



Beau Schillig and Austin Cooper combine to make the stop for the Bulldogs.

Powerful Tigers too much for Cornersville

By **Dennis Holley**
Sports Writer

FAYETTEVILLE — The sky was clear Friday as the Cornersville Bulldogs (2-4, 1-2 Region 5-A) travelled to Fayetteville to take on the No. 2 ranked and Region 5-A leader Fayetteville City Tigers (6-0, 3-0 Region 5-A)

The Bulldogs were at a decided disadvantage due to youth, inexperience and lack of size on the offensive and defensive lines. The absence of seniors Riley Qualls (knee injury) and Mason Calahan (concussion) didn't help as Cornersville faced an opponent with 16 seniors, all veterans of 2020's state championship team.

The result was a 67-6 loss to Fayetteville City.

FC is big, tall, and fast but displayed lack of discipline as they were flagged for 15 penalties, including five for offsides on kickoffs, and numerous unsportsmanlike conduct penalties.

Ben Franklin again led the Bulldogs with 103 yards on 15 carries and 14 yards on one reception.

Quarterback Blaine Woodard finished with 37 yards on 10 carries and 18 yards on 7-for-13 passing.

Cornersville's Austin Cooper fielded the opening kickoff and was snowed under at the Bulldog 20-yard line. FC batted down Blaine Woodard's first down pass, Ben Franklin was tackled for a four-yard loss on second down and Woodard's pass to Cooper was stopped with no gain, leaving the Bulldogs to punt on 4th and 14.

That start was a sign of things to come.

Cornersville's Blake Estes, after a high snap was lucky to get the punt to the Cornersville 42-yard line where FC's Aljarea Johnson fielded the ball, broke left, and outspurred the Cornersville defenders for a touchdown, but a block in the back negated the run and the Tigers began play at the Bulldog 25-yard line.

FC fumble was pounced on by Cornersville's David Metcalf at the Bulldog 5.

The Bulldogs on this possession fared better as Franklin rushed for eight yards and Woodard on third down and two ran up the middle for a first down at the Bulldog 16-yard line.

The Bulldogs could gain no more and were forced to punt again, but this time the high snap evaded Estes who, forced to run, was tackled at the Bulldog 11-yard line. FC wasted little time as on third down Johnson dashed off the left side for a touchdown and Isaiah Thomison, listed as a 6'3, 238-pound TE/LB, rumbled into the end zone for the two-point conversion and the Tigers broke on top at the 6:50 mark of the first quarter, 8-0.

The Bulldogs began play at their own 10-yard line and on third and 11 the Tigers were guilty of a face mask penalty, giving Cornersville a first down at their own 25-yard line.

The Bulldogs could gain no more and were forced to punt and FC's KJ Jackson fielded the ball at the Tiger 20-yard line and raced untouched down the left side for a touchdown, but the two-point conversion was no good and with 3:02 left in the first quarter FC led 14-0.

The Bulldogs received the kickoff at their own 40-yard line courtesy of an out-of-bounds kick but could not move as FC, using an eight man in the box defense, overran the Bulldog line.

The punt attempted was again a high snap that resulted in the Bulldog punter being tackled at the Bulldog 15-yard line, first down for FC.

The Tigers again struck pay dirt at the 1:23 when Ryan Thomas hauled in a Sam Willoughby pass for a 20-yard touchdown and Thomison again added the two-point conversion increasing the Tiger led to 22-0 as the first quarter ended.

The second quarter

began with Cornersville again being forced to punt and on second down Willoughby found Johnson behind the Bulldog defense and the completed pass placed the ball at the Bulldog 25-yard line.

Three plays later Thomison caught a pass over the right side for a 17-yard touchdown and Johnson ran for the two-point conversion to make the score 30-0 at the 9:16 mark of the second quarter.

The Bulldogs again received the kickoff and began play at their own 40-yard line, but on second down Woodard's pass was intercepted by Kevarion Whitaker for a 53-yard touchdown and Thomison again added the two-point conversion. With 8:17 left until halftime the Tigers led 38-0.

The Bulldogs would show a light on the next possession as on second down Franklin broke through a hole on the left side and streaked down the sidelines to the Tiger 31-yard line where FC's Kentius Henderson was able to knock the big man out of bounds.

Cornersville's Woodard on the next play started right then reversed to the left as the Tiger defense overpursued, found an opening, then was dragged down at the FC 5-yard line.

Franklin burst over the left side to score but the PAT was blocked and at the 8:17 mark of the second quarter FC now led, 38-6.

After a run back to the Cornersville 32-yard line by KJ Jackson, Johnson raced into the end zone for the touchdown and Thomison again rushed for the two-point conversion and at the 6:25 mark of the second quarter FC led, 46-6.

The Bulldogs received the kick-off and began play at their own 32-yard line and Franklin did as Woodard had done - reversed his field for a 15-yard gain to the Bulldog 48-yard line. The Bulldogs were stymied by an unsportsmanlike penalty and



Khi Canty finds a crease and scrambles forward for a few yards against Fayetteville City.



Blaine Woodard drops back in the pocket and fires a pass for Cornersville.

were forced to punt and after a long Willoughby completion to the Cornersville 22-yard line, Johnson again raced around the left side, found room on the far sidelines and scored and Thomison added the two-point conversion at the 2:29 mark to up the Tiger lead to 54-6; a lead that would hold until halftime.

The second half was played with a running clock. nonetheless, the Tigers would score twice more for a final score of 67-6.

Coach Waddell told

his team after the game, "Hold your head up, we have opportunities coming up after the bye week with games against Wayne County and Moore County. You cannot let this define your season, hold your heads up, you fought hard, come in Monday and we will go to work."

The Bulldogs head into their bye week with time to recover from the loss and prepare for senior night and a chance to make the playoffs against Wayne County High School on October 14, then finish the

season on October 21 in Lynchburg for a season ending game with the Moore County Raiders.

Your final from Fayetteville: Fayetteville 67, Cornersville 6.

Cornersville 0 6 0 0 6
Fayetteville City 22 32 7 6 - 67
First Quarter
F — Aljarea Johnson 4 run, (Sam Willoughby 2 pt. conv.), 6:50.
F — KJ Jackson 80-yard punt return, (kick failed), 3:02.
F — Ryan Thomas 20 pass from Willoughby (Isaiah Thomison - 2 pt. conv.), 1:23.
Second Quarter
F — Thomison 17 pass from Willoughby (Johnson 2 pt. conv.), 9:16.
F — Kevarion Whitaker 53-yard interception return (Thomison 2 pt. conv.), 8:17.
C — Ben Franklin 5 run, (kick failed), 6:48.
F — Johnson 32 run, (Thomison 2 pt. conversion), 6:25.
F — Johnson 22 rush, (Jaterious Derrick 2 pt. conv.), 2:29.
Third Quarter
F — Bryson Johnson 25 pass from Willoughby, (Thomison kick).
Fourth Quarter
F — Zyon Njaji 18 run, (2pt. conv. failed) 4:35.