

ALL THE WAY TO STATE 2023
SPECIAL EDITION
 2023 MCKENZIE REBELS FOOTBALL IS
 TSSAA DIVISION I CLASS 1A STATE RUNNER-UP

THE McKenzie, Tennessee
BANNER
 TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2023

Congratulations to the Amazing Rebels

BY BRITTANY MARTIN

Three consecutive state appearances means everyone knows your name now. You are on their radar. You are living rent free in their heads. They are going to study you and put you at the top of their list of teams they most want to beat.

Good for you, Rebels. The outcome may not have been what you wanted, but more happened on that field than you realize.

South Pittsburg did not expect the level of fight you gave them. They are not used to playing from behind.

McKenzie has a history of flipping the script, changing

the narrative, doing what they say can't be done.

I am betting you have a lot more to teach them about who McKenzie is.

So hold your heads up. There are so many teams that would love to be in your shoes right now. There are seniors that will never get the opportunity to play for a state championship.

There were so many challenges you had to overcome to get all the way to state.

You maneuvered through six Mr. Football semifinalists during the regular season and post-season!

You fought adversity, injuries and uphill battles to be one of the best teams in McKenzie's history.

Your community is so very proud of you.

Years from now, when you look back on this moment, I hope you realize how amazing of a feat it was to make three back-to-back state appearances.

I hope you realize that you have everything you need inside of you to conquer any challenge you face in life. Because the lessons you learn on the field: depending on each other, working as a team, preparation, focus, staying humble, and doing the right thing even when no one is looking — are the fundamentals of a successful life.

Congratulations, Rebels, on an amazing season!



Congratulations on a wonderful season!



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Above, The 2023 McKenzie Rebels with their runner-up trophy. The Rebels finished the season with a 13-2 record. Below Left, Colt Norden (#12) catches a pass for a McKenzie first down. Below Right, Jake Cassidy (#9) rushes South Pittsburg quarterback Kamden Wellington (#0). Cassidy and Carter Swalley would record the sack. Bottom, An emotional group of Rebels are encouraged by Coach Kentrell Diggs. Photos by Jason R. Martin/The Banner



Rebels Fall Short in Repeat State Championship Attempt

BY JASON R. MARTIN
jmartin@mckenziebanner.com

CHATTANOOGA (December 1) — On Friday afternoon, the McKenzie Rebels made their third straight appearance, in the BlueCross Bowl. After claiming the championship in 2022, the Rebels were unable to repeat as they fell short 14-7 to the South Pittsburg Pirates after a hard-fought game that was scoreless until the third quarter. The Rebels finished the season, 13-2. In their four state

championship appearances, this made the third time the Rebels have had to play the Pirates for gold.

Statistically speaking, it appeared South Pittsburg dominated McKenzie. Yet, for three quarters, the game was back-and-forth led by key defensive stops. It wasn't until the fourth quarter, that South Pitt found a chink in McKenzie's armor. Looking at the final numbers, the Pirates had 270 total yards to the Rebels' 90 yards. South Pitt outrushed McKenzie 208 yards to 40 yards. The pass-

ing game was closer but still favored the Pirates 62 yards to 50 yards.

Leading McKenzie in rushing was Brady Brewer with 53 yards in 10 carries. For South Pitt, Jamarion Farrior, BlueCross Bowl MVP, carried the ball 29 times for 160 yards. In passing, Rebel Tate Surber was six of nineteen with one touchdown and one interception. The Pirates' Kamden Wellington was five of twelve.

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Above Left, KaDarius Cunningham gets his ankle retaped during a timeout. Above, Coach Comer talks to the Rebels' offense during a time out. Left, Stafford Roditis (#13) punted seven times averaging 36.9 per punt. Below Left, Martez Teague (#4) breaks up a Pirate pass with his helmet. Below Right, Cole Brown (#3) pursues Jamarion Farrior (#9) of South Pittsburg. Photos by Jason R. Martin/The Banner

Rebels

...From Page 2

In receiving, Jake Cassidy had one catch for 18 yards and a TD followed by Cole Brown and Colt Norden with one catch each. Brewer had two catches for four yards.

Leading the McKenzie defense was Skyler Fornera with six tackles, five assists and two forced fumbles. KD Cunningham recorded four solo tackles and six assists with Cassidy and Carter Swalley teaming for a sack.

South Pitt won the coin toss and deferred to the second half. The coin used for the toss honored State

Troopers Lee Russell and Matt Blansett. Each of their pictures were on the coin. The McKenzie offense began its first offensive drive from the Rebel 32-yard line following a 12-yard kickoff return by Timmy Arline. Before the snap, the Rebels were penalized five yards for a false start. McKenzie ended up going three-and-out, moving the ball eight yards.

The punt by Stafford Roditis put South Pitt at the Pirates' 26-yard line. The Pirates were able to pick up two first downs in eight plays for 32 yards before ending the series in a punt. On fourth-and-three

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Above Left, Jake Cassidy (#9) crosses the goal line for a McKenzie touchdown. Teammate Colt Norden (#12) signals the touchdown. Above Right, Skyler Fornera (#1) attempts to keep Jamarion Farris (#9) from crossing into the endzone. Left, The Rebel offensive line, Cameron Flippin, Ryan Toombs and Carter Dalrymple, prepares for another offensive drive. Below Left, Stafford Roditis (#13) takes the legs out from under Racash Kelly (#11). Below, Tate Surber (#14) breaks through the line towards a host of South Pittsburg defenders. Photos by Jason R. Martin/The Banner



Rebels

...From Page 3

from the Rebel 42-yard line, Jacob Bivens had a 36-yard punt pinning the Rebels on the six-yard line.

McKenzie showed signs of life on the next drive as they picked up two first downs. Surber hit Norden for ten yards, and then on second-and-three Brewer got a fresh set of downs on a three-yard carry. After Brewer added six yards, the drive stalled with two incomplete passes forcing the Rebels to punt.

South Pitt had a strong series starting from the Pirate 30-yard line. Ja-Mychal Buckner had two consecutive carries that would have been a first down but the Pirates and the Rebels were flagged for illegal blocks. Wellington picked up the first down with a pass to A.J. Wallace. A holding penalty on South Pitt took away their momentum as McKenzie was about to knock down three passes by Wellington forcing the Pirates to turn the ball over on downs at the McKenzie 27-yard line ending the first quarter.

The next offensive series for McKenzie was ineffective in part due to another false start and a holding call. On fourth-and-eight from the Rebel 29-yard line, Roditis had a 36-yard punt.

The Rebel defense had a strong series against the Pirates to open the quarter. McKenzie forced South Pitt into a three-and-out after

stops for Fornera, Carter Swalley and Dalton Hatley. Bivens' punt set McKenzie back to the 33-yard line.

The second offensive series of the quarter for McKenzie resulted in a three-and-out with Roditis having a booming punt for 57 yards.

South Pitt's next drive, starting from the Pirate 8-yard line, was plagued with penalties and three big tackles by Cunningham. With just over 3 minutes to play in the half, The Pirates punted the ball down to near midfield.

On first-and-ten, Surber fumbled but the ball was recovered by Roditis for a loss of seven yards. The Rebels then called on Brewer who picked up two yards. On third down, an incomplete pass to Brown led to another punt by McKenzie.

With 1:15 left in the first half, South Pitt started at the Pirate 15-yard line. Cassidy and Swalley sacked Wellington, putting the Pirates on the eight-yard line. South Pitt kept the ball on the ground with two carries by Farris picking up a total of 16 yards. On fourth-and-two Wellington's final second pass fell incomplete ending the first half.

At the half, South Pitt ran 25 plays for 115 yards while McKenzie had 18 plays for 52 yards. Farris was held to 38 yards and Brewer had 29 yards. The first down count was 3-2 in favor of the Pirates. Time of possession was 10:40 for the Rebels and 13:20 for the Pirates.

Starting the third quarter, South Pitt took the kickoff to the 24-yard line.

On third-and-one, Wellington kept the ball picking up 13 yards and the first down. Buckner's number was called on second-and-10 from the Pirate 46, the back fumbled the ball and McKenzie's Cassidy recovered the ball on the South Pitt 44-yard line.

The Rebels needed a shift in momentum but they were unable to move the ball. On fourth down, Roditis punted the ball away with the Pirates downing the ball at the 18-yard line.

South Pitt ran five plays on the next drive before Fornera forced a fumble by Wellington that was recovered by Swalley at the Pirate's 22-yard line.

The Rebels capitalized on the turnover. Brewer ran for four yards on the first play. Then on second-and-six from the 18-yard line, Surber hit Cassidy with a little out pass that went the distance. McKenzie led 7-0 after Roditis added the extra point with 5:46 to play in the third quarter.

Roditis' kickoff went for 37 yards as Logan Hargis was about to pick up 24 yards on the return. Set with good field position, starting at the Pirate 47-yard line, Farris' rushing attack was proving strong as he picked up a quick first down. Then on second-and-five from the Rebel 37-yard line, Farris picked up 18 yards before Fornera forced another fumble. The ball was recovered by Ace Fisher.

Starting at the Rebel 21-yard line, it would have

See REBELS on Page 5

Go Rebels!

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Left, The Rebels get final advice from coaches during pregame warmups. Right, The McKenzie Rebel cheerleading squad made the trip to Chattanooga to root for the Rebel football team. Photos by Jason R. Martin/The Banner

Rebels

...From Page 4

been an excellent time for McKenzie to capitalize on another South Pitt turnover. Unfortunately for the Rebels, after moving the ball for a fresh set of downs, Farrior forced a McKenzie fumble that was recovered by South Pitt's Racash Kelly.

In scoring position, the Pirates took over at the Rebel 29-yard line. Wellington was able to pick up a first down. The quarter closed with South Pitt with a fourth-and-one sitting on the McKenzie seven-yard line.

Wellington picked up the first down with a one-yard run. Two plays later, Farrior was in for the touchdown from three yards out. Alex Phillips tied the score 7-7 with the PAT.

With 10:55 to play, McKenzie knew they had to score again and keep South Pitt out of the end zone. The Rebels started with a fair field position at the McKenzie 37-yard line. Brewer picked up three yards on the ground and then five yards on a pass from Surber. On fourth-and-two from the Rebel 45-yard line, the Rebels set up in punt formation. The snap went to Drew Chappell on the fake punt but he was stopped a yard short.

The turnover on downs played right into the wheelhouse of the Pirates. South Pitt ran seven plays for 46 yards in a little over four minutes for the go-ahead points. Farrior ran each play getting the direct snap. Chipping away at the Rebel defense and snipping up chunks of yards, the Pirates were first-and-goal at the McKenzie nine-yard line. Farrior plowed into the endzone at the 5:31 mark. With Phillips' extra point, South Pitt led 14-7.

Down but not out, it was on the McKenzie offense to tie things up. On the next series, the Rebels went three-and-out. The punt by Roditis put the Pirates at the South Pitt 42-yard line.

South Pitt was unable to score on the next drive. They ran 11 plays gaining 15 yards while eating 2:53 off the game clock. Bivens kicked a 38-yard punt leaving McKenzie with 1:35 to score from 95 yards out.

Surber had consecutive incomplete passes to Brewer, Norden and Cassidy. On fourth-and-ten, Surber was picked off by Cavin Gilley who slid in front of Cassidy.

