

By JASON EPP

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There is an old football proverb that says, 'To win you must run the ball and stop the run.

The Turpin Cardinals did just that Friday night, rushing for 426 yards, while holding the Booker, Tex. Kiowas to minus 2 yards rushing in a 42-16 win.

Two standouts carried the load of the carries for the Cardinals with Matt Mendoza finished the game with 214 yards and three touchdowns on 40 carries. Stern Douglas carried the ball 20 times for 160 yards and a touchdown.

Turpin controlled the ball throughout the game, running 76 plays (74 were runs) to only 43 for Booker, Tex., and gaining 20 first downs compared to only six for the Kiowas.

But Turpin did not control this game from the opening kickoff. In fact, Booker was a threat to score on the first possession of the game thanks in part to quarterback Raul Camacho's 38-yard run that gave Booker a first down at the Cardinals 33. Camacho completed a 9-yard pass to Damian Rosales on the next play. But a sack on third-and-15 put an end to the drive with Turpin taking over after a failed fourth down conversion at their 19.

Turpin struggled to move the ball, but caught a break when Booker fumbled the punt and Turpin's Andrew Bowers jumped on the loose ball near midfield. Turpin did not score, but was able to turn the field position, with Booker taking over at their 19.

Turpin was unable to score in the first quarter, but kept the ball in Kiowa territory. After another Booker punt early in the second quarter Turpin took over at the Kiowa 47. The Cardinals ran on nine consecutive plays, scoring the first points of the game on Matt Mendoza's 3-yard run to take a 7-0 lead with 7:10 left in the first half.

Booker looked to answer back when Julian Rios caught a swing pass for 15 yards and after an incomplete pass, took a quick pitch 55 yards to give Booker a first-and-10 at the Cardinals 12. After a holding penalty, Booker was in second-and-26. Camacho got out of the jam when he found Skylar Fronk on a crossing pattern, and Fronk made his way to the 4-yard line. But the Cardinals stuffed the run on third down, and Jake Zielke batted down the fourth down pass to take over with 4:39 left in the half.

Turpin quarterback Bradley Kinser was able to draw Booker off sides twice to give the Cardinals breathing and a first down. Twelve consecutive running plays got the Cardinals to the Kiowa 31, but with no time outs and less than thirty seconds left in the half, Turpin threw only their second and final pass of the night, which Booker intercepted at the 8-yard line with 16.1 seconds left.

Then Booker made one of the more puzzling and costly decisions of the game — they decided they would attempt to move the ball 92 yards in the final 16 seconds of the first half.

Bad decision.

Camacho lined up in the shotgun. Turpin's Jake Zielke immediately broke threw the line and chased down Camacho in the end zone, where he fumbled and Turpin's Payton Eggers recovered the loose ball for a touchdown with 9.2 seconds left before half to make the score 14-0 in favor of the Cardinals at the half.

"We had a goal-line stand down there before the half," said Cardinal Coach Mario Mendoza. "I don't think we were too sure of ourselves at the beginning of the game, but that score before halftime was big. We came out in the second have and drove it down and scored and it seemed like the kids said 'We can do it.' We did in the second half, we just ran them over."

And that is exactly what Turpin did, and took control of the game in the second half, scoring on their first four possessions.

9 plays, 86 yards, and 4:51 off the clock with Mendoza scoring from 11 yards out; 21-0.

13 plays, 69 yards, and 6:36 of time, capped by Stern Douglas' 7-yard TD run; 27-8.

2 plays, 32 yards, set up by Kinser's interception and finished by his 18-yard keeper around the right side for a touchdown; 35-8.

12 plays, 71 yards, 6:26, with Mendoza scoring his third TD from two yards out; 42-8.

Booker added a late touchdown pass against Turpin's reserves to close the final score at 42-16.

Mendoza was happy with the win, but wants his team to get better.

"We made a lot of mistakes, but we are a young club," said Mendoza. "I'm proud of the kids. I thought our effort was good. Guys did a great job (up front) getting pressure on the quarterback to stop their passing offense."

The defensive line only recorded two sacks (Jake Zielke 1, Taylor Olomon 1), but harassed and forced Booker quarterbacks into bad throws and a 13-of-33 passing night. Booker only totaled 153 yards on those plays, and half of those yards came on the final two offensive plays of the game for the Kiowas.

Turpin is now 1-1 on the season, and will close out non-district play next Friday when they host Shamrock, Tex. for homecoming.

Cards ground up Kiowas

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