

Cliff Abbott did his homework before deciding to abandon the traditional kicking game for a more aggressive style of play.

4th & GOAL



EARL WATT

He knew there would be moments when it appeared the short fields given to the opponent would look silly.

He knew that going for two points instead of one would leave some wondering why not kick the one-point gimme.

But he knew that the averages were in his favor.

He knew that if you stick to the strategy, it would pay off.

When tempted to kick the extra point to tie the game in the fourth quarter, Abbott's assistants kept their head coach on track with the plan — if you have a high-powered offense, let them do what they do.

Abbott followed through, and the pass for a two-point conversion gave the Redskins a lead.

Then, there was a temptation to kick the ball deep and make the Ulysses Tigers drive the length of the field to get into field goal range or score a go-ahead touchdown.

Or onside it and try to keep the ball in your high-powered offense's hands.

Abbott chose to onside, and the ball bounced off a Tiger and was recovered by a host of Redskins.

I was skeptical about the strategy. There were times the risks did not reap the reward.

But sticking with the plan paid off.

Liberal scored on the onside recovery drive, and not only scored, but with a 48-41 lead, they again went for two.

And they got it, putting the pressure on Ulysses to score twice late in the fourth quarter.

Who knows what we will see down the road, but for Game 1, the aggressive style of play paid off in a big, big way for the Redskins, and it just might have put the Redskins over a hump.

On the defensive side, Liberal still has a lot of work to do.

There will be those that say giving Ulysses short fields on failed onsides is unfair to the defense, and it is.

But the statistic that should stare the Angry Red defense in the face isn't the 41 points that Ulysses scored but the 7.18 yards per carry that Ulysses was able to gain.

Short field, long field, it doesn't matter when you average that much every time you run the ball.

Ulysses passed four times the entire game, and if the Redskin defense cannot stop the run, teams won't have to pass at all.

There is no question the offense will move the ball, but they do it so fast, the defense will have to be able to stop opponents.

Offense wins games, but we know what defense does.