

Ellensburg pushes past Prosser to advance to state semifinals

By Roger Underwood

YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

MOSES LAKE, Wash. - If there's anything Garrett Hull likes less than talking about himself it's taking credit for something good, even if the positive deed was performed by Hull himself. But if there's one thing the Ellensburg senior is undeniably good at, whether he enjoys being lauded for it or not, it's winning.

"What makes Garrett really special," Bulldogs football coach Randy Affholter said after Hull and his teammates used an exemplary second half to beat Prosser 34-20 in a Class 2A quarterfinal Saturday, "is he's such a great competitor. He really is, whether it's football, basketball or baseball. "And another thing is, he loves moments like this. He loves moments like this in games like this."

Games like this, on a raw and breezy early evening at Lions Field, would qualify as a prep gridiron classic in just about anyone's estimation - two standout teams engaged in a back-and-forth tug of war until Ellensburg, taking its first lead on Hull's fourth-quarter interception return for a touchdown, gained a permanent upper hand. The result of the second-ranked Bulldogs' triumph, coming five weeks after a 21-14 conquest of the Mustangs at Prosser, means a second straight semifinal matchup with three-time defending champion and third-ranked Lynden.

Ellensburg (12-0), will take on the Lions (11-1) next Friday or Saturday, with Saturday seeming the more likely date and Lions Field a potential site.

Lynden routed Hockinson on Saturday, 52-28. Last year the Lions downed Ellensburg 21-7 en route to their third straight title and sixth since 2006. "We knew," Affholter said,

"that to win the championship we'd have to run the gauntlet, and that means Prosser, Lynden and then Tumwater or Sedro-Wooley. So yeah, we're excited to play Lynden next week."

On a day when Prosser, seeking its fourth straight semifinal berth, seemed bent on preventing explosive Bulldogs senior Gabe Caskey from beating them, Ellensburg simply turned to Hull and fellow senior Brayton Leach. Caskey, of course, was a factor despite Prosser's concerted efforts to the contrary. The powerful 5-11, 185-pounder produced 91 yards and two touchdowns on 12 carries, and his 52-yard scoring burst late in the third quarter tied the score at 20.

He also was his typically destructive self linebacker. It stayed tied until the Mustangs, facing third-and-8 from their own 14 yard line, threw a pass into their right flat. In stepped Hull, who like Caskey excels on both offense and defense, for a 22-yard pick-six with 10:30 to play that gave E-burg a 27-20 lead.

"My coaches," Hull said, "put me in a good position, and I just did 1/11th of the job for our defense." Leach, who ran 12 times for 67 yards while Hull posted 66 yards on 11 carries from his quarterback position, embellished on his teammate's comments. "That play definitely got us over the hump," Leach said. "And that's just the way Garrett is. He always rises to the occasion."

Nor was Hull finished. After a Prosser three-and-out, the Bulldogs marched 84 yards in 14 plays with Leach carrying eight times and Hull scoring on an 8-yard scamper around his left side to seal it, 34-20, with 1:39 left.

"That last drive of theirs," Prosser coach Benji Sonnichsen said after his team's season ended with a 10-3 record, "they went to Leach more and just sort of wore us down. We really felt good at halftime (ahead 20-13). It seemed almost like a half of offensive perfection for us."

Indeed, the Mustangs built their advantage off an 18-carry, 93-yard performance by senior running back Adrian Lochrie, who scored on runs of 1, 2 and 7 yards with the

latter tally coming 35 seconds before halftime. Lochrie finished with 105 yards on 23 tries. Ellensburg countered with a 5-yard TD by Caskey and an 8-yard scoring pass from Hull to Nick Broderius.

"The pick-six looked like a no-brainer," Sonnichsen said, "but here's what happened. Garrett was playing a corner on Cardell, who we sent across the middle. But instead of covering Cardell, Garrett intercepted a ball we threw to our running back. "We had not run that play before. I saved it specifically for Prosser, and if we'd thrown to Cardell it would have been a touchdown. That's the kind of night they had." And for the second straight meeting against Ellensburg, the Mustangs were shut out in the second half after holding a lead at intermission.

Prosser 7 13 0 0 - 20

Ellensburg 7 6 7 14 - 34

Pros - Adrian Lochrie 1 run (Javier Diaz kick)

Ell - Gabe Caskey 5 run (Cristian Barrientos kick)

Pros - Lochrie 2 run (kick failed)

Ell - Nick Broderius 8 pass from Garrett Hull (kick blocked)

Pros - Lochrie 7 run (Diaz kick)

Ell - Caskey 48 run (Barrientos kick)

Ell - Hull 22 interception return (Barrientos kick)

Ell - Hull 8 run (Barrientos kick)

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING - Prosser, Lochrie 23-105, Cardell Jones 11-69, Tanner Bolt 2-15, Kason Blair 6-0, Thomas Niemeyer 4-17. Ellensburg, Brayton Leach 12-67, Caskey 12-91, Hull 11-66, Benny Lee 1-40.

PASSING - Prosser, Jones 4-6-0-12, Blair 3-4-1-26, Bolt 7-8-0-76. Ellensburg, Hull 9-18-0-49.

RECEIVING - Prosser, Jones 5-44, Lochrie 3-29, J.J. Martin 2-13, Diaz 2-12, Michael Kernan 1-7, Blair 1-9. Ellensburg, Bryce Helgeson 5-44, Lee 3-14, Leach 2-(minus 2), Caskey 2-26, Broderius 1-8.