

PREP FOOTBALL

# Bulldog breakaway: Ellensburg rolls past rival Prosser after intermission

Yakima Herald-Republic

Updated Sep 24, 2016

ELLENSBURG — For a half it was a ball game.

With the promise of last year's overtime classic settling over a chilled and breezy Andreotti Field, Ellensburg departed for the locker room with a one-possession lead over its rival Prosser in Friday's much-anticipated CWAC showdown.

But when Prosser was penalized 15 yards for returning to the field late, the Bulldogs seized the moment with an iron grip and squeezed the life out of this one. With a three-touchdown blitz in the third quarter and an equally dominant effort on defense, Ellensburg rolled to a 35-12 victory that showcased just how far the team has come since a season-opening loss at Royal. Ellensburg's dual-threat quarterback Bryce Helgeson, coming of age quickly in his new position, ran for 88 yards and a touchdown and ignited the third-quarter breakaway with two scoring strikes to Xander Orejudos.

After completing just three passes with an interception in the first half and relying mostly on his legs, Helgeson went 5-for-5 with Orejudos to start the second half, gaining 5, 24, 14, 22 and 54 yards for most of his 146-yard total. The 54-yarder came when Prosser's defense completely lost track of Orejudos and left him unmarked near the Ellensburg sideline. Helgeson hastily threw what would be generously described as a heavy wobbler, but Orejudos came back for it and dashed untouched for a 35-6 lead at the 1:58 mark in the third period.

"I just love that kid," Orejudos said of Helgeson, who was a receiver last year. "I feel really confident with him at quarterback even though it's his first year. That last one was great because I just stayed over on the sideline and kept quiet. When no one lined up on me I yelled, 'Bryce, Bryce!' He threw it to me with his fingers on the tip."

That's how it went in the second half as everything broke Ellensburg's way. While the Bulldogs' offense scored three touchdowns in the space of six plays in the decisive third quarter, the defense shut out the potent Prosser offense and allowed just four first downs.

"The kids really responded well in the second half," said Ellensburg coach Randy Affholter. "We're a team that's built to grind and we tried to establish that first. Then we worked in some passes and Bryce did a nice job. Since week one he has improved leaps and bounds. The best thing about the Royal game (a 21-14 loss) was seeing what we could do and couldn't do with Bryce. He has come a long ways." Orejudos hauled in six of Helgeson's eight completions for 124 yards. Complimenting Helgeson's playmaking runs — he carried the ball 17 times for 88 yards — were Mason Sherwood and Jake Andrews, who combined for 79 yards and scored a touchdown each.

Defensively, Ellensburg was stellar. After Prosser answered Ellensburg's first score, the Bulldogs forced five punts, stopped the Mustangs on downs twice and kept all-state quarterback Tanner Bolt from hurting them deep. Bolt completed 20 of 42 passes for 217 yards and touchdowns to Noah Flores and Michael Kernan.

"Steve (Reeves) did a great job with our defensive plan," Affholter said. "We studied a lot of the film from the state quarterfinal (a 31-0 loss last year) and the things they did that were so successful. We were much better against that system this time." While Prosser did have success moving the ball between the 20s, actually outgaining Ellensburg 331-313, the Mustangs were undone by penalties. Prosser was flagged 14 times for 130 yards and that, coupled with some struggles on special teams, kept the Mustangs in tough spots all night.

"The best thing about this rivalry is how it forces each team to catch up to the other," Affholter said. "We win, they adjust and win. We lose, make some changes and win. Back and forth like that and it makes both of us better."

Both teams resume league play next Friday at home with East Valley at Prosser and Selah at Ellensburg.

**Prosser 6 0 0 6 — 12**

**Ellensburg 7 7 21 0 — 35**

Ell — Bryce Helgeson 37 run (Elliot Hougardy kick)

Pro — Noah Flores 13 pass from Tanner Bolt (kick blocked)

Ell — Jake Andrews 2 run (Hougardy kick)

Ell — Mason Sherwood 4 run (Hougardy kick)

Ell — Xander Orejudos 22 pass from Helgeson (Hougardy kick)

Ell — Orejudos 54 pass from Helgeson (Hougardy kick)

Pro — Michael Kernan 15 pass from Bolt (run failed)

## **INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS**

**RUSHING** — Prosser, Flores 10-57, Kord Tuttle 6-43, Josiah Stutzman 6-13, Bolt 7-2, Kernan 1-2, Team-(minus 3). Ellensburg, Helgeson 17-88, Sherwood 11-46, Andrews 14-33.

**PASSING** — Prosser, Bolt 20-42-0-217. Ellensburg, Helgeson 8-14-1-146.

**RECEIVING** — Prosser, Kernan 8-108, Flores 5-56, Kolby Swift 2-22, Tuttle 1-13, Skylar Gray 1-8, Robert Perez 1-6, Ryan Harle 1-4, Chase Courtney 1-1. Ellensburg, Orejudos 6-124, Ethan Robertson 1-20, Sherwood 1-2.