

# Titans Rally Comes Up Short

Putnam County Sentinel – Charlie Warnimont, Sports Editor

FREMONT – Thoughts of Ottawa-Glandorf's exciting Region Final win over Orrville popped up as the Titans were driving down the field and trailing 20-14 in the fourth quarter of the State Semi-Final game Saturday night with Chagrin Falls.

This time the Titans dreams died when a Tiger defender batted down a fourth down pass in the endzone giving Chagrin Falls a slim 20-14 win in a Division IV State Semi-Final at Don Paul Stadium in Fremont. The Tigers, 14-0, advance to the Division IV State Finals this Saturday against Kettering Alter, 14-0, while O-G saw its best season ever end at 11-3.

“It was a war. It was what we expected,” O-G coach Ken Schriener said. “We were just a little bit short. Last week we had the opportunity and went down and scored. This week we didn't get it done. It was a great ball game. Credit them, it was an outstanding effort.”

Chagrin Falls took the lead with 3:52 left when Bobby Winkeman scored on a one yard run. O-G's Brian Laubenthal came around the left side of the line and blocked the extra point leaving the Tigers with a six point lead.

Ottawa-Glandorf took over at their own 33 and methodically moved down field behind the running of Nathan Kahle and a fourth down pass play to Ryan Kuhlman for 21 yards to the Chagrin Falls 23 yard line.

On first down, the Titans attempted a double reverse only to see the Tiger defense drop Zach Buckland for a 10 yard loss. Kahle picked up nine yards on second down, then hit Ryan Kuhlman for six yards bringing up a fourth and five from the 19. On fourth down, Kahle lofted a pass towards Matt Peck in the endzone Chagrin Falls safety John Storaasli raced across the endzone and knocked down the pass just before it reached Peck.

“We had a couple of nice big plays to get down the field, we just ran out of downs,” Schriener said. “We didn't panic. We made some things happen. Nathan did a great job getting us organized in our two minute offense. It took a fourth down play by their safety to save the game. They have fast, athletic kids and that was what won the game for them. A lot of people have said we ran out of time, we just ran out of down!”

“It was only fitting that a defensive play decided the outcome as both teams defenses came up with key plays all game long to deny the opposing offense. Both teams were able to move the ball, but had trouble finishing off drives due to fine defensive plays and mistakes that hampered each team throughout the contest.”

“We moved the ball effectively,” Schriener said. “You look at the mistakes we made and actually the plays Chagrin Falls made stopping us twice on fourth down situations in the scoring zone, that's tough to swallow. It wasn't as much as us not getting it done, but them making big plays. Their middle linebacker played an outstanding game and they did some things up front that confused our kids.”

Early in the second quarter, the Titans appeared ready to tie the game, but on a fourth down play were stopped by the Tiger defense. Early in the fourth quarter, the Titans again were stopped at the Chagrin Falls 20 when Brandon Kuhlman was stuffed for no gain on fourth down.

“Give credit to our defense,” Chagrin Falls coach Mark Iammarino said. “They made some great stops down there. It was scary looking at the score, 20-14, but I have to give credit to our team, they did what they had to when they need to.”

For the most part, the Titan defense shut down a Tiger offense that had put up over 600 yards in their Regional Final win the week before. Against O-G, the Tigers were held to 308 yards, 244 of that on the ground. Jake Recker led a

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physical O-G defense with 11 tackles, two for losses, and Logan Kaufman finished with 11 tackles, one for a loss.

“Our defense has been our marquee all year,” Schriener said. “They were very physical tonight and that’s what we want to hang our hats on. The bottom line is that team has been putting up the points all year and we held them to 20 points.. Unfortunately, our offense wasn’t able to get the job done and that’s been our Achilles heel all year.”

The Titan defense tried to set the tone early as it appeared Laubenthal had come up with an interception to halt a Tiger drive. The play was nullified by a pass interference play and on the very next play Chris Gorman, 15 carries and 136 yards, went around the right side for a 25 yard scoring run.

O-G tied the contest with 4:32 left before the half when Brandon Kuhlman, 25 carries and 117 yards, scored on a three yard run. Ryan Kuhlman, five catches for 32 yards, caught two passes on the drive for 30 yards to help set up the score. That would be the halftime score.

The Titans came out of the locker room fired up and used a big play to start the second half when Ryan Kuhlman took the kickoff 71 yards to set up O-G at the Tiger 26. Kahle capped off an eight play drive when he spun into the endzone from two yards out.

Chagrin Falls came right back to score as they went 65 yards in six plays as quarterback Chris Trinetti hooked up with Pat Nadeau for a 31 yard scoring strike.

Kahle finished with 96 yards rushing on 15 carries and passed for another 107 yards as he was 7 of 15 passing. O-G had 325 yards for the game.

“I’m so proud of the way the kids played,” Schriener said. “One day they will look back on this and be proud of what they accomplished.”

“Jake Recker hung it out there. He was flying all around the field making plays. It’s tough to get a feel for their speed. We kind of came out and got a feel for them the first series, then got after it the second series. We played well throughout the night.”

“Congratulations to O-G,” Iammarino said. “That’s a great team. They are so young, they are going to be scary next year. Their coach does a great job with them and they are so fundamentally strong with a solid quarterback.”

“I have to give our kids credit. We lost our composure a little bit, with some penalties, but we were able to rebound and come up with some big plays”

Trinetti had 65 yards rushing for the Tigers and was 4 of 7 passing for 65 yards. Nadeau caught three passes for 61 yards.