

Clinton Arrows upset Oxford 23-6, look towards playoff spot

By Danny C. Davis

The season is now down to three games for the Clinton Arrows. Clinton High School is now 3-4 overall and 2-2 in Region 2-6A and can likely clinch the #3 seed playoff spot if the Arrows win all three remaining games - or a #4 seed if they win two out of the last three. Clinton faces Grenada on the road October 22 and will host Tupelo October 29 at Arrow Field before closing out the season at Jackson Murrah on the road.

The Arrows took a giant step towards playoffs with a big 23-6 upset win over Oxford on October 15 at Arrow Field. Clinton took an early 14-0 first quarter lead and never trailed.

Clinton players wore an undershirt that said "One Play" for the Oxford game. The slogan refers to the fact that Clinton was just one play away from beating Oxford last November in the Class 6A North Semifinal game to advance to the state championship, but came up one play short and were eliminated 31-27.

As it turned out, the Arrows were the team making all the big plays this time around. Arrows QB Jordyn Battee hit a wide-open Michael Tripp for an 82-yard pass-scoring play to put CHS ahead 7-0 with 7:43 left in the first quarter. Just three minutes later, Clinton took advantage of a fumbled kickoff by the Chargers and went ahead 14-0 on Jacobe Calvin's one-yard run.

Oxford cut it to 14-6 with Roman Gregory's 18-yard run with 7:43 left in the half. But that is as close as Oxford would come. Clinton kicker Luke Hopkins kicked a 37-yard field goal with two minutes left in the half to extend the Arrows' lead to 17-6. In the second half, the Clinton defense held Oxford scoreless, and Jakobe Calvin put the game out of reach with a highlight reel 29-yard run for a touchdown to make it 23-6 with 10:24 left.

Clinton's Calvin had a career high 25 carries for 204 yards rushing and two touchdowns.

"We got off to a good start, and our line was giving me some big holes to run through," said Calvin, who missed all of last season with a torn ACL. "We practiced real hard this week and played hard tonight, and this was a big district win for us."

Junior offensive lineman Griffin Berch agreed.

"We had a good game plan and knew we could run the football on Oxford. We took care of the front end, and our backs were able run the ball good tonight."

Defensively, the Arrows were led by Xynarus Haynes and Jacquavyian Carter, who came up with a lot of big defensive plays late in the game to stop Oxford's high-scoring offense.

"We watched a lot of film on Oxford last week, and our coaches had a great plan to stop their offense," said Haynes. "We worked hard on tackling drills this week, and it paid off," said Carter.

"I am proud of the way our players played and how they fought hard the whole game," said Arrows head coach Judd Boswell.

"We finally finished a game and played hard all four quarters. We just challenged the players about winning tonight and going 1-0 this week. We will look at our final three games the same way."

In the Arrows' double-digit loss to rival Madison Central, CHS fell behind early and never led. MCHS scored on their first possession on a 19-yard pass from QB Vic Sutton to receiver Isiah Spencer to go up 7-0 with six and a half minutes left in the first quarter. But Clinton's next possession ended at the Jaguar 13, when Luke Hopkins 30-yard field goal attempt was wide right.

MCHS led 14-0 on their next possession after Sutton hit Spencer again, this time for a 23-yard touchdown with 11:50 left in the half. But Clinton drove the length of the field and got on the board with a 27-yard field goal by Hopkins to make it 14-3.

Then the Arrows closed the gap to 14-10 on Jordyn Battee's 23-yard TD pass to Juan Taylor with 33 seconds left in the half.

Next, the most controversial call by officials of the game turned the momentum the Jaguars' way.

MCHS threw a pass in the end zone with no time left on the clock in the first half. Although the Jaguars' receiver pushed off and then fell down, officials ruled pass interference against CHS. With an untimed play, MCHS was awarded a first down at the Arrow 27 yard line, and kicker Max Zulaga connected on a 44-yard field goal to make it 17-10.

"That was not a good call," said Boswell. "That really hurt right before half, after we had battled to get back in the game. That was like a 10-point swing."

The second half was pretty much all Jaguars. MCHS scored on their next two possessions on runs by Robert Dumas to take a 31-10 third period lead and went ahead 34-10 on Zulaga's 31-yard field goal.

Clinton drove to the MCHS 24 yard line, but Battee threw his third interception of the night to stop the drive. Juan Taylor scored late on a 4-yard run to make it 32-17.

"We did a very poor job of tackling against Madison Central and let them have some long running plays against our defense," said Boswell. "We're not playing up our potential to beat teams like Madison Central. The good thing is that we still have games left and still have a shot at the playoffs."



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