

ANDALE FOOTBALL SMOKE SIGNALS

November 12, 2018

The last time the Andale Indians had met the Scott City Beavers on the gridiron was in the second round of the state playoffs in the 1991 football season. The Andale season ended with the Indians fumbling on the first play of their possession in the second overtime, after holding the visiting Beavers to a field goal in their portion of the second overtime. Scott City, 9-6 winners that day, breezed through the rest of their march to the 4A title.

Both teams came into Friday night's game with identical 10-0 records, with the Beavers shutting out five of their opponents while the Indians blanked six of theirs. The Beavers relied heavily on senior running back Wyatt Hayes, who was approaching a 4000 yard career rushing mark, while the Indians top four rushers combined for 2300 yards for the season.

There would be no dramatic finish for this contest as the Indians rolled to an unexpected three touchdown victory, 35-14, in a game which one brave pundit favored Andale by two points.

Things started out badly for the Beaver's Wyatt Hayes when he tried to bull his way through the Andale line. After two plays for no gain, the visitors went to the toss sweep only to be nailed for four yard loss by Scotti Easter to force a punt. It looked like two heavyweights were locked in mortal combat when the Beavers forced Andale to punt, but the worm turned quickly when Scott City botched a handoff into the waiting arms of Cayden Albers at the Scott City 38. Junior Mac Brand covered the last 25 yards in four plays to put the Indians on the board.

The Beavers, with Hayes accounting for most of the yards, answered the Andale score and tied the game on the second play of the second quarter. Andale countered with an 18 play, 85 yard drive that culminated with Brand's second touchdown on a 3 yard run. The drive consumed 8:50 of the second quarter. The Beaver's offensive efforts in the second quarter were cut short when Eli Rowland intercepted on their first play of their next possession. The Indians were driving for yet another score, but ran out of time.

In the third quarter, with Brand carrying most of the load running and catching, the Indians moved to the Beaver eight yard line. A swing pass to fullback Devin Marx pushed the Andale lead to 21-7. Once again the Andale defense rose to the occasion, holding Scott to three plays and a punt that set in motion the Indian's drive for their fourth touchdown. Quarterback Ethan Baalmann scored on the third play of the fourth quarter, extending the lead to 28-7.

Passing on every down, the visitors mounted their longest scoring drive of the game. Completing five passes and getting a pass interference penalty on the Indians, the Beavers moved the ball from their own 12 yard line to close the gap to 28-14. The Beaver enthusiasm was quickly dampened when Mac Brand, on the first play of the Andale possession, popped through the middle of the Scott City defense and outran all of his pursuers for a 55 yard score, making the final score 35-14.

Brand, with 192 rushing yards and 21 yards in pass receptions, enjoyed a career night. Baalmann completed 11 of 13 passes for 93 yards. Junior Eli Clouse made all five of his PAT attempts. The Indians outrushed the Beavers 288 to 45 yards.

Scott City coach Jim Turner attributed his team's loss to the Indians' physicality. To paraphrase the old Lucky Strike cigarette commercial, "It's what's up front that counts". The Indians have plenty up front with a bevy of competitive throwers from the Andale Track & Field team. Seniors Mason Fairchild, Cooper VenJohn, Ethan Shackelford, Garrett Simon, Devin Marx, Cory Mohr, juniors Creighton Camp and Carson Fair were major contributors to team scores in the events where strength matters most.

Let there be little doubt, the Lions share of the credit belongs to the defense that completely stifled an offense that had run rough shod over all of its opponents this year. The clock consuming Andale offense kept Scott City's high powered offense off the field for much of the game.

The win advances the Indians to the semifinal round to determine the West bracket team that will advance to the state 3A championship game in Gowans Stadium on the Hutchinson Community College campus in Hutchison. Friday, the Indians will travel to Pratt to take on the Greenbacks, who advanced to the game with a 46-0 win over previously unbeaten Smoky Valley. Both the Indians and the Greenbacks enter the contest 11-0.

The Greenbacks are led by four year starter Travis Theis who led them to the 4A-II championship his sophomore year. Smoky Valley coach Tim Lambert dubbed Theis as the best back he has seen in a number of years. The apparent strong suit is his strength in breaking tackles. A running back in previous campaigns, Theis has by necessity moved to quarterback.

The Greenbacks closest game was a 32-16 win over Halstead. Andale beat the Dragons 35-0.

All four teams in the 3A semifinals are undefeated. Galena kept their unbeaten string alive with a double overtime 42-36 win over last year's 3A runner-up Marysville. Sabetha, last year's 3A champion, had an easier time of it, defeating Parsons 62-18.

The answer to last week's Andale Trivia Question: Dante Nickel, father of AHS student Kasey Nickel, created the logo for Chapman High School that resolved the school's dispute with Notre Dame University over the use of Notre Dame's copywrited leprechaun logo. The new logo applies the attributes of KSU's "power cat" or AHS' "power Indian" to the leprechaun.

This week's Andale Trivia Question: Who on the Andale Football coaching staff was once a Greenback?

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