



WEEK THREE RECAP



Panthers Dominate South Hills Scorpions in yet another Rain-Drenched Game

We mark our lives by tragedies.

We remember where we were and what we were doing when we learned that President Kennedy was shot. We remember the sun-drenched day the Challenger exploded, and that sick feeling in the pit of our gut when we saw the flash and lost sight of the rocket. We recall the beautiful clear-skied Sept. 11 when terrorists struck, and that gnawing anxiety about what might be next.

True, we also remember the days of joy and triumph. Forty years ago, Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first of just 12 people to walk on the moon. Ever since, everyone who meets them seems to have an innate need to describe exactly how they felt when they watched the astronauts walk the barren lunar terrain.

We mark our lives by tragedies and triumphs and pronounce that life is forever changed. And then we go about our business as though nothing has changed at all. Nevertheless, we are changed, and so is history's course -- whether or not we subscribe to chaos theory. A butterfly flapping its wings in South America may or may not set off a chain of events culminating in a hurricane in the Gulf of Mexico. But a strong pass play here and a strong defensive play there may lead to a victory, which serves as a stepping stone for a legitimate playoff run.

Thing is, we're not so good at marking turning points, those subtle shifts with outsized impact. It's only through the passage of time that we have the necessary perspective.

Nevertheless, it's hard not to wonder whether we may have seen the Panthers begin a great leap forward with last Thursday's 23-0 victory over the Fort Worth South Hills Scorpions.

The victory came after two long weeks of frustration, an extended long night of the soul that tried the faith of Panther Nation. The collective mood was as somber and downcast as the weather, which was unrelentingly gloomy.

And then, as sudden as a cloudburst, everything but the weather changed.

The game was scoreless after the first quarter of play as each team thrust here and parried there, sizing each other up in Thursday's rain and muck. But the outcome never seemed in doubt as the Panthers clearly maintained the upper hand.

That hand came crashing down on South Hills at the 5:31 mark of the second quarter when QB Brian Gallagher found WR Travoy McCarver for a 24-yard touchdown. The groundwork for the touchdown was laid by yeoman-like work by the defense, which for the third time in the game forced a South Hills punt.

Taking over on their own 30 yard line, the Panthers picked up huge yardage on a Gallagher pass to WR Rochell Johnson, who advanced to the South Hills 40. A penalty on South Hills after the play gave Paschal the ball at the South Hills 25. After a one-yard run by RB Emmanuel Smith, Gallagher found McCarver to give the Panthers a 6-0 lead. The Panthers were unable to convert the ensuing two-point try and contented themselves with a six-point lead -- at least temporarily.

The Panther D forced a quick three and out by South Hills, and the offense got to work at the Paschal 40 yard line. QB Robert Dennis hit Johnson for a quick-strike first down at the South Hills 27. After several plays resulted in no gain, Smith bullied his way to the South Hills 9 for another first down.

Gallagher on the next play found TE Doug Parkhurst for a touchdown with 2:19 remaining in the second quarter. Smith rumbled in for the two-point conversion and the Panthers looked to be headed for a 14-0 lead at halftime.

The Panthers had other ideas, however. The defense once again forced a three and out, and the resulting South Hills punt gave the Panthers the ball at their own 42 with 1:33 remaining in the half.

Gallagher hit Johnson for a first down at the South Hills 48, and on the next play, Smith ran for an apparent touchdown. However, by the time Smith had reached pay dirt, the field behind him resembled the Wal-Mart lingerie department during a 50 percent off sale, and the run was nullified by one penalty or another. Undaunted, Gallagher quickly found McCarver for a first down at the South Hills 48 with 58 seconds remaining in the half.

Smith got another apparent first down, but yellow hankies spoiled the fun again. Now facing first and really long, Gallagher and Johnson teamed up to get a chunk of real estate back and put the Panthers near mid-field. Later, facing fourth and long with just 19 seconds remaining, the duo teamed up again on another nice catch and run to the South Hills 9. The Panthers attempted one more play from scrimmage before deciding to bring in the field goal squad. With one second remaining in the half, K Chris Smith split the uprights to give the Panthers a 17-0 halftime lead.