With 1:10 to play, South Pitt took a knee twice to run out the clock. South Pittsburg claimed their seventh TSSAA State Football Championship with a 14-7 win.

While McKenzie did not win the game, they did something no team was able to do to South Pittsburg all

year, and that is to keep the Pirates offense limited to two scores. It was also the first time South Pittsburg was forced to come from behind to win. The closest game all season for South Pittsburg was an 18-6 win against Middle Tennessee Christian School. The Rebels came out and punched the Pirates in the mouth stating that they came to play and deserved a chance for the gold ball.

Rebels, Friday's loss hurt, especially for the seniors but you did something no other team has done so far in school history, compete three consecutive times for a state championship. When the chips were down, you found

the grit in your gut to fight and persevere. Many of you were banged up throughout the season but you never quit. You had one regular season loss to a team that was ranked #1 by the end of the season, and then you knocked them off to play the other #1 team in the state. To top it off, you had to face all five Mr. Football Semifinalists in the post-season along with a host of DI college prospects.

I'd say that is something to be mighty dang proud of. Hold your heads high. You not only proudly represented your school but you also proudly represented all of McKenzie. From one Rebel to another, Thank You and Go Big Red!

Pepsi MidAmerica Donates to McKenzie Football Team



Ricky Price and Stephen Berryman with Pepsi MidAmerica donated Gatorade to the football team. A Dr. Pepper game ball was presented to Head Coach Wade Comer and Dr. Pepper hoodies were given to the senior players. Submitted Photo

2023 High School Roster

#	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	GR.
1	Skyler Fornera	WR/DB	5'7"	170	11
2	Ace Fisher	TE/LB	5'10"	165	12
3	Cole Brown	QB/LB	5'10"	165	9
4	Martez Teague	WR/LB	6'3"	185	11
5	Aiden Orten	WR/DB	5'6"	130	9
6	Timmy Arline	R/DB	5'10"	165	10
7	Jacobi Melton	WR/DB	5'9"	150	9
8	Brady Brewer	RB/LB	5'9"	160	12
9	Jake Cassidy	TE/LB	5'9"	165	12
10	Mason Batten	FB/LB	6'1"	185	10
11	Lute McCaslin	WR/DB	6'0"	140	12
12	Colt Norden	RB/DB	6'1"	170	11
13	Stafford Roditis	WR/DB	5'11"	155	12
14	Tate Surber	QB/DB	6'2"	200	11
15	Drew Chappell	RB/LB	6'	200	12
17	Owen Walker	WR/DB	5'10"	150	10
21	Ryan McCreary	RB/LB	6'2"	210	11
22	Matthew Gaylord	WR/DB	5'7"	135	10

#	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	GR.
24	Matteo Campbell	RB/LB	5'11"	135	9
25	Gage Crosland	WR/DB	5'7"	145	11
28	Lelan Gordon	RB/DB	5'8"	150	9
30	Dalton Hatley	TE/LB	5'10"	160	12
47	Jacey McCreary	RB/LB	5'10"	170	9
51	Craegen Travis	OL/DL	6'2"	240	11
52	Pedro Mendez	OL/DL	5'9"	200	9
54	Davarion Gilbert	RB/LB	5'8"	150	10
55	Ethan Batton	OL/LB	5'9"	185	10
56	Aiden Callis	OL/DL	6'0"	180	10
57	KaDarius Cunningham	OL/DL	6'0"	220	11
61	Chance Graciani	OL/DL	5'10"	230	9
63	Joe Stallion	OL/DL	5'10"	220	9
64	Landin Deatherage	OL/DL	5'8"	190	10
66	Barry Swalley	OL/DL	6'0"	200	11
67	Jacob Smith	OL/DL	6'3"	290	11
72	Cameron Flippin	OL/DL	5'10"	200	12
73	Ryan Toombs	OL/DL	6'0"	210	10

Schedule

Aug. 18	Huntingdon	W 28-12
Aug. 25	Dresden	L 42-14
Sept. 1	@ Chester Co.	W 29-12
Sept. 8	@ McEwen	W 23-0
Sept. 15	@ Scotts Hill	W 43-13
Sept. 22	@ HR-Bruceton	W 63-0
Sept. 29	@ Perry Co.	W 57-7
Oct. 6	Houston Co.	W 56-7
Oct. 13	BYE	
Oct. 20	@ Freedom P.A.	W 38-8
Oct. 26	West Carroll	W 42-13
Nov. 3	Cornersville	W 31-14
Nov. 10	Collinwood	W 43-0
Nov. 17	@ Moore County	W 28-27
Nov. 24	Dresden	W 25-14
Dec. 1	South Pittsburg	L 14-7

Div. I Class 1A State Runner-Up

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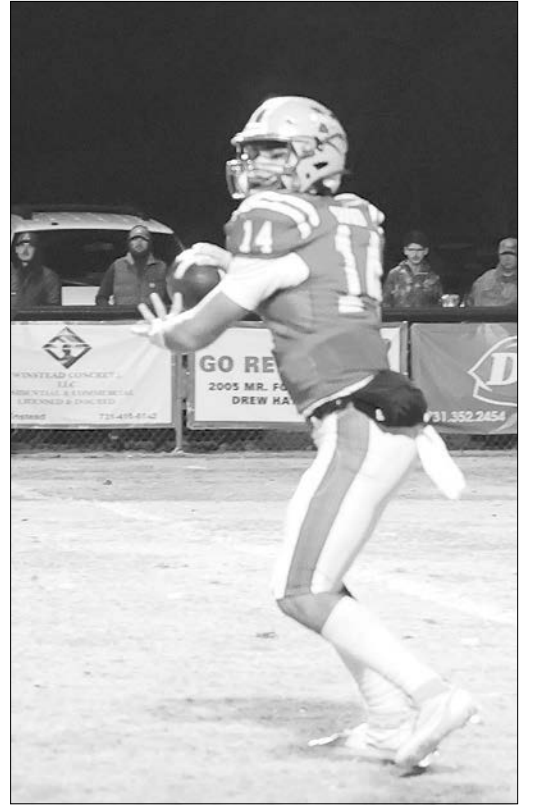
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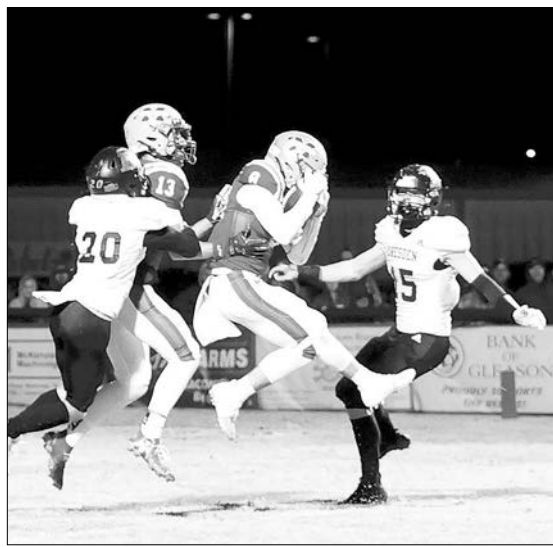
Congratulations Rebels!

Joseph G. Butler, Carroll County Mayor and Staff

GAME 14 — MCKENZIE 25, DRESDEN 14



Above Left, McKenzie Rebel and Dresden Lion fans packed the stands with an estimated attendance over 4,000. Above Right, McKenzie's Tate Surber looks for an open receiver down field. Below Left, Brady Brewer (#8) pulls down the pass against a host of Lion defenders. Below Center, Colt Norden (#12) makes a diving catch. Below Right, Cole Brown (#3) goes low to stop Dresden's Micah Wingate (#32).



McKenzie Comes From Behind to Advance to State Championship

BY JASON R. MARTIN
jmartin@mckenziebanner.com

MCKENZIE (November 24) — Friday night's game against Dresden started as if it would be the last game of the 2023 season, at least in the first half. At the half, the Lions were up 14-0 and were set to receive the second-half kickoff, the Rebels came out the second half dominating on both sides up the ball scoring 25 unanswered points. The 25-14 victory now pits the McKenzie Rebels against East Tennessee rivals the South Pittsburg Pirates for the TSSAA Football State Championship.

Looking at the numbers, McKenzie ran 59 plays to Dresden's 66. The Rebels accumulated 371 total yards on offense to the Lions' 263 total yards. In passing yards, McKenzie had 296 yards while the defense held Dresden and Mr. Football Finalist Cameron Schlicht to 176 yards. The Lions outruled the Rebels 75 yards to 87 yards.

McKenzie was penalized 10 times during the night for 81 yards and Dresden was flagged seven times for 63 yards. The only turnover on the night was credited to the Lions.

Tate Surber was 14 of 29 in passing for 296 and two touchdowns. Schlicht was 17 of 26 for 176 yards. In receiving, Colt Norden had four catches for 147 with one touchdown followed by Brady Brewer had three catches for 77 yards. Leading McKenzie's ground game was Brewer with 16 carries for 69 yards and two touchdowns. His longest run of the night was for 45.

On defense, McKenzie's Dalton Hatley had five tackles with one assist along with one recorded sack. KD Cunningham had five tackles and one assist while Jackson Cassidy had three solo tackles and two assists. Surber and Cole Brown were also credited with sacks.

The Rebels won the coin toss and elected to start on offense. McKenzie would go three-and-out but not before

being flagged twice for false starts on second down. A 42-yard punt by Roditis put Dresden on the Lion 28-yard line.

Dresden's first offensive drive resulted in a three-and-out with Brown leading a host of Rebels on a sack of Schlicht. Nick Turnbow's punt started McKenzie on the Rebel 34-yard line.

Similar to their previous series it too ended in a three-and-out, as did the Lions' next series.

McKenzie's offense began to show signs of life as they picked up the first first-down of the night. Surber's pass to Norden was good for 37 yards, moving the ball past midfield. On third-and-four from the Lion 42-yard line, Roditis caught a pass for 13 yards and the first down. Then the Rebel drive sputtered and stalled out at the 26-yard line. On fourth-and-eight, McKenzie lined up for the field goal. A bad snap led to Roditis' kick being blocked.

The turnover on downs put the Lions on the Dresden 26-yard line. A questionable catch from Schlicht to Reese Bell moved the ball into Rebel territory wrapping up the scoreless first quarter.

A 14-yard screen pass by Schlicht put Dresden on the Rebel two-yard line. Running off of the left tackle, Schicht was in the end zone for the touchdown. Paul Betzou's extra point was good as the Lions led the Rebel 7-0 at the 10:50 mark of the second quarter.

McKenzie's next drive resulted in another three-and-out and their fifth false start of the night. On their next offensive series, in eleven plays, Dresden increased its lead.

Starting at the Lion 33-yard line, Tristan Jett moved the ball across the line of scrimmage but the Rebels were called with a chop block on defense. The 15-yard penalty gave Dresden a fresh set of downs. Then on third-and-four from the McKenzie 27-yard line, McKenzie was flagged a second time for a defensive chop block. On the next play, the Rebels tackled



Assistant Coach Kentrell Diggs (left) and Head Coach Wade Comer (right) praise the Rebels after winning in the semifinals and advancing to the championship round. Photo Joel Washburn/The Banner

on a face mask penalty placing the ball on the four-yard line. Jett was able to pick up the touchdown followed by Betzou's PAT. The Lions led 14-0 with 4:59 to play in the opening half.

