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By JASON EPP

Leader & Times

The Beaver Dusters dropped their home opener to a physical, grind-it-out Burlington, Colorado Cougars team, 27-6.

“We got it taken to us up front,” Beaver Dusters head coach Mike McVay said. “They were very physical.”

Burlington was not fancy, but effective. The Panthers lined up in a basic veer formation and ran right at Beaver for 320 yards, averaging over 6.6 yards per carry for the game.

“They were very basic on offense, but that’s because what they do, they do very well,” McVay said. “They were driving us back and we were not getting off of blocks. They didn’t run anything we weren’t prepared for, they just ran it better than we expected.”

Beaver started well collecting two first downs on the game’s opening drive before sputtering out

at the Burlington 24.

The Panthers did not sputter on their first drive, scoring from 48 yards out to cap a seven play drive. Burlington struck again after a Beaver three-and-out with an 8-play TD drive that put the Panthers up 13-0 with 1:45 left in the first.

Burlington's third drive of the night was a 14-play, 87-yard drive that put the Panthers up by the halftime score of 20-0.

Burlington scored their final touchdown of the night on the first possession of the second half to go up 27-0.

Beaver moved the ball in the second half by focusing on inside run plays. Beaver faced a fourth and two to at the Burlington 17 to start the fourth quarter. Hadley Skaggs busted through to give the Dusters a first and goal at the two-yard line.

Two plays later Skaggs scored, cutting the lead to 27-6 with eleven minutes left.

"They were stacked on the outside waiting for us," McVay said. "We decided our best opportunity was between the tackles, and that worked out pretty well for us."

A Burlington fumble recovered by Gunnar Lansden on the next play gave the Dusters the ball on the Panther 37. Beaver converted a fourth down into a first down at the Burlington 24, but tragedy struck three plays later when Skaggs fumbled at the 18, ending the threat.

"I think our kids hung in there and played hard for four quarters, they just had us out-manned," McVay said. "Hopefully we'll learn to take it to another level against a good Hollis club next week."

Beaver finished the game with 10 first downs, 56 yards rushing on 34 carries, and 6 of 11 passing for 54 yards.

Beaver (1-1) travels to Hollis Friday.

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