The Panthers came out of halftime just as hungry as they went in. They took over on their own 45 after the South Hills kickoff, and Gallagher spread the wealth around. On successive plays he passed to WR Angel Argueta to move the Panthers to the South Hills 17. RB Smith then ran the ball to the South Hills eight yard line. Gallagher and WR Chris Smith appeared to finish off the drive with a touchdown pass, but it was called back for holding. The duo got six yards back on a subsequent pass play, and then RB Smith took the ball to the one on a direct snap. Smith scored on the next play. A failed two-point conversion ensued, and Paschal had a 23-0 lead at the 9:27 mark of the third quarter. And that's the way the game would end. Despite the rain, it was a great night for the team, as the bench got emptied and many players saw significant time on the field. Some regulars got a taste of different positions. On defense, Dustin Alumbaugh recovered two fumbles. All in all, it was a good win for the Panthers, the kind of win that returned a swagger we haven't seen since the first game of the season. But it was not so good that it got the Panthers to strutting. It was a good win but far from perfect, and the Panthers left Clark Field knowing they have miles to go before they sleep.

The Panthers now begin district play Thursday night against the Weatherford Kangaroos and their cut-block heavy triple option offense. The Roos are coming off a tough loss to Coppell but earlier defeated perennial power Aledo. It's a difficult way to begin district play and the road gets no easier the following week, when the Panthers travel west to face the Abilene Eagles.

And yet, it's hard not to wonder whether we may have seen a turning point in the Panthers' football program with last Thursday's win. A loss, or even a poorly played win, could have scrapped the entire season. Instead, with their backs against the wall and a pervasive sense of dread hanging about their heads, the Panthers stood tall and answered the challenge. In the process, they answered a lot of questions -- about their character, their drive, their hunger, their dreams.

The Panthers demonstrated that, in the words of Jesus Jones, "Right here, right now, there is no other place I want to be." Panther Nation is with them, and right here, right now -- 7 p.m. Thursday at Farrington Field -- is where they'll watch "the world wake up from history." The Panthers are back. All they ask is that you have theirs.

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JV Panthers Pounce on South Hills

The JV Panthers rolled to a 20-0 win over South Hills, paced by a strong defensive effort.

The Panthers allowed just five first downs during the contest.

Hector Mendez launched Paschal's scoring on the opening drive, carrying the ball five times for roughly 60 yards.

Mark Lewis scored the Panthers' second touchdown on a gadget play. QB Chris Hanson tossed the ball to Mendez, who handed the ball to Adam Ruffu. Ruffu in turn handed the ball to Lewis to complete the double reverse and Lewis took it to the house from 35 yards out.

Paschal's last touchdown came on a Hanson pass to Ruffu. Tyler Arner scored the two-point conversion.

Every JV player ended up playing multiple plays on both offense and defense. They played flawlessly, learned something new and had fun.

The JV Panthers next play at 5 p.m. Wednesday in Weatherford.

Special thanks to Brandon Lillard for his insights into the JV contest.

Freshmen Panthers Pounce on South Hills for Rain-Soaked Victory

The combined freshmen white and freshmen purple squad defeated the South Hills Scorpions 14-0 on a night marked by inclement weather.

Both Paschal scores came in the first quarter. The first touchdown came on a 45-yard run by QB Adrian Rodriguez on a third and 12 play.

The second score came just one drive later, when RB Marco Marquiz hooked up with WR Jarronald Tate on a 28-yard halfback pass.

After the score a torrential downpour greeted the two teams, soaking the field (and t-shirt clad coaches) and rendering the turf a muddy mess. Moving the ball on offense thereafter became a tall order.

The Panthers did manage several more long drives, but could not find their way back to the end zone. The defense, however, held strong and secured the third shutout in six games for all freshmen teams. Jeriden White, K.C. Packer, Jake Nelson and Alfredo Retana all played terrific defense, with several tackles each.

The win was credited to the purple squad, upping its record to 1-2. The white team's record remains 2-1.

Both teams return to action Wednesday night against Weatherford. The white team will play at 5:30, and the purple team will follow. Both games will be played at historic Bill Allen Field on the Paschal campus.

Special thanks to Coach Mike Snapp for his game day analysis of freshmen action.

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Visit The Panther Football Website at www.leaguelineup.com/paschalfootball

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

Questions or comments? email PHSFootballBooster@msn.com.