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Hays Deals Liberal Another Body Blow

Liberal invested a lot into this game. Players identified the Hays game as their biggest game of the season. So when Ryan and Gary Cornelsen's Indians marched into the Cornelsen Sports Complex and handed the Skins a 52-38 loss, it stung for LHS players who were understandably shaken after the loss. Liberal was certainly more competitive against Hays than in past years, but on a night when neither team turned the ball over, field position was one of the keys of the game. Liberal on-side kicked all night and never recovered a kick against Gary Cornelsen's special teams. Hays began most of their possessions around midfield while the Hays kicker Lane Clark sent kicks into the endzone. Liberal's best field position was their own 39.

The Redskins scored first with a three yard run by Britton Abbott to finish a 10 play 80 yard drive. LHS converted the two point conversion to lead 8-0 at the 9:25 mark. Hays QB Alex Delton sprinted 21 yards for a score on the Indians first possession to tie the game 8-8 at the 8:09 mark. Delton's six yard run at the 4:00 mark and nine yard run at the 6:51of the second quarter mark made it 22-8 Hays as their running offense created big holes against the LHS defense. But Abbott's 15 yard run made it 22-14 at the 2:12 mark. That score stood at halftime.

Hays running back Preston Weigel ran it in from eight yards out at the 10;56 mark of the third quarter to lead 29-14. Abbott found Trenton Hammond, who was double covered all night, for a four yard touchdown pass and got the two to make it 29-22 Hays with 6:18 to play.

Delton streaked 44 yards for the Indians' biggest play of the game with 4:48 to play in the third to lead 36-22. Abbott found Hammond again for a 16 yard score to make it 36-30 with 3:16 to play in the third.

Hays began the fourth quarter with a Delton 12 yard TD pass to yaden Kreutzer with 11:55 to play in a 44-30 game. Abbott found Nolan Larkin for a 12 yard score with 2:33 as LHS refused to go away quietly. But Weigel's three yard score with 1:40 sealed the deal at 52-38. Head coach Cliff Abbott said after the game that LHS intentionally let Hays score to get the ball back down two scores with 1:40 remaining.

Hays put up 393 yards with 351 rushing yards. Delton rushed for 123 and Weigel for 180 yards. Liberal put up more yards at 430 but had more field to navigate due to field position.

Gary Cornelsen returned to the stadium named after him coaching special teams and defensive ends for son Ryan Cornelsen who is 5-0 against LHS and 14-3 in WAC games. Gary Cornelsen, ironically, was 12-1 against Hays. Liberal has lost 19 straight WAC games.

Hays is 3-0 and LHS is 2-1 and plays at 2-1 Dodge City Friday night at 7 on Talkradio 1270 and kscbnews.net.

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