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Bearcats Fall to Fredericktown in Rainy Mess

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Fredericktown, Missouri –The first round of Class 3, District 1 playoffs began Thursday night, and the Dexter Bearcats traveled north to take on the Fredericktown Blackcats. The Blackcats came into the game as the favored #3 seed in the district and the #6 seed Bearcats were simply outmatched on this night, dropping the contest by a score of 56 to 0. With the loss, the Bearcats end the 2012 season with a record of 1-9.

With a winning 2012 season, the Blackcats finished the regular season with a record of 5 wins and 4 losses, compared to the Bearcats regular season record of 1-8. Fredericktown narrowly missed an exceptional season with losses to Park Hills (14-20 1OT), Maplewood (20-27), St. Genevieve (29-50) and North County (34-35). Nonetheless, the Bearcats entered the playoffs with hopes of overcoming injuries and the loss of several key personnel to find one more victory.

A “Black-Out” Night for fans was organized by members of the Bearcat Nation in hopes of building the enthusiasm, but a 30 degree drop in temperature 10 minutes prior to kickoff and drenching rain brought out umbrellas and raincoats, and created challenges for the players and fans alike.

In the brutal cold, the Bearcats took the opening kickoff, but were unable to produce any offense and when DJ Dowdy was sacked on third and long the Bearcats were forced to punt into a 40 mph wind.

In the Blackcats first possession on offense, Holden Bruce came across the line of scrimmage providing a huge tackle in the backfield for a 9-yard loss. With the rain pouring down, the Bearcat defense held the Blackcats on 4 downs and got the ball back around the midfield stripe.

DJ Dowdy backed up on the first play on the second series and launched a 30-yard pass in the pouring rain to Chase Young. Young came up with a great catch in the inclement weather, but fumbled the ball as he was tackled to the ground.

The Blackcats began to grind the ball up the middle gaining good yardage against the Bearcats until a midfield fumble was recovered by Noah Kronk at 5:55 in the first quarter. The game brought back memories of Dexter's last visit to Fredericktown in 2010 when the ‘Cats took advantage of eight Blackcat turnovers to take a 30-22 title-clinching win. However, this time the Bearcats were unable to take advantage of the turnover and were forced to punt.

The Fredericktown offense went back to work pushing and driving the ball down the field. At the 3:20 mark in the 1st quarter, Fredericktown's running back James Royer found his way into the endzone from 5 yards out for the Blackcats first score. The 2 point conversion failed, but Fredericktown to the early lead by the score of 6-0.

By the end of the 1st quarter, the Bearcats began to see the talent found in the Blackcats quarterback, Jeremy Gremminger. Gremminger marked over a 1,000 yards both rushing and passing during the 2012 season. Built for speed even in the poor field conditions, Gremminger found the endzone on a 23 yard touchdown run with 1:30 remaining in the first period. The two point conversion was good with Gremminger passing to Justin Sawyer, and the Blackcats extended thier lead to 14-0.

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The kickoff
by the
Blackcats

yielded a great return by Trevor Waldner from the 4 yard line for a gain of 26 yards. But a fumble on the center/quarterback exchange gave the ball right back to the Blackcats deep in Bearcat territory . Quickly, Fredericktown went right back to work on the ground gaining yardage in big hunks until again, Gremminger took the ball into the endzone on a 13 yard scamper for thier third consecutive score. The PAT was good, and the first quarter ended with Fredericktown on top by the score of 21-0.

The Bearcats continued to struggle in the 2nd quarter both offensively and defensively. At the 10:17 mark, the Blackcats quarterback was off again on another 40 yard run to the endzone. The PAT was again good by the Blackcats making the score 28 to 0. The Blackcats continued to pour it on in the second quarter when on the next possession, Gremminger passed to Jack Korokis for 12 yards over the right side for another touchdown. The PAT by Burks was good and the Blackcat lead was extended to 35 to 0.

The next offensive series for Dexter began a spark as Foels made a good return on the kickoff. A 17-yard pass from Dowdy to Stevens on a flag route to the left side of the offense gave the Bearcats a little momentum. An unfortunate penalty on 4th down stalled the drive for the 'Cats and again, the Bearcats handed the ball over to Fredericktown's offense.

The first half flurry of scoring was not yet over, as James Royer made a 7-yard run over the left side of his line producing the final score of the half. The extra point by Ty Burks was good and Fredericktown to a commanding lead of 42 to 0 into halftime.

The second half contained much of the same action as the Bearcats faced multiple injuries during the contest. The Blackcat offense continued to power the ball down the rainy field scoring 13 additional points on 8-yard and 29-yard runs for scores.

Winning by the final score of 56-0, the Blackcats advace to the second round of the playoffs, where they will get a second shot at defeating Park Hills Central next week. Park Hills defeated Lift For Life by the score of 49-0 in their first round game.

Statistically, the Bearcats were just unable to match up with Fredericktown on the night with the Blackcats dominating all areas of the team statistics. With over 500 yards net offense compared to the Bearcats 133-yards, Fredericktown simply dealt with the adverse elements of the night to capture the first round victory in the playoffs. The Blackcats amassed 27 first downs and an impressive 457 rushing yards in the contest.

The Blackcats had three individuals with over 100-yards rushing on the night, and they each averaged over 10 yards per carry. Their leading rusher was QB Gremminger, who had 168 yards on 15 carriers.

The Bearcat's Dowdy had 29-yards rushing, followed by Sophomore Tim Spence with 23-yards and Jonathan Foels with 24. Dowdy also threw for 49 yards and completed 3 of this 13 passing attempts.

Defensively, Trevor Waldner and Jonathan Foels were the leading tacklers for the Bearcats with 11 and 10 respectively. The Bearcats aggressively had 8 tackles for loss of 42-yards on the night, but were unable to stop the "up the gut" runs by the Blackcat offense.

This loss for the Bearcats sadly closes the book on the 2012 football season. It only feels like yesterday that the pre-season hopes surrounded the jamboree. Knowing that it was an uphill battle with the youth of the 2012 season, little did the coaching staff know that the youthfulness and injuries to this team would present such a challenge.

No one takes their job more seriously than Head Coach Aaron Pixley. You can guarantee that the long ride home last night from Fredericktown involved the calculations of the 2013 season. The weight room will begin to ring and the focus will be drawn to the new hopes and dreams of a better season next year.

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