

Bulldogs Open Season with a Win

By Judy Rogers

The Golden Plains Bulldog Football team opened their 2024 season with a 62-16 win over the Moscow Wildcats on their home field in Rexford. "The game went well," said Miguel Garcia, senior. "We played good defense, had good blocking, and worked well together." The Dogs led throughout the game midway through the third quarter due to the 45-point mercy rule.

Moscow received the ball from kicker Jose Rios to start the game ending the series with a punt back to the Bulldogs who took over on the 20. Senior Quarterback Josh Rath threw the ball to senior Miguel Garcia who ran for a short gain. Rath finished the series in the end zone. Rios kicked the ball through the uprights to give the Bulldogs an early 8-0 lead.

The Dogs defense, led by junior Diego Perez and senior Wyatt Amlong, stopped the Wildcats from advancing. Junior Dylan Wark recovered the punt and ran it into the end zone for a second Bulldog score. Rios kicked another PAT for a 16-0 Bulldog lead. The Dogs followed with another touchdown from Rath. The extra point kick went wide as the Dogs extended their lead to 22-0.

The home town boys continued to play tough defense, including a sack by Amlong, to stop the Wildcats from advancing. Following a gain by sophomore Conner Kier, Garcia caught another pass and ran it in for a Bulldog score and a 28-0 lead with 1:33 remaining in the first.

With just .04 left in the first, the Wildcats crossed the goal line for their first score of the game. They kicked in the extra point to end the quarter with a 28-8 Golden Plains lead.

The Dogs opened the second quarter with a touchdown run by Diego Perez. Rios kicked a successful PAT to put the Dogs up 36-8. Perez had to deep tackles sending the Wildcats back down the field. They attempted to pass but were blocked by Wark ending the series with a punt.

Back on offense the Dogs moved the ball to the air but had some interference by the Wildcats and missed connections. Rath ran for some good yards to get within sight of the goal allowing Kier to finish in the end zone. Senior Abe Taylor connected with senior Maddix Green for the extra point and a 43-8 Bulldog lead.

The Wildcats answered with a quick score and followed with an extra kick to give them 16. The Dogs came back with runs by Perez and a pass to Wark. Wark finished in the end zone to extend the Dogs lead. Perez stayed strong on defense getting quickly into the backfield to push the Wildcats back. The Dogs took over on the 10-yard line finishing the first half with a 49-16 lead.

The Bulldogs received the ball to start the second half. Following a short run by Perez, Wark ran to the end zone for another Bulldog touchdown. Taylor connected with Freshman Kelby Buehler for the extra point. Josh Rath connected with Wyatt Amlong for a final touchdown to give the Dogs the win 62-16 with 6:23 remaining in the third.

"It was great start to our season," said Coach Travis Smith on the first game of his 25th season as the Bulldogs head coach. "The growth these guys have made since last year has been tremendous. I couldn't be more proud. Next week is a major challenge as we face #2 Ingalls. I think our boys are up to the challenge."

Josh Rath finished the game with 233 total yards-90 rushing and 143 passing. Miguel Garcia had 96 receiving yards along with 57 receiving yard by Wyatt Amlong. Dylan Wark rushed for 74 yards and Diego Perez rushed for 43. Conner Kier rushed for 17, and Maddix Green 2. Abe Taylor passed for 2 yards received by Kelby Buehler.

Jose Rios kicked 3 out of 4 PAT's. Perez and Rath led the team with 11 tackles apiece along with Wark and Amlong with 7 each, Garcia 4, Kier 3, and Rios & Green 2 each. The Bulldogs will kick off against Ingalls at 7:00 pm on September 13 in Rexford. "We need to work on our pass defense," added Garcia. "We are hoping for the win!"