The remainder of the quarter was a scoreless back-and-forth to wrap up the minutes of the quarter.

Dresden received the opening kickoff of the second half but was forced to punt away the possession.

Buried deep in Rebel territory, McKenzie started at the two-yard line. The Rebel offense showed its first signs of life since the opening quarter. On first down, Surber hit Norden for 52 yards. After crossing into Lion territory, Surber hit Brewer for 38 yards and moved the Rebels into the red zone. On second-and-goal from the 13-yard line, Surber and Norden teamed for the touchdown. The extra point was not good as McKenzie trailed 14-6 with 5:43 to play in the third quarter.

McKenzie's defense held Dresden to a three-and-out on the next series. Starting at the Lion 43-yard line, the

Rebels needed eight plays in about three minutes to once again cut into Dresden's lead. After crossing midfield, passes were hauled in by Brown and Cassidy giving McKenzie a fresh set of downs at the 22-yard line. A defensive pass interference call pushed the Rebels into the red zone. Then on third-and-five from the six-yard line, Brewer found pay dirt. The two-point conversion failed as the Rebels were down 14-12 in the final seconds of the third quarter.

With twelve minutes remaining, it was do-or-die time for the Rebels. To win the ball game, McKenzie needed to prevent Dresden from scoring and then score either a field goal or a touchdown to take the lead.

The Lions picked up two quick first downs and crossed over to the 38-yard line. McKenzie would need a big stop to have a chance for the come-behind win and they got it. On first-and-ten, Dresden's Jett fumbled on the carry and the ball was recovered by Brown.

With 9:15 to play, McKenzie quickly moved the ball down-

field. A defensive pass interference call put the Rebels near midfield. Then on first-and-ten, Surber and Norden teamed up for a 45-yard game of pitch and catch. The first fresh set of downs put McKenzie first-and-goal from the three-yard line. Brewer was in for the touchdown at the 7:34 mark. Once again McKenzie was unable to capitalize on the conversion but took the lead 18-14.

The Rebels left Dresden with plenty of time to score the possible go-ahead touchdown, but McKenzie's defense stepped up and quickly muted the Lions' next drive. An illegal motion penalty forced Dresden into a third-and-long situation. The Rebels dialed up the blitz and Hatley came away with the sack. With 6:30 to play, Dresden elected to punt.

Starting at the Rebel 40-yard line, McKenzie crossed over the 50-yard line keeping the clock moving. The Lions donated a first down to the Rebels with a personal foul penalty. With a fresh set of downs, McKenzie's drive stalled after consecutive holding penalties. The Rebels

turned the ball over on downs with 2:59 left to play.

Once again, the McKenzie defense would be put to the test. With their backs to the wall, Dresden could not afford any mistakes. After two consecutive incomplete passes, Schlicht kept the ball and nearly picked up the first down. On fourth-and-one, Schlicht was stopped short of the first down by the Rebel defense.

With 2:03 left to play, McKenzie was in the catbird seat if they could manage the clock or score again. On first down from the Lion 45-yard line, Brewer ripped down the field for the touchdown. Roditis tacked on the PAT as the Rebels went up 25-14.

With less than two minutes to play, the Lions moved the ball down the field but were unable to score as the clock ticked down to zero.

McKenzie now advances to the Championship Round of the TSSAA State Playoffs. The Rebels travel to Chattanooga to battle it out against South Pittsburg a third time. Friday's game time is 2 p.m. CST.

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GAME 13 — MCKENZIE 28, MOORE COUNTY 27

Rebels Advance to Semifinals After Nailbiter

BY JASON R. MARTIN
jmartin@mckenziebanner.com

LYNCHBURG (November 17) — On Friday night, in what promised to be one of the best games in the playoff series, the McKenzie Rebels and the Moore County Raiders did not disappoint. Coming down to the wire, McKenzie defeated Moore County 28-27 advancing to the semifinal round of the TSSAA Playoffs. The Rebels moved one step closer to an opportunity to play for a second state championship.



Left, Brady Brewer 175 yards and three touchdowns against Moore County. Right, Jake Cassidy had a strong defensive game picking up key tackles in the Rebel win. File Photos

In an equally matched ballgame, the Rebels were neck-and-neck with the Raiders. McKenzie ran 65 plays for 325 yards of total offense to Moore County's 62 plays for 352 yards of total offense. The Rebels outruled the Raiders 203 yards to 167 yards while the Raiders reigned supreme in the air with 185 yards to the Rebels' 122 yards.

Moore County had a pair of turnovers that proved costly, while McKenzie was plagued with penalties. The Rebels were flagged 17 times for 151 yards versus seven penalties for 42 yards for the Raiders.

Brady Brewer led McKenzie's ground game with 27 carries for 175 yards with three touchdowns. For Moore County, Logan Hegwood was the top rusher with 17 carries for 114 yards and one touchdown.

In passing, Rebel Tate Surber was 10 for 20 for 122 yards and one touchdown. Raider Dawson White, a Mr. Football semifinalist, was 12 of 20 for 185 yards with three touchdowns and one interception. Colt Norden led McKenzie in receiving with five catches for 75 yards followed by Stafford Roditis with two catches for 24 yards and Cole Brown with two catches for 18 yards and a touchdown.

On defense, Jake Cassidy had five tackles and two assists, Surber had four tackles and one assist, Ace Fisher had four tackles and two assists, Skyler Fornera had three tackles and two assists, Drew Chappell had two tackles with one assist and a sack, and Cameron Flippin was also credited with a sack.

McKenzie won the coin toss and deferred to the second half. Testing their defense against the Moore County offensive proved to be a good decision. On the second play, Hegwood fumbled and Chappell recovered for the Rebels.

Starting from the Raider 30-yard line, McKenzie needed only one play to find pay dirt. Brewer took off like a shot and gave the Rebels the early lead. Roditis added the extra point as McKenzie led 7-0 at the 11:10 mark of the first quarter.

Moore County responded on the next drive tying the game. On the sixth play from

the Rebel 39-yard line, White's pass to Alex Copeland was good for the touchdown. Jax Ross tacked on the PAT making the game 7-7 with 7:56 to play in the opening quarter.

Starting at their 25-yard line, McKenzie battled downfield to retake the lead. The Rebels took 16 plays and ate the remainder of the first quarter clock before crossing the goal line at the 11:55 mark of the second quarter. On second-and-goal, Brewer had his second touchdown. Roditis added the PAT putting the Rebels up 14-7.

The Raiders took a little over two minutes to march 76 yards picking up their second TD of the night. On a deflected pass, Copeland hauled in the touchdown from 16 yards out. Ross added the extra point putting the score at 14-14.

The next three offensive series resulted in punts. The Rebels' second punt of the night pushed the Raiders deep into Moore County territory. Starting at the 16-yard line, White looked to connect with Copeland but his pass was picked off by Martez Teague.

From the 17-yard line, McKenzie had short yardage for the go-ahead touchdown. On third-and-five from the 12-yard line, Surber broke a series of tackles to find an open receiver, Brown, for the touchdown. The Roditis kick put the Rebels up 21-14 at halftime.

McKenzie was able to keep up the momentum in the second half. In a replay of the first drive, Brewer took the opening run of the second half for a 65-yard touchdown. Roditis increased the lead to 28-14.

Both defenses stepped up keeping the opposing side at bay for much of the third quarter. At the 3:45 mark of the third quarter, Moore County cut into the McKenzie lead. Starting at their 20-yard line, the Raiders took eight plays to move the ball across the goal line. Hegwood crossed midfield with a 35-yard run then White tagged Copeland with a second first-down. Then it was White again who found Copeland for the touchdown. Ross added the PAT as McKenzie's lead was cut 28-21.

The fourth quarter opened with Moore County easily moving the ball downfield. With a shift in momentum, things did not look good for McKenzie. On second-and-nine from the Rebel 39-yard line, White picked up a fresh set of downs on a 26-yard pass to Copeland. On the next play, Hegwood scampered into the end zone on the 13-yard touchdown run. Looking to tie the game at 28-28, Ross attempted the PAT but the kick sailed wide left allowing the Rebels to retain a one-point lead with 9:59 left to play.

The final minutes of the game began the battle of attrition for McKenzie. The Rebels needed to either score or keep the Raiders out of the end zone. McKenzie was unable to score on its next drive following two questionable spots leading to a turnover on downs near the 50-yard line.

Now it was up to the defense to keep the Rebels' season alive. On third-and-three from the Rebel 46-yard line, Cassidy came up with a big tackle preventing Hegwood from picking up the first down. On fourth-and-one, the Raiders were penalized with a false start pushing them back five yards. Then on fourth-and-six, White looked to pick up the first down but Cassidy sacked the QB and forced the turnover on downs.

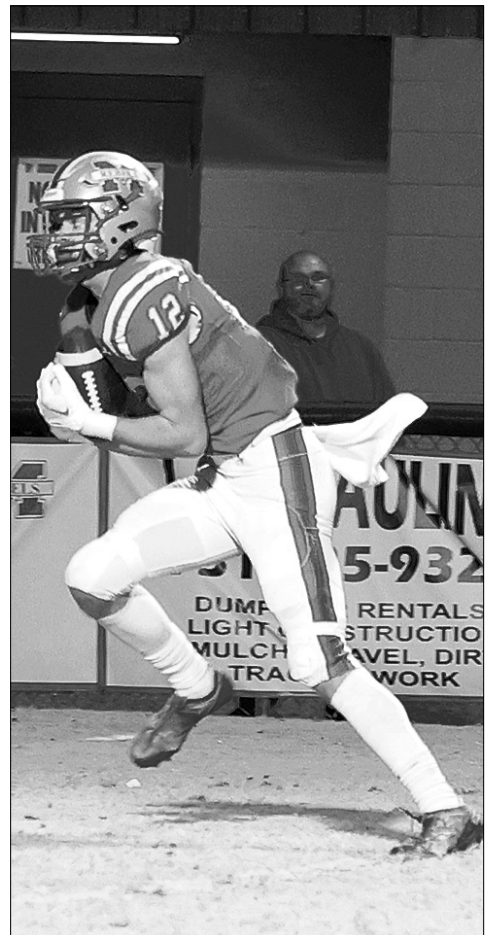
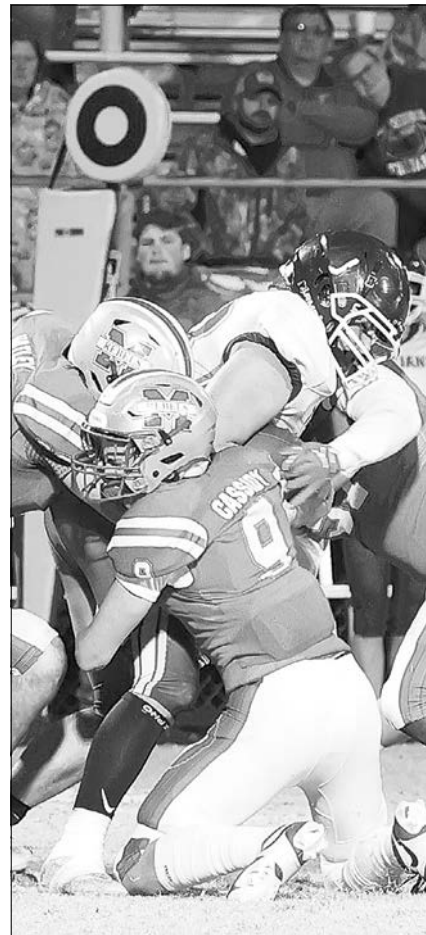
With 4:17 on the clock, McKenzie needed to pick up a couple of first downs to force Moore County into using their final two timeouts. On fourth-and-nine, Surber and Norden picked up the first down putting the clock at three minutes. The Raiders would use their two timeouts in the next three plays. Again the Rebels elected to go for it on fourth down and again it was a pass from Surber to Norden for the first down. The clock rolled to its final seconds as McKenzie kept the ball on the ground before Surber and the Rebels, in a sign of sportsmanship, took a knee, ending the game 28-27 in favor of the Rebels.

