

WEEK FIVE RECAP



Panthers Experience Growing Pains, but Emphasize the Positive

It would later become known as the Battle of Shiloh. A surprise attack by Confederate forces almost resulted in a complete rout of the Union army. Almost.

At the end of the first day of fighting, General Ulysses S. Grant munched and puffed at a cigar as hundreds of dead and dying soldiers lay across the rolling countryside. He was joined by General William Tecumseh Sherman. "Well, Grant, we've had the Devil's own day, haven't we?" Sherman said.

Grant concurred, but showed he hadn't given up hope of victory. "Yes," he replied. "Yes. Lick 'em tomorrow, though."

Instead of a retreat, Grant ordered a counterattack at dawn. The Union forces drove the Confederates from the field, resulting in one of the first major Union victories of the Civil War.

The Paschal Panthers ran into a buzz saw of a Weatherford Kangaroos team Oct. 4. While not a complete rout, it was a performance that showed little hint of the vast progress the team has made this season. It was a perfect life lesson: Sometimes the wheels just fall off.

Kudos, however, to the coaching staff, which went out of its way to let the boys in purple know that, like Grant, they had faith in the troops to "lick 'em tomorrow." Sure, the Panthers won't get another go at the Roos until 2008, but the Mansfield Tigers loom next on the schedule.

The '07 Weatherford game is history. And no amount of wishing or gaming can take it back or change the outcome. The boys lived and learned. The only thing they can do now is prepare for the future, armed with the lessons of the season's first five games.

Just for the record, however, the Panthers showed a 15-point improvement over the team's showing last year against Weatherford. Highlight moments included a TD by QB Robert Gallagher, a circus catch by WR Zac Waters and a host of first half passing yards by QB Tyler Nurdin. The defense stiffened in the second half, fighting hard to the final whistle despite inheriting a plethora of short fields.

Along the way, the Panthers picked up plenty of motivational fuel for next year's set-to with Weatherford. Item: Although the Panthers had already scored earlier in the game and the Roos weren't defending a shutout, Weatherford shuffled its first-team defense back into the game when the Panthers offense started carving up the field late. Item: With a huge lead and an almost total assurance of strong field position, Weatherford elected to go for a first down instead of punting. Item: As the Paschal band played the alma mater, the Weatherford band abruptly and rudely began playing.

Brooklyn Dodgers fans once made a cottage industry of future hope, and "wait 'til next year" became a mantra. The Panthers, though, still have half a season to go, and any pent up anger about Weatherford can easily be transferred. The team squares off against the Mansfield Tigers at 7:30 p.m. Friday at Mansfield ISD Stadium.



Now the JV Panthers Can Just Go Out and Play

After the fall of Richmond, Confederate President Jefferson Davis displayed an oddly sunny disposition. No longer burdened with defending the former capital city, Davis said, Confederate forces could engage in the guerilla warfare to which they were best suited, prolonging the war to such a costly extent that the North eventually sued for peace.

Perhaps Davis was merely imitating the ostrich. Certainly Davis was wrong. The war was already over, and his side wasn't going to win. But there was a kernel of wisdom in his thinking.

The 4-0 JV Panthers put it all on the line against a stout Weatherford squad Oct. 3 and for the first time experienced the bitter fruit of defeat. It was a tough, grind-it-out contest, a war of attrition that greatly favored the corn-fed Roos.

That having been said, the JV Panthers no longer bear the burden of defending an unblemished record. They now are free simply to go out and play, hard, without worrying that a single mistake could cost them an undefeated season. They can play with the loose, reckless abandon that allowed them to jump so quickly out of the gate.

The JV squad has already enjoyed a season of success. But that season is far from over, and the success is sure to continue. Kevin Deal is emerging as a force at quarterback, a position he was thrust into by injuries. RB Markus Kindles is developing a reputation as a go-to running back, and WR Rochelle Johnson has become an offensive juggernaut. Line play has been outstanding on both sides of the ball. The defense has been solid all season, and the kicking game, on the capable foot of Doug Parkhurst, has been stellar.

Paschal Gets Yet Another Strong Effort by Frosh

The freshmen Panthers lost a heartbreaker to Weatherford Oct. 3, but held their heads high knowing they hung with a quality program.

Moreover, the freshman Panthers learned an important lesson: There are days when the only team that can beat the Panthers is the Panthers. Turnovers hurt, especially as the frosh were on the march and within striking distance of payday.

The defense was stellar throughout the game, holding a bigger and quite physical Weatherford team to a bare minimum of points. And Aaron Stafford added another clip to his season highlight reel with yet another Paschal touchdown.

The hungry freshmen now take their 2007 tour on the road to visit the Mansfield Tigers Oct. 11. B team action is scheduled to begin at 5, with the A team game to follow.

Questions or comments? email PHSFootballBooster@msn.com.

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Special thanks to Geoff Campbell for his insightful game day analysis.