

WEEK SEVEN RECAP



Panthers Face another Tough Loss but Look to Rebound v. North Crowley

It was a beautiful night at a beautiful facility. Pity the outcome was less than beautiful, but even still there was much to like when the Paschal Panthers battled the Richland Rebels Friday night.

WR Chris Smith and QB Robert Dennis teamed up for two beautiful touchdowns. Indeed, Dennis was 9-for-17 passing for 196 yards. Smith hauled in three of those passes for 94 yards. RB Demarcus Kindles broke loose for a thrilling 29-yard run. Patrick Alland split the uprights with a pretty-as-you-please PAT. The final score aside, the defense had some brilliant plays of its own, whether it was a linebacker making a sack or a defensive back breaking up a pass or countless Panther defenders shedding solid blocks to make stops.

The game began as so many have this season. On the Panthers' first play from scrimmage, a Richland defender was clearly in the neutral zone when the ball was snapped but the referees chose not to see what was right in front of their faces. Instead, the defensive push the encroachment allowed resulted in a fumble in the Panther backfield. The Rebels' offensive juggernaut got the ball on the Panthers' 28. The defense put up a good fight, but the Rebels were able to score at 9:11 of the first quarter.

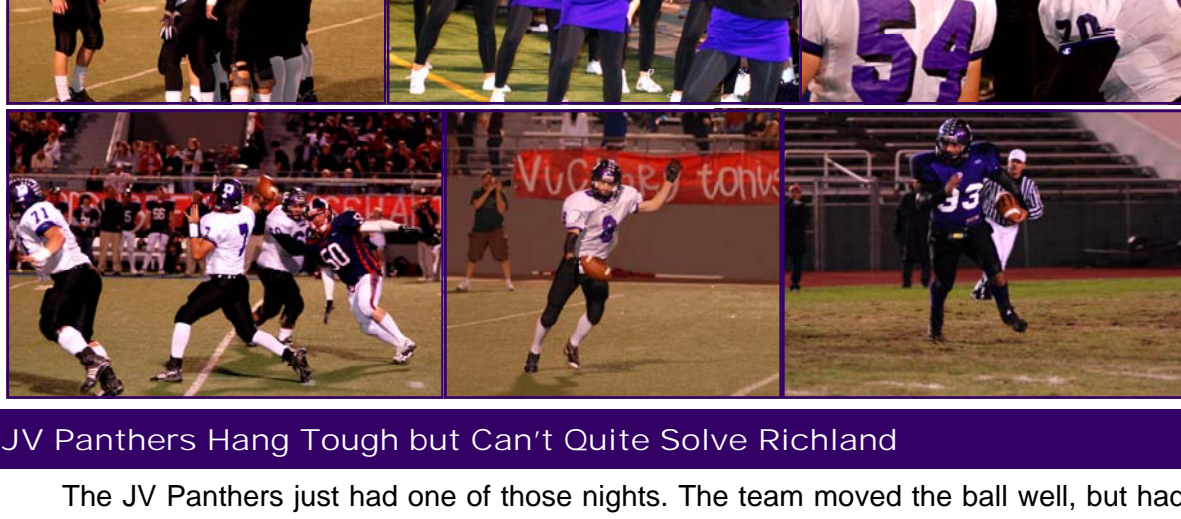
On the ensuing kickoff, Angel Arguetta returned the ball to the Paschal 30, but the refs found their hankies and flagged the Panthers for a block in the back, pushing the ball back to the 20. The Panthers, feeding Richland a steady diet of RB Emmanuel Smith, earned a first down. Kindles then made his dash to the Richland 35. Smith over the course of two plays got Paschal another first down at the Richland 25. Lamentably, the Panthers' drive stalled. But at the end of the first quarter, the Panthers trailed just 7-0, hanging right in there against a truly impressive team.

Richland began to wear the Panthers down in the second quarter, but the team showed resilience and fight. Paschal got on the board at the 5:11 mark of the third quarter. The touchdown was set up by an Arguetta kick return to the Paschal 38. Dennis then found Chris Smith, who demonstrated true Panther fight by wresting the ball from a Richland defender for an 8-yard reception. On the next play, from the Paschal 46, Dennis threw a strike to Smith for a touchdown.

The Panthers scored again at 5:15 of the fourth quarter. Dennis was pressured out of the pocket, rolled left and, while eluding a would-be tackler, hit Chris Smith, who again made a fighting catch to give the Panthers another score. Alland's PAT kick was true.

The final score was not likely the sort of thing Paschal partisans will be hanging on their refrigerators. Still, the team never quit. The Panthers may have gotten into an early hole under conditions that were arguably sketchy, but Richland is a stout opponent with more overall team speed than the Panthers have encountered to date. Like Abilene, Richland is good.

The game was excellent preparation for the Panthers' next opponent, the North Crowley Panthers, who likewise feature tremendous speed and athleticism. The Senior Night contest is scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday at Farrington Field. The game will be the team's last home event. The Panthers conclude their 2009 regular season Oct. 30 at Burseson.