The Friday night win puts the Rebels (12-1) at home in a rematch against the Dresden Lions (13-0). The winner will travel to Chattanooga to play for the TSSAA Division I-IA State Football Championship. Game time is 7 p.m.

GAME 12 — MCKENZIE 43, COLLINWOOD 0



Above, Stafford Roditis returns an interception for the touchdown. Below Left, Jake Cassidy and a host of Rebels tackle the Collinwood runner. Below Right, Colt Norden catches a pass and runs downfield. Photo by Joel Washburn/The Banner



Rebels Continue Playoff Run

McKenzie Blanks Collinwood

MCKENZIE (November 10) — On Friday night the McKenzie Rebels picked up their eleventh win of the season and advanced to the quarterfinal round of the TSSAA Football Playoffs. The Rebels hosted the Collinwood Trojans coming away with a 43-0

win. Next Friday, McKenzie travels to Lynchburg to battle it out with the Moore County Raiders (12-0).

The Rebel defense along with a balanced offense made McKenzie look unstoppable. Collinwood was held to 57 yards of total offense in 37 plays. McKenzie forced three turnovers on the Trojans with two fumbles and an interception. Ace Fisher led the Rebel defense with six tackles, one assist and a fumble recovery. Jake Cassidy recorded two tackles and a sack while KD Cunningham posted two fumble recoveries.

McKenzie's offense recorded 300 total yards in 48 plays. The passing game led by Tate Surber had 107 yards and a touchdown in 11 plays. On the ground, the Rebels accumulated 193 rushing yards. Brady Brewer led the attack with 15 carries for 124 yards and three touchdowns.

In the first quar-

ter, McKenzie scored one touchdown. At the four-minute mark, Brewer was in the end zone from 23 yards out. Then Cassidy converted the two-point conversion putting the Rebels up 8-0.

The Rebels had three scores in the second quarter. Brewer had his second touchdown starting the second quarter. Roditis tacked on the PAT. Then at the 4:10 mark, Surber completed a 51-yard touchdown pass to Colt Norden, Roditis' extra point enhanced the lead 22-0. To close the half, Roditis intercepted a pass returning it 52 yards, and then kicked the PAT putting McKenzie up 29-0.

In the third quarter, Brewer had his third TD of the night. The Roditis PAT was good as the Rebels went up 36-0. Capping the game off in the fourth was Timmy Arline with a three-yard touchdown run on second-and-goal. Roditis added the final point on the night giving McKenzie the 43-0 victory.

Kickoff Friday night at Moore County is 7 p.m.

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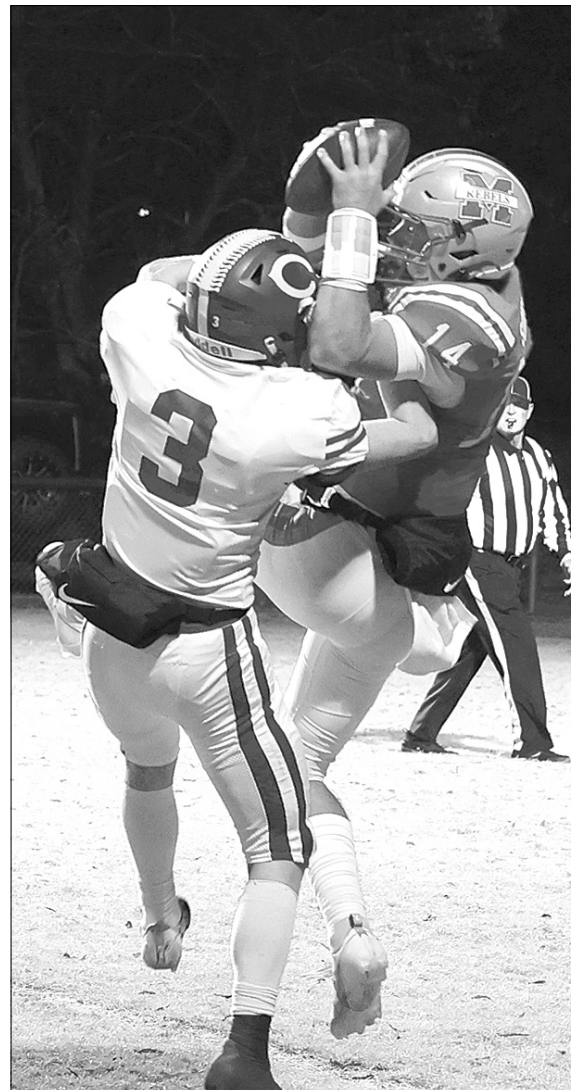
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GAME 11 — MCKENZIE 31, CORNERSVILLE 14



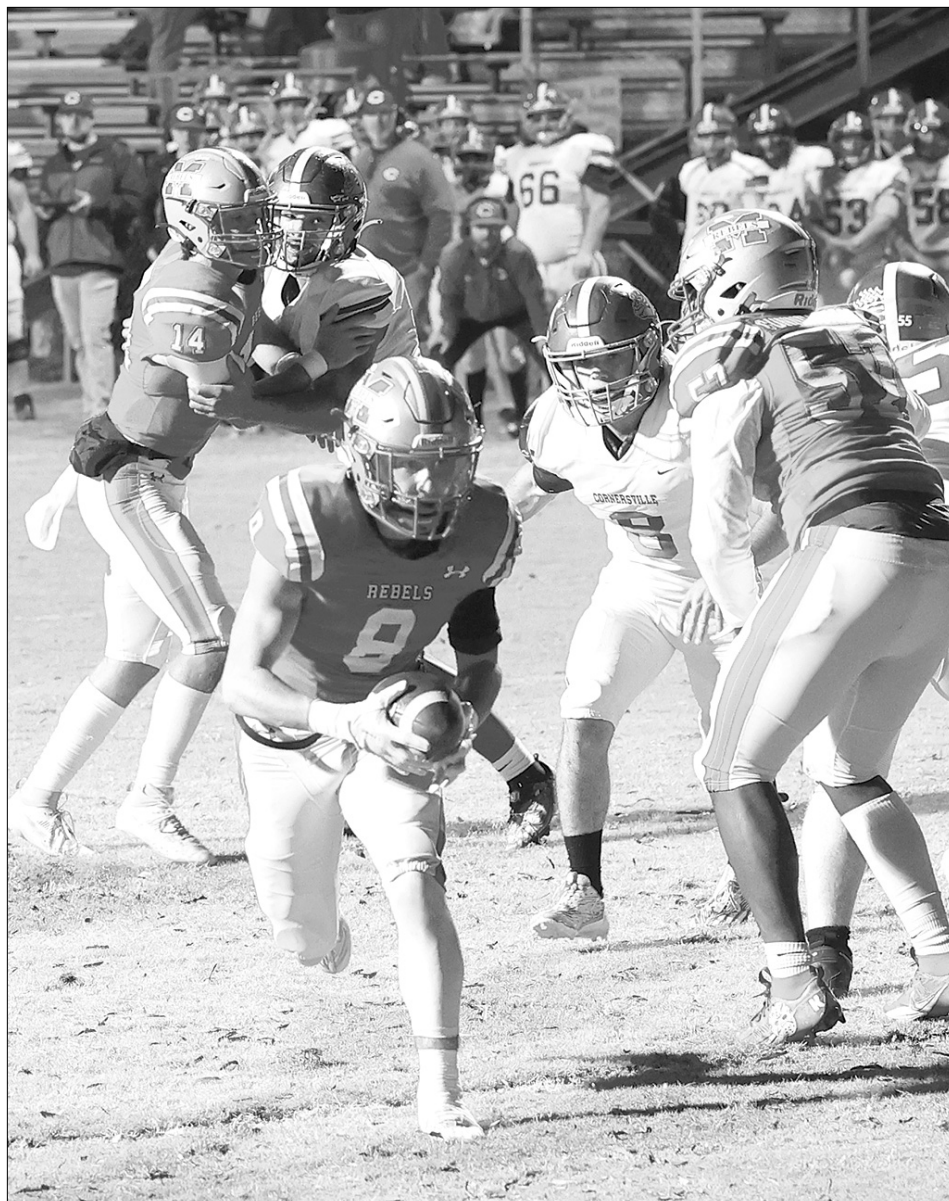
Left, Stafford Roditis (#13) catches a touchdown pass from Tate Surber. Right, Tate Surber (#14) intercepts to pass over Cornersville receiver Hunter Uland (#3). Photos by Joel Washburn/The Banner

McKenzie Rebels Advance to Second Round

BY JASON R. MARTIN
 jmartin@mckenziebanner.com
 MCKENZIE (November 3) — The McKenzie Rebels opened the first round of

the TSSAA State Football Playoffs with a 31-14 win over the Cornersville Bulldogs. Despite the Bulldogs taking an early lead, the Rebels took the lead and

held strong for the remainder of the game. Looking at the numbers, McKenzie ran 61 plays for 340 total yards. Cornersville ran 41 plays accumulating 200 total yards. In passing, the Rebels had 150 yards with Junior Quarterback Tate Surber going 11 of 23 with two touchdowns. Stafford Roditis caught 5 passes for 77 yards and two touchdowns. The Bulldogs were held to 27 yards passing.



Brady Brewer (#8) finds the gap and goes for the touchdown. Photo by Joel Washburn/The Banner

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On the ground, McKenzie rushed for 190 yards. Led by Brady Brewer with 20 carries for 124 yards and two touchdowns. For Cornersville, they rushed for 173 yards. Leading their ground game was Senior Running Back Ben Franklin with 22 carries for 160 yards and accounting for both Bulldog touchdowns. During the regular season, Franklin rushed for 2,184 yards on 176 carries with 31 touchdowns. Defensively, the Rebels were led by Surber with four tackles with two assists and an interception. Skyler Fornera had two tackles with one assist and a fumble recovery, KD Cunningham had two tackles, followed by Dalton Hatley with one tackle, two assists and a sack. Cornersville received the opening kickoff. Starting from the Bulldog 35-yard line, Franklin broke free on a quick pitch around the end for the touchdown. The Bulldogs followed up with a successful two-point conversion to take the early 8-0 lead.

