

Bulldogs Battle Titans at Home

By Judy Rogers

The GPHS Football team returned home to take on the Triplains/Brewster Titans on October 11. The Bulldogs demonstrated the improvements they have made so far this season as they stayed close to the Titans for much of the game. However, the numerous penalties got to them as they lost in the end 22-48. “Super proud of my boys!! Came up short, but gave it all we had!” said head coach Travis Smith.

The Bulldogs won the toss and elected to receive. Senior Shane Ryburn returned the kickoff to their own 20-yard line. Following a one-yard loss, quarterback Grant Spresser completed a pass to Tristan Schwarz who broke a tackle attempt and ran the ball in for a touchdown. The score was called back, however, due to a block in the back on the Bulldogs. The boys connected on another pass, but the Titans were ready as they swarmed on and dropped Schwarz. The Bulldogs passed again for a short gain, but Schwarz ended the series with a punt.

The Titans slowly gained first downs despite numerous stops by the Bulldog defense. As they approached the end zone, a pass covered by senior Josh Barnhart fell incomplete turning the ball over to GP. Barnhart then gained 4 and Schwarz gained 3. Barnhart broke through for another Bulldog touchdown only to once again have it called back—this time for a holding penalty. Unable to gain the first down, the Bulldogs were forced to punt once again.

The Bulldog defense continued to work hard and stop the Titans from advancing throughout most of the first quarter. With just over a minute left before the buzzer, the Titans found the end zone. GP’s defense held strong on the extra point attempt and the quarter ended with the Titans leading 6-0.

The Bulldogs started off the second with a successful pass complete to senior Zach Spresser. He was pushed out of bounds at the six yard line. Barnhart carried the ball before Schwarz ran in the touchdown to tie the game up 6-6. The Titans return the ball to the Bulldogs 25 yard line only to be brought down by junior Domonic Luna. Benny Martinez, junior, then knocked the ball loose and G. Spresser recovered. Several penalty calls pushed the Bulldogs back to their own ten yard line and they were forced to punt. The defense continued to make stops, but allowed the Titans to move the ball enough to get into the end zone for a 12-6 lead with 7:15 until the half.

With the Bulldogs passing to gain yards, the Titans intercepted a pass attempt and ran it in for a touchdown just seconds later. The Bulldogs held them on the extra point attempt and fell behind 18-6. Back in possession, GP gained several first downs before the coaches called a time out. Returning to the field, the boys continued to move the ball downfield as Schwarz crossed the goal line for another Bulldog score. The extra point attempt was run in by Barnhart, but called back due to a flag. Ryburn caught the ball for the second attempt and the Bulldogs closed their deficit to 18-14.

With under two minutes until the half, the Bulldogs were fired up and played aggressive defense to hold the Titans. With six seconds on the clock, a timeout was called. Back in the game, senior Zach Spresser intercepted a Titan pass at the buzzer. The ball was dropped when the buzzer sounded, but was not called dead by the referee’s whistle. A Titan picked up the ball and ran into the end zone for a half time score. With the clock on 0, they ran in the extra points to lead 26-14.

Despite the half-time play, the Bulldogs were determined to claim their home field as they fought hard to stop the Titans first series and take over on their own 22 yard line. On the first down Schwarz was sprung by the line to run in a 58 yard touchdown. Z. Spresser caught the PAT pass and the Bulldogs were back to within 4 with a 22-26 score.

Ryburn, Luna, and Martinez continued to pushed the Titans back and forced multiple fumbles, but the Titans managed to recover them all. However, the Bulldog defense held and forced them to punt. As the flags continued to fly on the field, the teams battled it out throughout much of the third. The Titans passed into the end zone as the quarter wound down to start the fourth with a 34-22 lead.

As the cold wind blew and the fourth quarter advanced, the boys on the field worked hard and never gave up. The Bulldogs had one more touchdown called back due to a penalty. The Titans also tallied up numerous penalties throughout the battle as they added two more scores to their final 48-22 win.

Despite the loss, the Bulldogs tallied up some good yardage with Tristan Schwarz leading the team with 145 total yards rushing and receiving. Josh Barnhart gained 60 while Grant Spresser totaled 97 with passing and rushing. Zach Spresser received 33 and Shane Ryburn rushed for 9. Benny Martinez and Domonic Luna led the tackling with 17 and 16 along with Ryburn-12, G. Spresser and Ziegelmeir each with 9, Z. Spresser-98, and Schwarz and Barnhart with 5 each.

The Bulldogs hit the road this week as they travel to the third in state ranked Wallace County Wildcats before returning home to finish their season against Wheatland/Grinnell and Northern Valley.