JV Panthers Hang Tough but Can't Quite Solve Richland

The JV Panthers just had one of those nights. The team moved the ball well, but had trouble punching it in.

Offensive linemen Alex Hulen, Walker Moore and Matt Keller had solid games. Receivers Repairer Etuk, Adam Ruffu, Rory Ginsburg and Ben Bradley all had receptions on passes from QB Chris Hanson.

Lamentably, the offense was stopped twice inside the 10-yard-line, but gave it everything it had. The defense likewise played well, containing an explosive Richland attack.

The JV squad next squares off against the North Crowley Panthers in a game scheduled to begin at 6 p.m. Friday at North Crowley High School.

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

Freshmen Panthers Purple Squad Acquits Itself Well v. Richland

The freshmen purple team played one of its best games of the season, coming up just a bit short in its contest against Richland High School.

RB Marco Marquez rushed for well in excess of 100 yards and got the Panthers on the board with a 75-yard touchdown run in the second quarter. QB Adrian Rodriguez later found WR Jerronald Tate for a 10-yard TD pass with 12 seconds remaining in the game. However, Richland recovered the ensuing onside kick attempt to seal the victory.

DB/WR Alfredo Retana, RB/NT Jeridan White and DB/WR Marcus Reyna also had standout nights for the Panthers.

The freshmen white squad endured a tougher night but gained valuable experience. Both teams are scheduled to return to action Friday night against North Crowley. The white squad is slated to play at 5, with the purple team scheduled to play immediately after. Both games are at Paschal's Bill Allen Field.

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

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.

Panthers Gear Up for Senior Night and Hope to Enjoy a True Home Field

It was one of the coolest scenes in sports Saturday night. As the Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets finished off their upset win over the then-No. 4 Virginia Tech Hokies, the stadium public address system blared "Kernkraft 400" by Zombie Nation as fans and Yellow Jacket players alike hopped up in down in joyous techno celebration.

That was legit. And it was yet another example of the kind of happiness and joie de vivre one can experience with a true home field advantage. Another example closer at hand came Friday night, when the Paschal Panthers traveled to the Birdville ISD's Fine Arts Athletic Complex.

The evening was gorgeous, the weather sublime, the facility magnificent. The well-maintained stands are close to the field – close enough to hear the players and their bone-crunching hits – not a zip code away as it seems at Farrington or Clark fields in Fort Worth. The big-screen video replay screen is awesome, and was used to highlight Richland players of note and to rev up the home team fans with exhortations to cheer. Fort Worth's fields are lucky to have a working functional scoreboard.

Another beauty of last Friday night's experience was that the Birdville ISD does not subject fans to a body cavity search or make them waste time going through metal detectors or paw through purses and wallets. No one appeared to feel unsafe or at risk, and likewise no one felt violated at having some stranger open up their wallets and checkbooks. But I'm happy to give the benefit of the doubt: Perhaps the Homeland Security Department has issued an alert for terrorists smuggling WMDs in checkbooks.

I bring this up not to disparage the Fort Worth ISD. I'm well aware it is a large district with broader concerns than our tender sensibilities or amenities at sports venues, concerns that range from educating some 80,000 students to ensuring safety to dealing with declining tax revenues. I'm also aware that school districts throughout the country are dealing with budget shortfalls by eliminating athletics altogether. I'm second to none in being grateful the FWISD continues to understand the value of interscholastic competition.

That having been said, Paschal never enjoys a game that feels like a home game. No Fort Worth school does. The facilities – and again, I'm thankful to have them – are sterile and antiseptic. The announcers do nothing to add to the home field buzz; we're as likely to get some self-styled jokester who tosses out stale Colgate v. Brest scores for tickets this season, are getting increasingly annoyed at having people rifle through their personal effects before being allowed into the facilities.

The season began with a small ray of hope, a little something to make the games feel more like home. The district, apparently, was going to let schools put together CDs for play during pre-game warm-ups. The Panthers got to do this before their first home game, but someone heard a word he or she didn't like and the district put the kibosh on the music. The offending song was removed from the CD, but the district has continued to prohibit the team from playing it. Frankly, this all strikes me as a silly, petty and small-minded. The district does have more important things to worry about. Moreover, it has more than made its point, which I gather is that it is in charge. Message received. Now it's time to move on, and to give the Panthers the opportunity to feel like a home team. Pre-game music costs the district nothing and would go at least a little way toward making home games more home-like.

The Panthers have one "home" game left. They should be allowed to play their music. And in the future, the district might want to take a look at the Birdville playbook. Birdville has managed to work sponsorships for things like video replays and even time outs. It would seem that a district lamenting a lack of funds for athletics might seek proactive solutions such as those embraced by districts like Birdville. But maybe that's just me.

The preceding is the personal opinion of Geoff Campbell and does not reflect the views of Paschal High School, its administrators or its coaching staff.