McKenzie started its offensive drive from the Rebel 36-yard line. On the first play of the drive, Colt Norden caught a first-down pass that resulted in a personal foul and a possible concussion taking him out of the game. The Rebels crossed midfield, and on third-and-four from the 23-yard line, Brewer picked up the rushing touchdown. Roditis added the extra point as McKenzie trailed 8-7 with under eight minutes on the clock in the first quarter. The Bulldogs' next drive was cut short as Blaine Woodard's pass on second down was deflected and picked off by Ace Fisher. Deep within Cornersville territory, a facemask penalty put the Rebels at the eight-yard line on first-and-goal. Brewer added his sec-

ond touchdown of the game at the 4:15 mark. Roditis' added the PAT as McKenzie led 14-8. The next offensive series for both teams resulted in three-and-outs. Starting the second quarter of play, McKenzie had possession of near midfield. A horsecollar penalty on the Bulldogs put the Rebels close to the red zone. On third-and-ten from the Cornersville 22-yard line, Roditis made a leaping touchdown catch over two Bulldog defenders. With 9:12 left in the second quarter, Roditis added the extra point as McKenzie went up 21-8. Cornersville was able to respond on the next drive. Deep within Bulldog territory, Cornersville with the help of Franklin's ability

to break free on the run was in scoring position in eight plays. On second-and-four from the McKenzie eight-yard line, Franklin was in for the touchdown. After a failed two-point conversion, the Rebels led 21-14. McKenzie looked to keep their momentum going to close the half but a fumble recovery by Cornerville killed a promising touchdown drive. The Rebels scored on the opening drive of the second half. Roditis and Cole Brown were able to catch first-down passes and a run by Brewer put McKenzie in scoring position. On second-and-four from the 27-yard line, Roditis caught a second touchdown pass from Surber. The PAT put McKenzie up 28-14.

The Rebel defense kept Franklin in check for much of the second half. In the fourth quarter, Surber intercepted Woodard's pass. McKenzie capitalized on the turnover. On fourth-and-six from the Cornersville nine-yard line, Roditis booted the 26-yard field goal, capping the game at 31-14 in favor of the Rebels. This Friday, November 10, the Rebels (10-1) host Collinwood (7-3) at 7 p.m. The winner of that game travels to play the winner of Moore County (11-0) / Eagleville (7-4) in the quarterfinals. The winner of the quarterfinals will likely play Dresden in the semifinals which advances to the state championship round to be played on December 1 in Chattanooga.

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GAME 10 — MCKENZIE 42, WEST CARROLL 13



Above, West Carroll's Zach Hames (#17) moves the ball for short yardage prior to being tackled by a host of Rebels. Below Left, Zac Fowler (#4) launches a pass. Below Right, Jake Cassidy (#9) runs after catching a pass for touchdown from Tate Surber. Photos By Joel Washburn/The Banner



Rebels Finish Regular Season With Region Championship

BY JASON R. MARTIN
 jmartin@mckenziebanner.com

MCKENZIE (October 26) — On Thursday night, the McKenzie Rebels hosted the West Carroll War Eagles for the Region 6-1A championship. Coming into the game, both teams were 4-0 in the region. At night's end, the Rebels took the win, 42-13.

Looking at the stats, the Rebels and the War Eagles both ran 53 plays. McKenzie accumulated 437 total yards to West Carroll's 250 yards. The Rebels had 210 passing yards and 227 rushing yards while the War Eagles had 144 passing yards and 106 rushing yards. McKenzie turned the ball over three times while West Carroll's offense was picked off once.

The opening quarter of play was a strong back-and-forth with which a long battle seemed to be held in store for the rest of the game. Yet, as the game continued, McKenzie's depth and athleticism took over.

In the first quarter, Brady Brewer had the first touchdown on a 34-yard run followed by Stafford Roditis adding the extra point putting the Rebels up 7-0.

As the second quarter progressed, McKenzie's lead increased as Tate Surber threw three touchdowns. The first was to Jake Cassidy from 17 yards out. Then Colt Norden caught two touchdown passes, one for a 25-yard TD and a second for a 22-yarder. Roditis added the three extra points, as the Rebels were up 28-0 at the half.

West Carroll looked to cut into the Rebel lead as Darion Taylor threw a 63-

yard touchdown pass to Jayden Milton. Jose Martinez kicked the PAT as McKenzie led 28-7.

After an interception catch by Roditis, McKenzie's Jacobi Melton reeled off a 51-yard run for the touchdown. The Roditis PAT put the Rebels up 35-7 to end the third quarter.

The War Eagles were able to score a second touchdown in the fourth quarter. Nate Wykoff crossed the goal line from 4 yards out. The extra point was no good.

Surber threw his fourth touchdown of the night to Norden (his third receiving TD). Roditis capped it off with his sixth PAT of the night.

Next week marks the opening round of the TSSAA State Playoffs as the Rebels look to defend their Class 1A State Championship. McKenzie (9-1) hosts Cornersville (6-4) at 7 p.m. The winner faces the winner of McEwen (4-6) / Collinwood (6-3). In all likelihood, the Rebels will face Moore County (10-0) at Moore County in the quarterfinals with the winner facing Dresden (10-0) in the semifinals. The semifinal winner will then likely face South Pittsburg (10-0) in the State Championship on December 13.

West Carroll hosts Eagleville (6-4) with the winner taking on the winner of Moore County (10-0) / Houston County (4-6).

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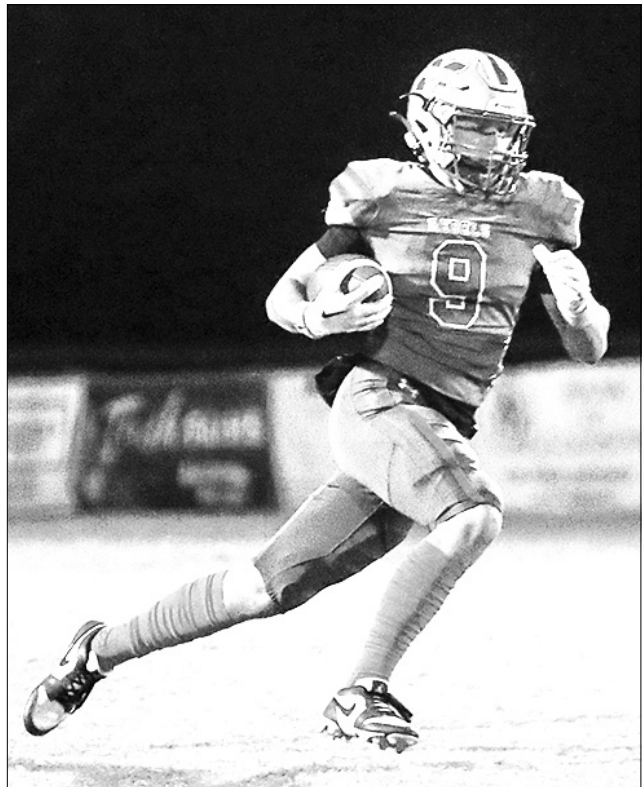
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GAME 9 — MCKENZIE 38, FREEDOM PREPARATORY ACADEMY OF MEMPHIS 8



Left, Jake Cassidy breaks free picking up positive yardage for the Rebels. Center, Colt Norden had one touchdown in Friday night's game against Freedom Preparatory Academy. Right, Craegen Travis works to contain the Eagle defender. Photos by Tammy Graves

McKenzie Takes Eighth Win of Season

Rebels Continue to Dominate on Both Sides of the Ball

BY JASON R. MARTIN
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MCKENZIE (October 20) — The Rebels continued to roll Friday night as they

hosted Freedom Preparatory Academy of Memphis taking their eighth win of the season. McKenzie won 38-8 improving to 8-1 on the regular season and 4-0 in

Region 6-1A. The Rebels ran 32 plays accumulating 220 yards of total offense while the Eagles ran 47 plays totaling 61 yards of offense. McKenzie's passing game picked up 144 yards and the rushing games had 76 yards. Freedom Prep had 104 passing yards with the rushing game held to -44 yards.

Leading the passing game for the Rebels was Tate Surber, who went 10 for 11 with 144 yards and three touchdowns. In receiving, Colt Norden caught one pass for 36 yards and had one touchdown, Jake Cassidy had three catches for 31 yards and a touchdown and Stafford Roditis had three catches for 30 yards and one TD.

Brady Brewer had seven rushing attempts for 49 yards and two touchdowns followed by Norden with one carry for 16 yards.

The McKenzie defense was led by Cole Brown with five tackles (three for a loss) and KD Cunningham with four tackles (two for a loss).

McKenzie scored ten points in the first quarter. At the 5:51 mark, Surber hit Cassidy for an 11-yard touchdown. Roditis added the PAT putting the Rebels up 7-0.

After a bobbled snap by the Eagles to the punter on fourth down, the Rebels were in excellent scoring position for their second offensive drive. Taking over at the 11-yard line, McKenzie could not pick up the touchdown. Instead, the Rebels elected to go for a field goal on fourth-and-nine from the 10-yard line. Roditis hit the 38-yarder as McKenzie went up 10-0 with 30 seconds remaining in the quarter.

In the second quarter, the Rebels and Surber had

two touchdowns. After a 14-yard punt by the Eagles, McKenzie taking over at the Freedom Prep 36-yard line needed one play from Surber to Norden to pick up the TD. Roditis picked up the extra point as the Rebels increased their lead to 17-0 with 10:42 to play in the half.

The Eagles were plagued by delay of game penalties on their next possession. Following a short punt, the Rebels fumbled the return as Freedom Prep recovered the ball. The Eagles had another three-and-out and McKenzie took over at the Freedom Prep 44-yard line.

In four plays the Rebels were in the end zone with a pass from Surber to Roditis from 11 yards out. Roditis' PAT was good putting the Rebels up 24-0 at the half.

With 9:39 to play in the third quarter, Brewer had his first rushing touchdown on second-and-goal

from the two-yard line. After the Roditis PAT, McKenzie was up 31-0 as the mercy rule went into effect with a running clock.

At the 2:34 mark of the third quarter, Brewer was in for six from nine yards out. Roditis tackled on the PAT as the Rebels led 38-0.

With 3:10 to play in the game, the Eagles scored on a 65-yard touchdown pass by Jalan Austin to Tyler Woodard followed by a two-point conversion pass from Austin to Josh Street. The final from Randy Thomas Field was 38-8.

Next Friday night at 7 p.m., the McKenzie Rebels host the West Carroll War Eagles for the Region 6-1A championship. Both teams are guaranteed to host the first round of the playoffs while the winner will host the first and second round of the playoffs (provided they win the opening round).

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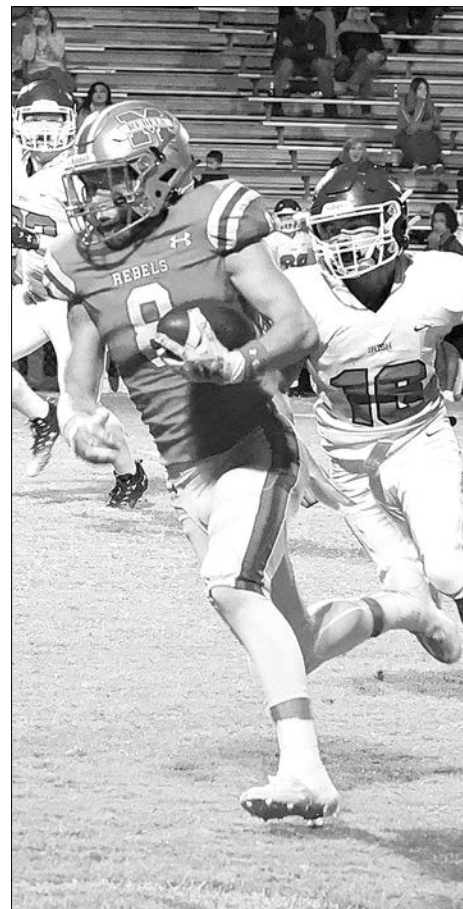
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GAME 8 — MCKENZIE 56, HOUSTON COUNTY 7



Above, Skyler Fornera (#1) and Timmy Arline (#6) make a tackle on Houston County's kickoff return. Right, Brady Brewer breaks free for a 59-yard touchdown. Photos by Joel Washburn/The Banner

McKenzie Takes the Fight Out of the Irish

BY JASON R. MARTIN
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MCKENZIE (October 6) — McKenzie moved to 7-1 on the regular season and 4-0 in Region 6-1A play after an impressive Homecoming win Friday night. The Rebels hammered the Houston County Fighting Irish 56-7.

