while compiling 144 rushing yards and three TDs this season.
After earning a bye in the Class 6A-1 state playoffs, which starts Friday, the Spartans await a state quarterfinal home game against the winner of Friday's Edmond Memorial at Tulsa Union first round game.
"We'll stay on schedule, we'll shorten practices and our meetings since we're not sure who we'll play and then on Friday, we'll do some conditioning and give them the weekend off," coach Montgomery said of this week's plans.
In final district results last week, Broken Arrow (10-0, 5-0) held on for a 56-39 win at Edmond North (5-5, 3-4); Norman North (7-3, 4-3) captured a 24-6 win at Edmond Memorial (4-6, 2-5), and Mustang (7-3, 5-2) rolled to a 58-6 win over visiting Westmoore (1-9, 1-6).
CLASS 6A-1 PLAYOFFS – First-round Class 6A-1 playoff games this week include Moore (7-3) hosting Edmond North, Mustang hosting Deer Creek (5-5), Yukon (6-4) visiting Norman North and Tulsa Union (5-5) entertaining Edmond Memorial.
Bixby, Broken Arrow, Jenks and Owasso earned first-round byes this week
In the quarterfinals set for Nov. 20, Bixby hosts the Union-Edmond Memorial winner, Broken Arrow hosts the Moore-Edmond North winner, Jenks plays the Norman North-Yukon winner and Owasso hosts the Mustang-Deer Creek winner.
NOTABLES – Bixby has now won 107 of its last 112 games. … Bixby was ranked No. 78 nationally by MaxPreps entering last week. … Captains for the regular season finale at Southmoore were Kaden Penny, Ben Puckett, Nathan Hobbs and Tylan Montgomery. … At Southmoore, the Spartans played without junior quarterback Isaiah "Q" Butcher IV, who was injured in the second half against Broken Arrow. "He probably could have played but as a precaution we gave him the week off," coach Montgomery said. … Twelve Spartans recorded rushing statistics in the game. Besides' Rice's 48 yards, junior BJ Jones rushed three times for 47 yards and senior Jack Gill rushed four times for 42 yards and one score. Nine Spartans ended with pass receiving statistics, led by Matthew Kohnstamm's five catches for 53 yards and one touchdown, Hilkyah Sampson's three grabs for 37 yards and sophomore Landon Fielder's two receptions for 35 yards. … Defensively, senior Jackson Cooper led a balanced Bixby effort with six total tackles and two tackles for loss. Senior Logan Haddon and Ben Puckett each were credited with five tackles each in limited time. Puckett had two tackles for loss and two sacks while Haddon recorded a sack.
'D' LINE – Through 10 games, Bixby has received solid production from its defensive line, a unit which played key roles in Bixby's success. Their progress hasn't gone unnoticed.
"I'm so proud of these guys. They work hard, they listen to you and they do everything they possibly can to hold up the front," said sixth-year defensive line coach Kaden Jackson. "I knew the kind of people we had coming back and the kind of people they are … I expected them to play well.

“Connor Arant, Jaxon Dorsey and Gavin Wilson are our starters, and we have rotational guys who come in, guys like Joey Dennis, Jayveon Fontenot and Colton Treat. Those are the guys we rotate the majority of the time.”

Arant, a 6-6, 244-pound junior, has been credited with 31 total tackles, seven tackles for loss, four sacks and two pass interceptions this season. The 6-2, 279-pound senior Dorsey has 15 tackles, eight unassisted stops, three tackles for loss and one fumble recovery this season. Wilson, a 6-2, 272-pound junior, has 13 total tackles, four tackles for loss, two sacks and two fumble recoveries this season.

Treat, a 6-0, 198-pound sophomore, has recorded 24 total tackles including 13 solo stops; Fontenot, a 5-9, 249-pound junior, has 14 total tackles and the 6-1, 252-pound Dennis, who also starts in the offensive line, is credited with four tackles.

“Gavin didn’t play defensive line last year, he was kind of a one-way guy since we had some senior guys, but I knew that his role would increase this year,” said coach Jackson. “We pride ourselves on run defense so last week (loss to Broken Arrow) was a big challenge for us … it upset those guys.”

‘O’ LINE – With three new starters, Bixby’s offensive line has effectively meshed together this season in becoming significant contributors to the Spartans’ offensive attack.

“Kaden Penny is at left tackle, Joey Dennis at left guard, Jacob Nielsen at center, Jaxon Dorsey at right guard and Gavin Wilson at right tackle for us this season,’ Bixby’s 15th-year offensive line coach Corbin Burchett said.

“KP and Gavin were starters last year and Nielsen was a sixth man. Dorsey is playing well and Joey has probably been the diamond of the bunch. We knew he’d be good but he’s playing better than I expected him to and he’s picked up and has honed in on the little details … he’s been a great addition for us and solidified the front line.

“Nielsen at center has done a great job at getting all the tags and calls when he needs to change things for the whole group. He’s really stepped up as a leader. They are meshing really well together and now that it’s getting colder, they aren’t getting as hot and tired.

“It’s great to see that bond form together now,” coach Burchett added.

Penny is a 6-4, 292-pound senior, Dennis is a 6-1, 252-pound senior, Nielsen is a 6-5, 288-pound senior, Dorsey is a 6-2, 279-pound senior and Wilson is a 6-2, 272-pound junior.

Bixby 64, Southmoore 7

FIRST QUARTER

BHS – Lincoln Fugate 24 pass interception return (Connor Arant pass from Jax Rice, 10:34
BHS – Preston Carter 6 run (Rice run), 6:08
BHS – Nathan Hobbs 19 pass from Reece Madden (run failed), 4:02
BHS – Jack Gill 1 run (Lincoln Aragona kick), :21

SECOND QUARTER

BHS – Rice 2 run (Aragona kick), 8:17
SHS – Brennan Barnett 40 pass from Boston Lippe (Greyson Caudillo kick), 3:21
BHS – Tylan Montgomery 30 run (Aragona kick), 2:08

THIRD QUARTER

BHS – Rice 4 run (Caden Hill kick), 8:25
BHS – Rice 20 run (Hill kick), 3:27

FOURTH QUARTER

BHS – Matthew Kohnstamm 1 pass from Rice (Hill kick), 9:35