

By JASON EPP • Daily Leader TEXHOMA —

It was a defensive struggle and a frustrating night for the Cardinals offense, as Turpin was shutout for the first time this season by Texhoma, 16-0.

Turpin came into this battle looking to position themselves as the number two seed in district A-1. Texhoma, was still hoping that with a win they could put themselves in that same position. The game began with stout defenses forcing both teams to a three-and-out. Turpin helped the Red Devils with their initial first down by jumping offsides. But the Turpin defense stiffened, and Texhoma had to punt on fourth and 8, it appeared. Punter Layton Berry pulled the ball down instead, and ran from Texhoma's own 23 to the 35 for a first down. The Red Devils did not score on the drive, but were able to pin the Cardinals back on their own 12 yard line. Texhoma forced Turpin to punt and after another offsides penalty, started the drive 1st and 5 from their own 45. Cruz Holguin, then made one of the plays of the game. The Turpin defense looked to have stopped Holguin for a 7-yard loss, but Holguin somehow escaped and was not brought down until he reached the Turpin 19-yard line. Texhoma inched their way toward the goaline, and finally scored on 4th and Goal from the one foot line when junior quarterback, Matt Freeman, sneaked across on the first play of the second quarter. The extra point was good, and Texhoma lead 7-0. Texhoma held Turpin to one first down before forcing a punt. Texhoma was driving, but on the 12th play of the drive, Ty Blakely hit reciever JD Pugh, just as the ball came to him, and Chance Dye was there to make the interception at the 9-yard line.



Turpin was held to a three-and-out, and a short punt gave Texhoma the ball on Turpin's 26-yard line. Texhoma, one again, moved the ball to within a foot of the goal line. But this time, the Turpin defense stonewalled running back Derrek Nye, and went to the half feeling good about being down only 7-0. Both defenses stymied the offenses to start the second half. But on Turpin's second drive of the half, Hector Marrufo, hit quarterback Konner Hood from the blindside and Chad Tanquary recovered the fumble at the Turpin 15. Turpin's defense was up to the task again forcing Texhoma to turn the ball over on downs at the 12. But once again, a negative play cost the Cardinals, as Konner Hood was sacked for a safety to make the score

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Friday, 31 October 2008 00:00

9-0, with 4:38 left in the third quarter. Turpin's defense made another possible game-changing play when Blake Mikles recovered the fumbled snap on Texhoma's first play to give Turpin possession at the Red Devil 49. Turpin moved to the Texhoma 37, but three consecutive plays left them punting from the 50. Turpin still had a chance after holding Texhoma to a three-and-out. The Cardinals took over at the 46, but were unable to even muster a first down. Texhoma then went on a drive meant to eat away the clock. Texhoma rushed on twelve straight plays to move the ball from their own 48 to the Turpin 18, converting a one third down and two fourth downs. A perfectly executed play-action pass from Matt Freeman to Trey Freeman for the diving touchdown catch to put the game out of reach at 16-0. The drive: 13 plays, 52 yards, and took the clock from 9:20 to 2 minutes. The Cardinals last effort was thwarted when JD Pugh intercepted Konner Hood's pass at the Texhoma 23. The Cardinals potent rushing attack was held to just 30 yards on 25 carries, and the Turpin offense was held to only 56 yards and 4 first downs. The Cardinals defense did play well in the loss, limiting the Red Devils to 288 total yards on 70 plays for an average of 4.1 per play. Aaron Kuns and Kurtis Hightower led Turpin's defense with 14 tackles each.

The Cardinals will try to bounce back when they take on Hennessey (7-1 in district, 7-2 overall) at 7:30 p. m. next Friday at home. Turpin did clinch a playoff spot Friday night when Hennessey defeated Chisholm 45-7, Friday night. The Cardinals are now 6-2 in district and 7-2 on the season.