McKenzie's offense and defense played a strong game, as the offense picked up 561 total yards and the defense held Houston Co. to 43 total yards. In passing, Tate Surber was 10 of 12 for 214 yards and two touchdowns. On the ground, the Rebels had 320 yards. Leading the attack was Brady Brewer with 206 yards and three touchdowns. In receiving, Colt Norden had five catches for 144 and two touchdowns.

The Rebel offense took the field first to open the game. In four plays, Brewer put up the first points on a 42-yard touchdown run. Stafford Roditis added the extra point making the

score 7-0.

McKenzie and Brewer scored their second touchdown on the next offensive possession. This time Brewer ripped off a 24-yard touchdown run with 7:40 to play in the opening quarter. Roditis' PAT put the Rebels up 14-0.

Houston County turned the ball over after an interception made by Brewer. McKenzie capitalized on the turnover as Surber on a play-action pass to Norden for a 43-yard touchdown. The extra point had the Rebels up 21-0.

On their next defensive series, Skyler Fornera intercepted the Houston Co. pass. From 10 yards out, Surber kept the ball and scored. Roditis tackled on the PAT putting the Rebels up 28-0.

McKenzie's fifth offensive series resulted in a fifth touchdown drive. Surber and Norden in a game of pitch and catch put up a 68-yard touchdown. The extra point put McKenzie up 35-0 with 6:47

to play in the second quarter.

With 2:59 left in the quarter, McKenzie went up 42-0 following Brewer's 59-yard touchdown and the extra point.

At half time with the mercy rule in effect, the second half opened with the Rebel offense making a series of substitutions. The Fighting Irish showed a flash of life with a 90-yard kickoff return to start the second half.

The running clock didn't hamper McKenzie. Cole Brown at quarterback broke free for a 37-yard touchdown. The extra point put McKenzie up 49-7.

Timmy Arline scored the final TD of the night at the 3:50 mark of the fourth quarter. The PAT capped the score at 56-7.

The Rebels have a bye week this Friday, but will be at home on October 20 to play Freedom Prep Academy. The game was originally scheduled to be played in Memphis.

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GAME 7 — MCKENZIE 57, PERRY COUNTY 7

Rebels Torpedo Vikings in Region Action

BY JASON R. MARTIN
jmartin@mckenziebanner.com

LINDEN (September 29) — The McKenzie Rebels wrapped up a five-week road revue picking up their sixth win on the season as they dominated the Perry County Vikings 57-7. The Rebels traveled to Linden for the week seven Region 6-1A win moving to 6-1 on the season and 3-0 in the region.

McKenzie seemed to score at will in the first half posting 50 of their points in the first half. Tate Surber had an excellent first half as quarterback going seven for seven with five touchdowns and 226 yards passing. He also led the team in rushing with 45 yards; one of his two runs of the night was for 30 yards.

In receiving, Colt Norden had two catches for 113 yards and two touchdowns. Stafford Roditis had three receptions for 51 yards and two touchdowns. Brady Brewer had one catch for 26 yards and a touchdown.

The Rebel defense held the Vikings to 114 offensive yards, 64 passing and



Left, Tate Surber passed for five touchdowns against Perry County. Right, Colt Norden caught two passes both for touchdowns, the longest was for 66 yards. File Photos



50 rushing. Gage Crosland had a pick-six interception. According to the stat sheet, Dalton Hatley had five tackles followed by Drew Chappell with three. KD Cunningham and Ryan McCreary recorded sacks on the night.

In the first quarter, Norden had two touchdown receptions. The first was

for 66-yards at the 11:13 mark followed by a pitch-and-catch from Surber to Roditis for the two-point conversion. At the 8:30 mark, Norden crossed the goal line from 47 yards out. The PAT by Roditis was good, putting McKenzie up 15-0.

With 5:59 to the play in the first quarter, Brewer

scored on a counter from six yards out. Roditis added the extra point as the Rebels were up 22-0.

After a quick three-and-out by Perry County, Surber had his third passing touchdown of the quarter to Roditis from eight yards out. The PAT was good as McKenzie's lead increased to 29-0.

The Rebels steamed ahead in the second quarter. With 8:25 on the clock, Surber found an open Brewer for 26 yards and a touchdown. The Roditis PAT was good as the Rebels were up 36-0.

After a big tackle for a ball 50 yards for the touch-down. The extra point put McKenzie up 43-0.

Roditis had his second touchdown reception from Surber with 3:40 remaining in the half. His extra point was good as the Rebels led 50-0.

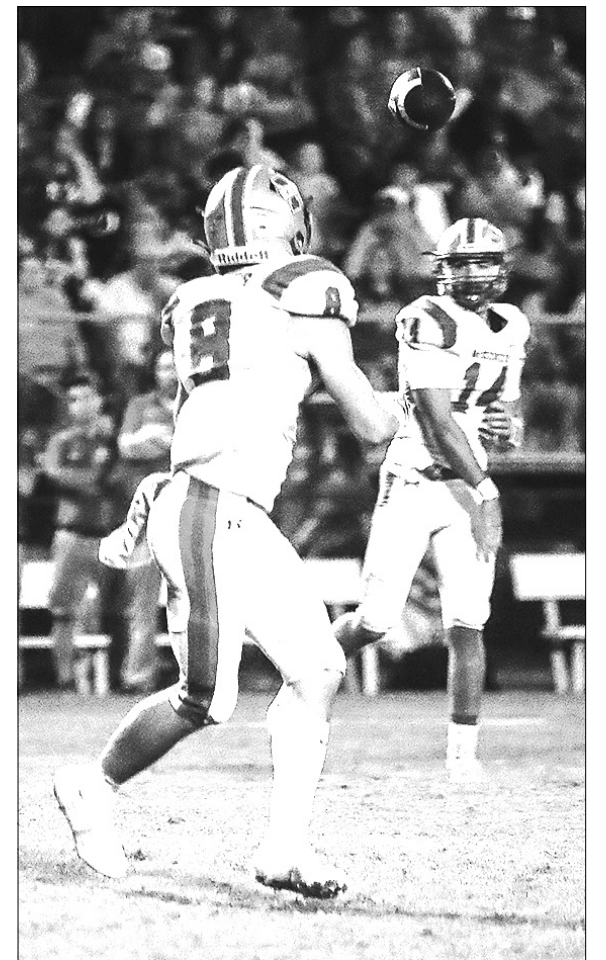
For the remainder of the game, substitutions were made allowing all the Rebels playing time.

The second half began with a running clock. Perry County was able to score on a 37-yard pass from Josh Warren. The PAT by Landon Smith was good as McKenzie's lead was narrowed to 50-7.

The Rebels scored the final points of the night in the fourth quarter as Timmy Arline crossed the goal line from 11 yards out. Skyler Fornera added the PAT putting the final score at 57-7.

Next Friday is Homecoming for McKenzie (6-1) as they take on the Fighting Irish of Houston County (3-4). This is the first time the two schools have played against each other on the gridiron. Kickoff is 7 p.m.

GAME 6 — MCKENZIE 63, HOLLOW ROCK-BRUCETON CENTRAL 0



Left, Drew Chappell looks to gain positive yardage after catching the pass. Center, McKenzie's defense held Central's offense to 92 yards. Right, Tate Surber (#14) passes to Brady Brewer (#8). Photos by Tammy Graves

Rebels Dominate Tigers in Region Win

BRUCETON (September 22) — The McKenzie Rebels made the 20-mile cross-country trek to Hollow Rock-Bruceton Central High School to pick up their fifth win of the season. The Rebels dominated the Tigers 63-0 in the Region 6-1A victory.

The Rebels scored on their opening drive after the Tigers punted on a three-and-out. On first-and-ten from the Tiger 21-yard line, Colt Norden scored. Roditis followed with the extra point, as McKenzie went up 7-0.

Central was three-and-out on their next possession.

Timmy Arline nearly took the return the distance but a block in the back put the Rebels at the Tiger 42-yard line. Brady Brewer picked up the first down on third-and-four. From the 30-yard line, Arline would score on the jet sweep. Roditis added the PAT as the Rebels led 14-0 with 5:20 to go in the opening quarter.

McKenzie Senior Lute McCaslin picked off a Central pass on the next offensive series. Five plays later the Rebels were in the end zone on a four-yard swing pass from Tate Surber to Norden. Roditis' extra point was good

as the Rebels went up 21-0 with 2:37 in the first quarter.

The second quarter of play opened with McKenzie in scoring position. On first-and-goal from the one, Brewer crossed the goal line. The PAT was good as the Rebels increased their lead to 28-0.

Following another short series by Central, the Rebels were on the move for the fifth touchdown of the night. Surber called his own number twice, moving the ball across midfield and down to the Tiger seven-yard line. On first-and-goal, Brewer picked up the seven-yard TD. Roditis

added the extra point as the Rebel lead moved to 35-0.

After another solid punt return by Arline and an un-sportsmanlike conduct call against Central, the Rebels had a short field for their next touchdown drive. Surber and Brewer played pass and catch for the 26-yard touchdown. Skyler Fornera took over the kicking duties adding the extra point. McKenzie was up 42-0 with 4:24 to play in the quarter.

Central fumbled the kick return and McKenzie recovered on the Tiger 20-yard line. The following play had Brew-

er in the end zone for his third touchdown. Fornera's PAT was good as McKenzie led 49-0 at the half.

With a running clock for the remainder of the half, McKenzie elected to use substitution throughout the game. Seth Cunningham along with Ethan Batton and Davarion Gilbert recorded sacks to open the second half.

Freshman Cole Brown took over for Surber with Arline and Jacobi Melton taking over the running duties for Norden and Brewer. The Rebel offense ran six minutes off the clock on their opening

drive of the third quarter. On second-and-goal from the one-yard line, Brown kept the ball picking up the Rebel TD. Fornera's PAT was good as McKenzie went up 56-0.

The Rebels would score once in the fourth quarter. Arline had a pick-six, returning the ball 75 yards. The PAT was good as the Rebels took the 63-0 win.

Next Friday night, the Rebels wrap up their road series in Linden taking on the Perry County Vikings. The region game kick-off is 7 p.m.

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GAME 5 — MCKENZIE 43, SCOTTS HILL 13

McKenzie Rebels Rout Scotts Hill Lions

Comer Picks Up 200th Career Win

REAGAN (September 15) — The McKenzie Rebels improved their record Friday night to 4-1 with the non-region road win at Scotts Hill. McKenzie handled Scotts Hill with ease as they picked up the 43-13 victory.

