

Prosser football advances to Class 2A state championship game

By Scott Spruill – Yakima Herald
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YAKIMA, Wash. -- If those actually were ghosts of Mustangs past floating around Zaepfel Stadium on Saturday, they obviously liked what they saw.

And even if a well-meaning apparition or two swooped in to lend a hand, this Prosser crew didn't really need the help. But thanks just the same.

"We kept our foot on the gas pedal and kept going," said Diaz, who opened the scoring with a 71-yard scoring reception on Prosser's first play and finished with nine catches for 155 yards. "That's a heck of a team, Sedro-Woolley. They're really big and fast and physical, and I respect them a lot. Nobody thought we could do this — we're too small or we have a new coach — but here we are. I love this feeling."

Prosser won three semifinal games at Zaepfel Stadium in 1991, 1993 and 1995 and is now 4-0 at the Yakima venue. That's as good a reason as any to explain the fortunate bounce that led to a 13-point blitz in the third quarter.

After Kernan drew Prosser even with the Cubs at 21-21 with his second touchdown, Diaz went for a medium-range pooch kick on the ensuing kickoff and only grazed the ball enough to make it go 10 yards in the frigid conditions. Intentional or not, Sedro-Woolley wasn't ready for it and junior Jude Schnellbach pounced on it for Prosser.

Seven plays later, Bolt pitched a low dart to Roy Borrego on an inside slant for a 9-yard touchdown. In a span of 2 minutes, 21 seconds, the Mustangs turned a 21-14 deficit into a 27-21 lead.

“That onside kick wasn’t planned,” said coach Corey Ingvalson. “You know what that was? It was Zaepfel being good to us. I don’t think we’ve lost a semifinal here. Javier just miss-hit it, but we got there and we’ll take it. That was a big momentum swing.”

Once in the lead, a defense that already had two playoff shutouts to its credit completely took over. After Sedro-Woolley’s short-field touchdown to open the third quarter, the Cubs were held on downs twice, intercepted twice and forced to punt after a three-and-out. Prosser gave up just 20 yards in the fourth quarter.

“That’s the first Wing-T team we’ve played all year and we knew they might get some big plays early,” said senior lineman Riley Lusk. “The way to win was to bounce back from those big plays and we did. That’s easily the most physical team we’ve played this year, but we came out with a will and determination to get it done. We brought everything we had.”

Kolby Swift and Borrego had interceptions in the final period, giving Prosser’s defense 10 picks in three playoff games, and Borrego also recovered a fumble in the second quarter.

“The pace of a Wing-T slows down a little in the second and third quarters, in terms of what our kids were seeing and reading,” Ingvalson said. “They got a few big plays, but we have so many kids back there who have played three years and are experienced. They stuck with it to the end and wore them down.”

Prosser has a week to prepare for another Wing-T attack in Tumwater, which defeated Archbishop Murphy 24-21 in the Tacoma Dome on Saturday. The Thunderbirds beat Prosser in the semifinals in 2012 and 2013.

“Our seniors and their leadership — to each other and the foundation of this program — got us this far,” Ingvalson said. “They played hard today for the tradition and they played hard for themselves.”

Sedro-Woolley 7 7 7 0 — 21

Prosser 6 8 13 6 — 33

Pro — Javier Diaz 71 pass from Tanner Bolt (kick blocked)

SW — Quinn Carpenter 1 run (Adrian Vasquez kick)

SW — Billy Hornbeck 85 pass from Devin Willard (Vasquez kick)

Pro — Michael Kernan 4 run (Kernan pass from Bolt)

SW — Carter Crosby 20 run (Vasquez kick)

Pro — Kernan 2 run (Diaz kick)

Pro — Roy Borrego 9 pass from Bolt (kick failed)

Pro — JR Coleman 11 run (pass failed)

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — SW, Carpenter 14-78, Crosby 13-52, Bryce Hornbeck 4-42, Billy Hornbeck 5-22, Thor Wagoner 2-6, Willard 3-1, Team 1-(minus 2). Prosser, Coleman 8-50, Kernan 11-41, Noah Flores 6-4, Bolt 2-(minus 2).

PASSING — SW, Willard 4-13-0-92, Crosby 1-9-2-28. Prosser, 29-47-4-312.

RECEIVING — SW, Billy Hornbeck 2-113, Wagoner 2-7, Gavin Holdt 1-0. Prosser, Diaz 9-155, Kason Blair 6-61, Borrego 4-32, Kernan 3-20, Eddie Zepeda 2-19, Flores 1-10, Kolby Swift 1-5, Luis Fernandez 1-5, Logan Hamlin 1-5, Josiah Stutzman 1-0.