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Prosser evades late scare to upset Tumwater in 2A title game

No. 1 Tumwater suffers only loss of season, 22-15, in 2A state championship game
In the upset, T-Birds are held to their lowest single-game point total of the year

Prosser wins the fifth state title in school history, and first since 2007

Tumwater High School's football team walked off the turf at the Tacoma Dome in silence.

Many of the players, including Tommy Brassfield, had tears streaming down their cheeks.

"It's heartbreaking," the senior center said. "Our slogan was, 'Finish the job,' and that all starts with finishing drives.

"We just couldn't do it."

No. 1 Tumwater (13-1) suffered its only loss of the season in its finale — a 22-15 upset by sixth-ranked Prosser (13-1) in Saturday's Gridiron Classic Class 2A title game.

The T-Birds committed five turnovers — four interceptions, one lost fumble — turned the ball over on downs twice, and punted four times as they were held to their lowest point total of the season.

"Right now they are hurting big time, and they should be because of the investment they put in," Tumwater coach Sid Otton said of his players. "But that

was a big-time performance by Prosser. That's two great teams having at it. We made a few too many mistakes on offense."

It looked all but over with one minute, 53 seconds to play.

Tumwater had just given up possession after Cade Otton was tackled short of a first down on fourth-and-10.

But Cade Otton — similar to what he did in last week's semifinal win against Archbishop Murphy — cut through the line on the ensuing drive to lay out Prosser quarterback Tanner Bolt, and landed on the ball when it slipped out of Bolt's hands at the Prosser 48-yard line.

"We just had to get the ball back," Cade Otton said. "The D-line did the same thing they did (last week), made a hole for me, and I just got the ball."

The play ignited the Tumwater sideline.

"It was a huge roller coaster," Brassfield said. "When he got that fumble back, I said, 'Let's get on the field, and let's do it.' I thought we were going to get it done, especially after that big run by Noah Andrews, but I don't know. We just sort of died out."

With 1:09 remaining, Andrews rushed 12 yards and went out of bounds at Prosser's 25. Four plays later, he slid to catch Spencer Dowers' 15-yard pass over the middle on fourth-and-10.

But the perfect season ended at the 10-yard line.

On second down, Dowers scrambled forward, and Prosser's Kolby Swift popped the ball into the air. Riley Lusk eventually recovered the fumble for the Mustangs.

"The corners were playing press, and our play is designed for if they were playing back, so it was supposed to be a quick pass," Andrews said. "Nobody could get open, so he tried to run it."

Dowers stayed in the pile until it was clear Prosser had possession with 30 seconds remaining.

"I just couldn't believe it happened," he said. "I was trying to get the fumble, couldn't get it, and they had the ball and won."

The Mustangs held Tumwater to 288 yards of total offense — the T-Birds have averaged 410 this season — and shut down 11 of 12 third-down conversion attempts.

“Our defense, especially in the playoffs, has stepped up so many times,” Bolt said. “They work hard and are physical and fast, and make plays when we need them at the end of the game.”

Prosser’s passing game was problematic for Tumwater throughout. Bolt was 21 of 35 for 280 yards and three touchdowns, with one interception.

“He made some great plays and made plays with his feet,” Prosser coach Corey Ingvanson said. “They played a lot of man coverage. He made some tough throws into small windows.”

The win gives Prosser its fifth title in nine appearances in state championship games.

The Mustangs opened the scoring with 4:07 remaining in the first quarter. Bolt found Michael Kernan across the middle, and he jetted 56 yards before he was pushed out at the 1-yard line by Jacob Crawford.

Bolt then hit Kolby Swift on a 1-yard fade to make it 8-0.

Two more Bolt touchdown tosses in the second quarter, to Kason Blair (30 yards) and Noah Flores (10 yards), gave the Mustangs a 22-8 advantage at halftime — a situation similar for Tumwater to last week’s semifinal, when it trailed 21-7 at the break.

“It was the same idea because we started again just super slow in the first half, and had to come out and adjust,” Brassfield said. “And we did, but we just didn’t adjust enough.”

Tumwater’s defense — which gives up an average of 13 points per game — held Prosser scoreless in the second half, but the offense couldn’t capitalize.

Three of the T-Birds’ five drives in the second half resulted in turnovers.

“Turnovers in a tight game will come back and bite you good,” Sid Otton said.

Wrapping up his 42nd season at Tumwater, the coach — who is Washington’s winningest high school coach with an all-time record of 384-129, and a six-time state champion — said next season will “most likely” be his last.

All five of Tumwater's state championships — it has appeared in the title game eight times — have come under Sid Otton, who joined the program in 1974.

Tumwater's senior class has been to the Tacoma Dome for four consecutive seasons, and lost each time — three times in the finals (2012, 2013, 2015) and once in the semifinals (2014).

“It stings a lot, especially for the seniors,” Sid Otton said. “This was their shot.”

Easton Trakel, a preseason all-state selection, returned for his final high school game after missing the majority of the season with a hamstring injury.

He hauled in a 42-yard pass from Andrews to score Tumwater's first touchdown with 3:28 remaining in the second quarter.

“This was my senior season after a big sophomore and junior year,” Trakel said. “Things happen for a reason. I'm just blessed to be able to play and put on a Tumwater jersey.”

Jarid Barrett's 3-yard run into the end zone with 6:54 remaining in the fourth quarter cut the Prosser lead to 22-15, but that's as close as the T-Birds would get.

“That's the best thing about this team, is we never give up until 0:00 is on the clock,” Dowers said.

Unfortunately for Tumwater, when the triple zeros did flash across the scoreboard, it was the team on the opposing sideline celebrating.

Prosser 8 14 0 0_22

Tumwater 0 8 0 7_15

P – Kolby Swift 1 pass from Tanner Bolt (JR Coleman pass from Logan Hamlin)

P – Kason Blair 30 pass from Bolt (Ricard Herrera kick)

P – Noah Flores 10 pass from Bolt (Herrera kick)

T – Easton Trakel 42 pass from Noah Andrews (Cade Otton pass from Spencer Dowers)

T – Jarid Barrett 3 run (Nathan Seaman kick)