The Rebels dominated on both sides of the ball. McKenzie had 357 yards compared to Scotts Hill's 152. In passing yards the Rebels accumulated 192 yards to the Lions 184 yards, most of which came off of two big plays. In rushing yards, McKenzie had 165 yards with the defense stymieing Scotts Hill to -32 yards.

Leading in tackles were Drew Chappell and Dalton Hatley with three each. Hatley had two sacks on the night.

It did not take the Rebels long to score on their first possession. Starting at mid-field Tate Surber completed three consecutive passes picking up first downs on each; catches were made by Stafford Roditis, Jacobi Melton and Ace Fisher. On first-and-goal from the seven, on a play-action pass, Surber threw a strike to Cole Brown for the touchdown. Surber called his own number for the two-point conversion as McKenzie led 8-0 at the 10:35 mark.

McKenzie scored on its second possession. Starting at the Lions' 36-yard line, in two plays the Rebels were up another touchdown. Surber and Brown teamed for 16 yards followed by a 20-yard pitch-and-catch from Surber to Melton for the TD. Roditis tackled on the PAT as McKenzie led 15-0 with 6:50 remaining in the first quarter.

On their third offensive possession, the Rebels fumbled away the ball, and the Lions would capitalize. On fourth-and-five, Noah Clayton caught a



Freshman Jacobi Melton had two touchdowns Friday night against Scotts Hill. He returned a kickoff back from 65 yards and caught a 20-yard pass for touchdown. *File photo*

47-yard pass from Kyle Carter. Jorge Elias added the PAT, cutting the Rebel lead 15-7 with 1:10 left in the first quarter.

McKenzie chewed up nearly half the second quarter in its next offensive possession. On third-and-goal from the Scotts Hill four-yard line, Surber crossed the goal line for six points. Roditis' first PAT attempt was no good but the Lions were called for offsides. The second attempt was good as the Rebels were up 21-7 with 6:09 to play in the opening half.

Scotts Hill went three-and-out on its next possession, and the Rebels took over at their 42-yard line. Penalties attempted to stall the McKenzie drive but the Rebels were able to score on second-and-fifteen from the 32. Brady Brewer caught the TD pass for Surber squeezing just inside the pylon. The Rebels elected to go for two as Surber teamed with Roditis, McKenzie was up 29-7 at the half.

The Lions went three-and-out to open the second half. McKenzie had a pass

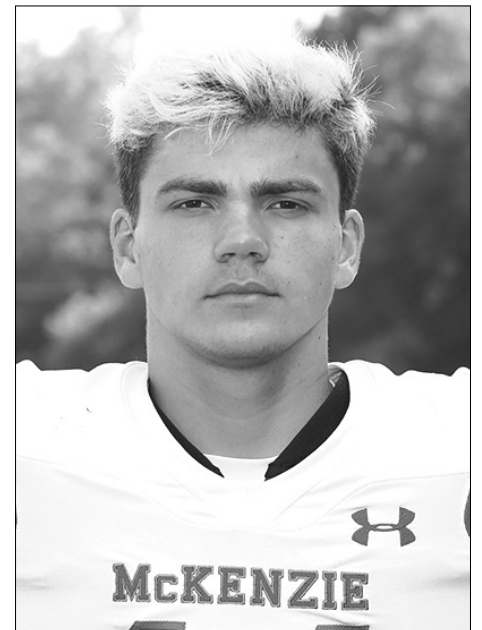
picked off on the next drive. Scotts Hill from their 30-yard line picked up the 70-yard touchdown with a pass from Carter to Malachi Johnson. Elias' extra point was no good. Rebels led 29-13.

It only took a matter of seconds for McKenzie to respond. On the kickoff, the Lions bunted a squib kick fielded by Melton, who returned the kick 65 yards for the touchdown. Roditis added the PAT as the Rebels increased the lead 36-13 with 9:40 remaining in the third quarter.

The last points of the night came at the 9:45 mark of the fourth quarter. On second-and-goal from the seven-yard line, Timmy Arline picked up the last touchdown and Roditis hit the final PAT. The final score from Reagan was 43-13.

The Rebels' record improved to 4-1 on the season. Next Friday night, McKenzie continues on its five-game road series at Hollow Rock-Bruceston Central (1-4). This region 6-1A game kicks off at 7 p.m.

GAME 4 — MCKENZIE 23, McEWEN 0



Left, Colt Norden (12) led McKenzie's ground game with 102 yards and one touchdown. Right, Tate Surber (14) was 12 of 17 passing for 173 yards.

McKenzie Handles McEwen with Ease

Comer One Win Away From 200

BY JASON R. MARTIN
martin@mcckenziebanner.com

McEWEN (September 8) — On Friday night, the Rebels traveled to middle Tennessee picking up their third win of the season and Coach Wade Comer's 199th career win. In a quick-moving game, McKenzie led McEwen from start to finish picking up the 23-0 win.

Looking at the numbers, the Rebels ran a total of 53 plays picking up 303 yards versus McEwen's 43 plays for 71 yards. McKenzie had 173 rushing yards and 130 yards rushing.

As for penalties, the Rebels were flagged 11 times for 85 yards while McEwen was called for 4 penalties equaling 47 yards.

Tate Surber was 12 of 17 passing for 173 yards. Colt Norden led the rushing game with 19 carries for 102 yards with one touchdown. The receiving core was led by Jake Cassidy with three receptions for 64 yards, his longest of the

night was for 26 yards.

Surber and Stafford Roditis each picked off a Warrior pass. KD Cunningham had three tackles with three assists and one for a loss. He was followed by Surber, Drew Chappell and Barry Swalley with two each. Cassidy had a fumble recovery.

The Warriors won the coin toss and deferred to the second half. The Rebels moved the ball downfield gingerly picking up four first downs. On first-and-goal from the two, Ryan McCreary picked up the touchdown. McKenzie converted the two-point conversion but was negated by a holding penalty. Roditis then kicked the extra point as the Rebel led 7-0 with 7:58 to play in the quarter.

McEwen's opening drive resulted in three first downs but failed to produce any points. The drive faltered on the McKenzie 24-yard line as the Warrior turned the ball over on downs.

McKenzie's second on their third possession of the night. From 49 yards out, Norden found running room thanks to a block by Cole Brown. The PAT by Rodit was good as McKenzie led McEwen 14-0 with 4:31 to play in the second quarter.

The Rebels recovered the kickoff as the Warriors bobbled the return. On McKenzie's second play, the ball was fumbled and recovered by McEwen.

With 32 seconds remaining in the half, Roditis intercepted Landon Davis' pass. Surber found open receivers in Brown and Roditis, moving the ball to the Warrior 21-yard line. The Rebels elected to kick the 38-yard field goal but it was ruled no good. McEwen was flagged for roughing the kicker and Roditis was successful on his second attempt. The 28-yard field goal closed the half with McKenzie up 17-0.

McEwen's opening drive of the second half was cut short as Surber intercepted Davis. The Rebels failed to capitalize on the turnover. Both teams went back and forth in the scoreless third quarter.

At the 5:53 mark of the fourth quarter, McKenzie tackled on the final points. On third-and-two from the three-yard line, Surber faked the run to McCreary and kept it for himself. The final score was 23-0 after the missed PAT.

Next Friday night, the Rebels travel to Reagan in Henderson County to take on the Scotts Hill Lions. Kickoff is 7 p.m.

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GAME 3 — MCKENZIE 29, CHESTER COUNTY 12

Rebels Bounce Back with Win Over Chester County

BY JASON R. MARTIN
jmartin@mckenziebanner.com

HENDERSON (September 1) — After a tough week two loss to Dresden, the McKenzie Rebels found their stride against the Chester County Eagles picking up the 29-12 win. McKenzie moved to 2-1 for the season.

The Rebels came out swinging in a fast-paced offense during their first possession. McKenzie, starting at their 14-yard line moved the ball across midfield but was forced to punt on fourth-and-eight as the drive stalled.

The Eagles' second possession was short-lived as they were forced to punt, downing the ball at the McKenzie 26-yard line with 4:22 to play in the opening quarter.

Ryan McCreary moved the ball across midfield due to a solid run and a Chester County facemask penalty. Colt Norden and Timmy Arline moved the ball inside the redzone. On first-and-goal from the one, McCreary put up the first touchdown and Tate Surber crossed the goal line with the two-point conversion. The Rebels led 8-0 with 1:21 remaining in the first quarter.

Chester County was unable to answer with any points on the next drive, but McKenzie would capitalize off of good field position. Starting at the 49-yard line, Surber hit Stafford Roditis for 39 yards on the post-play. Then Norden and McCreary set up the ball at the four-yard line allowing Arline to pick up the TD. With 7:47 to play in the half, Roditis tacked on the point-after attempt putting the Rebels up 15-0.

The Eagles were able to score on their next possession. Peyton Barham



Left, Cole Brown hits the corner extending the play. Right, Tate Surber turns up field looking for the first down. Photos by Tammy Graves

found running room on the Rebels several times on the drive picking up three first downs. On fourth-and-goal from the six, Barham was in for six. A low snap forced a bad PAT as McKenzie's lead was cut to 15-6.

The Rebels had the ball to start the third quarter. It looked as if McKenzie was going to be three-and-out of the drive but Roditis tucked the ball away instead of punting and picked up the first down. Surber's pass to Norden put the ball in the red zone. On fourth-and-nine, Roditis attempted a 29-yard field goal, he missed but Chester County was called for roughing the kicker. With a fresh set of downs, Norden caught a 15-yard touchdown pass in the back of the endzone. The PAT was good as McKenzie went up 22-6.

Early in the fourth quarter, the Rebels picked up their final touchdown of the night. Norden picked up several yards on the series

including a run for 38 yards. On second-and-goal from the two, Norden was in for six and Roditis's PAT was good. The Rebels led 29-6.

Chester County scored the final points of the night

at the 1:29 mark. Evan Schippers picked up 11 yards and an Eagle touchdown. Skyelor Fornera blocked the PAT as McKenzie capped the game with a 29-12 victory.

Next Friday night, the Rebels go into their second of four consecutive away

games to battle the McEwen Warriors. Game time is 7 p.m.

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GAME 2 — MCKENZIE 14, DRESDEN 42



Above Left, McKenzie's Timmy Arline (#6) breaks away for good yardage setting up for a Rebel touchdown. Above Right, Dresden's Nick Turnbow (#17) fumbles the ball, but the Lions recovered possession. Below Left, Colt Norden (#12) stretches out attempting to catch the pass from Tate Surber. Below Right, Ace Fisher leaps over the Lions attempting to make a catch. Photos by Joel Washburn/The Banner



Dresden Overpowers McKenzie in Week Two Match-up

BY JASON R. MARTIN
jmartin@mckenziebanner.com

MCKENZIE (August 25) — As they say, all good things must come to an end, and so it did for the McKenzie Rebels' winning streak Friday

night. After 16 consecutive wins and a state championship, the Rebels finally had to put one down in the loss column. The Dresden Lions handled McKenzie fairly easily in the week two matchup, coming away with the 42-14 victory.

Looking at the stats, McKenzie and Dresden both ran 59 plays but the Lions had nearly double the total yardage as the Rebels with 406 to 204. Dresden led in passing yards 209 to 85 and rushing yardage 197 to 119. The Lions were seven for eight in

third down conversions but had one turnover.

