

## Bulldogs Fall to Bluejays in Afternoon Game

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Bulldog football team hosted the Ashland Bluejays for a 5:00 pm game in Rexford on September 8. The Dogs got down, but fought back to finish the game with a 31-48 loss for the Bulldogs.

The Bluejays opened the game with a touchdown and a 6-0 lead. The Bulldogs worked hard to move the ball, but the Bluejays were able to add yet another score to lead 12-0. The Dogs connected on several passes from quarterback Josh Rath to Diego Perez, Dylan Wark, and Miguel Garcia to gain first downs running out of time as the quarter ended 12-0.

The Bluejays took over the ball in the second quarter and quickly added another touchdown. Wyatt Amlong blocked the extra point kick attempt to give the Bluejays an 18-0 lead. Rath returned the kick for the Bulldogs and ran a first down. Perez ran another first down as the Dogs moved the ball down field. Wark finished the drive in the end zone for the first Bulldog score of the night. Rath connected with Amlong on the PAT putting the Dogs on the board 7-18.

Ashland fumbled the ball that Jose Rios kicked back to the Bluejays and Rath recovered for the Dogs. Rath connected with Garcia again for a short gain. Additional passes fell short to turn the ball back to the Bluejays. Despite repeated tackles by Wark and Perez, the Bluejays once again crossed the goal line. This time the extra point kick was good and the Jays led 26-7.

Both teams worked hard on the field to stop the other's advance. The Bluejays worked their way to the end zone to score again with just 13 seconds until the half. Another PAT kick cleared the uprights to end the half with a 34-7 Bluejay lead.

Ashland received the ball to start the second half only to be stopped by the Dogs strong defense. The Dogs moved the ball as the teams traded possessions. The Bluejays were able to score once more midway through the quarter increasing the spread to 42-7. The Dogs pulled together on the next series and moved up the field with runs by Perez, Rath and Wark. A pass from Rath to Bruggeman connected to gain yards as the quarter ended.

The Dogs opened the fourth with a touchdown pass from Rath to Perez. Rios kicked the extra points to close the spread to 15-42. Garcia kicked a short ball back to the Bluejays. Amlong and Perez made several stops as the Jays moved the ball close to the goal line. The ball was knocked loose on the 4-yard line and Amlong recovered it for the Bulldogs, keeping the Jays away from the goal. Garcia caught a pass from Rath for a first down, then Rath ran to the 15 yard line. Wark finished the drive crossing the goal line for another Bulldog touchdown. Rios kicked the extra points and the Dogs had 23 to the Bluejays 42.

The Jays answered with their final touchdown of the game but the game was far from over. As the game drew to a close, Perez caught a pass from Rath to score the Dogs final touchdown of the game. Rios kicked a third PAT for the final score of 31-48 in favor of the Bluejays.

"I thought we played pretty well," said Diego Perez, who led the team with 16 tackles. "We have enormous potential this year. If we start the game out aggressive, we won't have to work to come from behind. Our defense has improved a lot from last year

due to experience. We have a good kicker and have improved on passing and taking care of the ball.”

Perez also helped lead the team with 186 total yards along with 187 from Josh Rath. Wark contributed 98 yards, Garcia 55, Bruggeman 15, and Amlong 2. Wark added 11 tackles, Abe Taylor 5, Bruggeman 4, Garcia 3, and Rios 2. The Dogs will play their first road game against Deerfield in Deerfield on September 15.