In the first quarter, things looked good for McKenzie. Dresden's Cameron Schlicht was intercepted by Stafford Roditis in the first series. While the Rebels were unable to score on their opening offensive drive a good punt flipped the field defensive. Looking to punt on fourth-and-nine, Dresden's snap went over the punter's head and was downed at the 10-yard line.

With 6:14 to play in the quarter, on a broken play, Tate Surber scrambled across the goal line to pick up the touchdown. Roditis tackled on the extra point as the Rebels had their only lead of the night at 7-0.

Dresden responded with a touchdown at the 1:18 mark of the first quarter. Start-

ing at their 40-yard line, the Lions relied heavily on Schlicht and Tristan Jett to gain the necessary yardage. On first-and-goal from the 10-yard line, Schlicht crossed the goal line. The extra point by Paul Betzou was good as the game was tied at 7-7.

The Lions scored their next touchdown early in the second quarter at the 9:10 mark. On first-and-goal, Schlicht picked up the TD with Betzou adding the PAT. Dresden led 14-7.

As McKenzie looked to respond to the touchdown, Dresden increased the pressure with its blitz giving Surber little to no time to throw the ball. The Rebels were forced to go three-and-out.

Dresden's Schlicht tackled on his third touchdown of

the night as Betzou added the PAT. At the half, the Lions led 21-7.

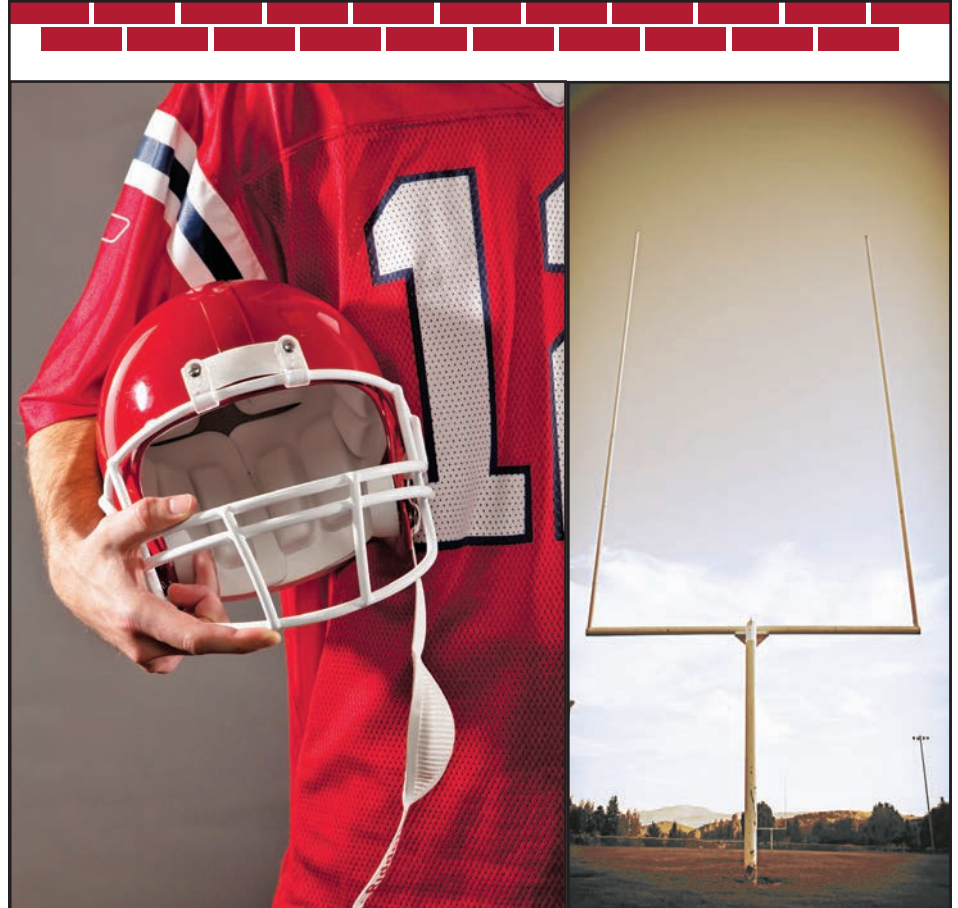
McKenzie was down but not out to open the third. Starting at their 37-yard line, McKenzie was able to narrow the Dresden lead thanks to a 45-yard run by Timmy Arline. The Lions were assessed a personal foul adding 15 yards to the play. On third-and-goal from the one, Surber was in for his second touchdown. Roditis' kick was good as the Rebels trailed 21-14 with 9:45 to play in the third quarter.

Dresden's offensive line proved too much for McKenzie as they quickly marched the ball downfield. With 5:06 to play in the third, shifting into the jumbo package Schlicht crossed the goal line a fourth time. The Lions led 28-14.

The Lions scored twice in the fourth quarter. At the 10:01 mark, Tristan Jett scored on a 69-yard screen pass from Schlicht. Then at the 8:16 mark, Jett scored a second time on a 53-yard run. Betzou was successful on both PATs. Dresden closed the game with a 42-14 win.

Next week, the Rebels will start a five-game away track beginning with Chester County, followed by McEwen, Scotts Hill, Hollow-Rock Bruceton and Perry County. McKenzie will be back home on October 6 to face Houston County. All kickoffs are at 7 p.m.

In a correction from last week's game against Huntingdon, Colt Norden had the opening touchdown.



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GAME 1 — MCKENZIE 28, HUNTINGDON 12



Above Left, Huntingdon's CJ Pelonero attempts to deflect Surber's pass. Above Right, Stafford Roditis breaks a shoe lace tackle for the 91-yard touchdown. Below Left, Huntingdon's Gray Eubanks looks to find running room towards the end of the game. Below Center, Huntington's Brady Warbritton looks to turn the corner as his offensive line holds the Rebels. Below Right, (L to R): Colt Norden receives the handoff from Tate Surber. Photos by Kathy Bush/The Banner



Rebels Break Mustangs in Home Opener

Errors Prove Costly for Huntingdon

BY JASON R. MARTIN
jmartin@mckenziebanner.com

MCKENZIE (August 18) — For the fourth consecutive season, the McKenzie Rebels have defeated their cross-county rivals, the Huntingdon Mustangs. The 28-12, week one, home opening, win put the Rebels on the correct path to defending their 2022 state championship.

The teams were evenly matched but turnover and penalties proved to be the Achilles heel for Huntingdon.

Looking at the stats, McKenzie ran 41 plays to Huntingdon's 65. The Rebels accumulated 285 total yards compared to the 252 yards by the Mustangs. In passing yards the Rebels led 134 to 46 yards but Huntingdon outrushed McKenzie 206 to 151. The Mustangs led McKenzie 15-7 on first downs with a 56% conversion rate on third down. Huntingdon had 3 turnovers.

In individual stats, for passing Tate Surber was 8 of 14 for 134 yards and two touchdowns while Gray Eubanks was 6 of 15 for 46 yards and one touchdown. In rushing, leading the pack for McKenzie as Surber with 13 carries for 74 and one touchdown followed by Ryan McCreary with one carry for 62 yards and Drew Chappell with five carries for 12 yards. Stafford Roditis led McKenzie in receiving with four catches for 101 yards and one touchdown.

Defensively, leading the way with tackles was Chap-

pell with 9, followed by Surber and Craegen Travis with four each, then Dalton Hatley with three and Colt Norden with two.

The Mustangs won the coin toss and deferred to the second half feeling confident in their defense. Eubanks' kick was fielded by Norden with the tackle coming about midfield, Huntingdon was assessed with an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty after a Mustang speared a downed Norden. This gave the Rebels excellent field position at the Mustang 35-yard line.

McKenzie relied on the pass four straight plays picking up the first down. Surber picked up the second first down on second-and-six from the Huntingdon 16-yard line. On third-and-goal from the three-yard line, McKenzie was flagged for holding, the officials placed the ball 10 yards further from the goal line. One third-and-goal from the 15-yard line, Surber passed to Norden for the first TD of the night. Roditis tackled on the PAT giving the Rebels the early lead 7-0 with 7:09 to play in the first quarter.

Huntingdon found themselves deep in their own territory to start their opening offensive drive. From the 15-yard line, the Mustang offense picked up one yard and was forced to punt on fourth down.

The Rebels went three-and-out on their next possession after Surber was sacked by Easton Byars and Kaleb Pearson. McKenzie punted the ball to the opposing 33-yard line only to be returned

to midfield.

The Mustangs were able to score on their next possession. With 3:20 to play in the opening quarter, Ashton Hutcherson led the rushing attack. On third-and-three, Hutcherson broke a tackle and looked like he was almost down but recovered picking up a 44-yard touchdown. The extra point went wide as McKenzie held the first-quarter lead at 7-6.

The second quarter was a back-and-forth between the two well-matched teams. The Rebels were forced to punt on fourth-and-long on their opening possession of the quarter. Huntingdon, starting out at their 29-yard line, was able to cross midfield and eat up a tremendous amount of the clock. The drive stalled at the 41-yard line, forcing the Mustangs to punt.

With the ball down at the 9-yard line, McKenzie had a long way to go if they planned on increasing their lead before halftime. On first-and-ten from the nine, Surber hit Roditis with a hot pass for a 91-yard touchdown reception. Roditis added the extra point as the Rebel led 14-6 with 6:25 to play in the half.

Huntingdon looked to respond but an untimely penalty and an interception gave McKenzie the ball back with less than five minutes to play.

Luckily for the Mustangs, their defense forced the Rebels to turn the ball over on downs. Starting at the McKenzie 40-yard line, Huntingdon was able to matriculate the ball down field

at the perfect pace. With 13 seconds to play in the first half, Eubanks called his own number for the touchdown. Hutcherson looked to tie the game with the two-point conversion but it failed as McKenzie led 14-12. With about five seconds to play in the half, Surber took a knee.

The third quarter opened with the Mustangs having solid field position. Runs by Eubanks, Hutcherson and Brady Warbritton got Huntingdon to midfield. At the McKenzie 42-yard line, the drive came to an end with a turnover on downs from an incomplete pass.

While Huntingdon remained scoreless for the second half, the Rebels capitalized on the mistake in four plays. Out of the shotgun, Surber was flushed from the pocket and scrambled free for 51 yards before the ball popped out at the 7-yard line. On first-and-goal, Surber picked up five yards and then the TD from 2 yards out. Roditis hit his third PAT as McKenzie's lead increased to 21-12.

Moving to the fourth quarter, the Rebels opened the final 12 minutes of play with the ball but were forced to punt with less than 10 minutes to play.

With time working against the Mustangs, the team hustled the ball down to the McKenzie 34-yard line. On third-and-three, Huntingdon fumbled the ball and the Rebels' Dalton Hatley recovered. Taking over at the Huntingdon 38-yard line, from the I-formation, McKenzie's McCreary busted through the middle on a fullback dive for the 62-yard touchdown. Roditis hit the final point of the night,

capping the score at 28-12. Huntingdon had the ball for most of the remaining six minutes but was unable to capitalize.

Next week, McKenzie hosts non-region 1A for

Dresden. Kickoff is at 7 p.m. Week two for Huntingdon is a bye week but they return to the field at home for homecoming September 1 to play the Adamsville Cardinals.

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