

Wayne Co. upends Cornersville on Senior Night

By Dennis Holley
Sports Writer

CORNERSVILLE — The Cornersville Bulldogs (2-5, 2-3) find themselves in a must win situation in order to take part in the upcoming TSSAA playoffs, welcomed to Frog Bottom field, the Wayne County Wildcats (4-3, 2-3) also facing a must-win game for their playoff hopes.

On a cool early fall evening the Bulldogs honored their seniors, playing their last game in front of the Cornersville hometown faithful. Seven senior Bulldogs, consisting of Riley Qualls, Khi Canty, Mason Calahan, Blake Estes, John Michael Jeter, Hunter McNeese and David Metcalf played their final home game in a Bulldog uniform.

Despite taking a 12-7 lead into halftime the Bulldogs were subjected to a bruising ground attack by the Wildcats to open the third quarter.

A 16-play drive of over eight minutes that yielded a touchdown to put Wayne County in front 14-12.

Then, to compound the problem the Bulldogs faced, their first possession of the second half resulted in a pick-six interception that extended the Wildcat lead, to 21-12.

Head Coach Shelby Waddell said, "I appreciate the effort from our players. They fought through a lot of adversity. I'm proud of their effort."

The statistics reveal a close game.

Wayne County led in yards gained 228 to 190, Cornersville led in passing yardage, 162 to 50.

Wayne County led in rushing yardage 178 to 28 and third down conversions were Wayne County 3-for-10 and Cornersville 4-for-11.

The game began with Wayne County winning the coin toss and electing to defer to the second half, kicked off to the Bulldogs and Khi Canty received the kick and but was tackled at the Bulldog 15-yard line.

Cornersville's Ben Franklin rushed for two and four yards that brought up a third down and four to go for a first down but a fumble in the back field resulted in a loss and on fourth down Blake Estes punted the ball to mid-field where Wayne County began their first possession.

The Wildcats, with the Bulldog defense gathered up to stymie the run, sent Ryder Butler streaking down the far sideline and once behind the Bulldog defense Dawson Willis lofted a pass that Butler gathered in and raced into the end zone and with Carl Britt kicking the point after, the Wildcats led 7-0 with 10:13 left in the first quarter.

The Bulldogs then received the Wayne County kick-off, fielded at the 18-yard line by Austin Cooper and moved the ball to the Cornersville 40-yard line.

The Bulldogs began the drive with Franklin and Blaine Woodard running the ball for short gains and Cornersville faced a fourth and three at their own 47-yard line.

Woodard then found Khi Canty over the middle for a completion that set Cornersville up with a first down at the Wayne County 40-yard line.

The Bulldogs after two incompletions and a seven-yard run by Franklin again faced



The Cornersville Bulldogs take the field in their home finale of the season against Wayne County.

Photos Courtesy of Paps Pic



Ben Franklin scrambles forward for a short gain.

another fourth down and this time Woodard's pass was hauled in by Beau Schilig for a first down at the Wayne County 27-yard line.

The next play by Cornersville, exemplified the play of Franklin this season as he took a swing pass from Woodard to the left side, headed toward the far side-line, made the corner then disappeared into a host of Wildcats, but suddenly emerged unscathed, racing down the sidelines with Wayne County in pursuit, but no one could catch the junior running back as he crossed the goal line, the PAT was no-good and with 4:30 left in the first quarter Cornersville trailed 7-6.

Wayne County received the kick-off and began a drive at their own 42-yard line, using their deep stable of running backs: Austin Whitson, Butler and Willis and they moved the ball to the Cornersville 32-yard line but a holding penalty pushed the Wildcats back and a fourth down pass fell incomplete resulting in the Bulldogs taking over at their own 42-yard line.

The first quarter ended with WC leading 7-6 and Cornersville facing a second and five from their own 47-yard line.

As the second quarter began the Bulldogs moved to the Wayne County 39-yard line but a holding penalty stalled the drive and Estes again punted to the Wildcats.

The Wildcats would begin their possession but as with the Bulldogs a holding penalty stalled their drive and

Wayne County punted to the Bulldog 40-yard line where Cornersville's Austin Cooper, with a full head of steam, fielded the ball and ran straight down field and the Wildcats were only able to drag him down at the Wayne County nine-yard line.

Three plays later Woodard rolled to his right and found Austin King in the end zone with a dart pass, but Woodard was stopped short of the goal line on the two-point conversion try and with 3:48 left until halftime Cornersville led, 12-7.

The Bulldogs defense bowed its back and held the Wildcats as on fourth and seven Wayne County's Whitson fielded a high snap and Cornersville's David Metcalf sacked him with two minutes left until halftime the Bulldogs took over at their own 49-yard line.

A first down pass to Cornersville's Kale Adcox gained nine yards then on third down Woodard gained the first and Wayne County was guilty of a facemask penalty and a first down at the 32-yard line; then passes to Franklin and Schilig moved the ball to the Wayne County four-yard line.

Time was ticking away from the Bulldogs with Franklin and Woodard pounding the Wayne County line and being denied each time.

With three seconds left until halftime Woodard tried the Wayne County line one last time but the Wildcats held, and the Bulldogs stopped, leading 12-7 as the halftime horn sounded, but as it



Austin Cooper takes the handoff and comes up with a short gain for Cornersville.

turned out this play was pivotal in the outcome of the game, instead of leading by two scores the Bulldogs led by less than a touchdown.

The third quarter began with the Wildcats receiving the kickoff from Cornersville's Joseph Palma and Wayne County began their bruising power football running attack.

Time after time the Wildcat runners crashed into the Cornersville defensive line taking advantage of their size and strength, chewing up three, four and five yards at a time, converting first downs, on a sixteen-play drive, chewing up time on the clock until with 3:28 left in the third quarter Whitson rumbled over the goal line from the six yards out and Britt kicked the extra point, the Wildcats took the lead 14-12.

The Bulldogs received the kickoff and

began play at their own 15-yard line where on first down Woodard's pass was intercepted by Wayne County's Saylor Skelton turning it into a pick-six touchdown and Britt again nailed the PAT, the Wildcats upped their lead to 21-12.

In the space of nineteen seconds the ball game turned in Wayne County's favor.

The Bulldogs would fight and scratch to try and get back into the game but without running back Ben Franklin, injured hip who sat out the second half, and despite a solid effort from quarterback Woodard they could not gain the endzone.

Wayne County would score once more in the fourth quarter with Whitson again gaining the endzone after another time-consuming drive by the Wildcats to make the final score, Wayne County 28, Cornersville 12.

The Bulldogs will travel to Moore County next Friday night to finish the season and now must depend on other teams plus beat MC to gain a playoff berth, a tall order for sure.

"Moore County is a very good team, their quarterback (Dawson White) is a player, we will have to be ready to go," Waddell said.

Waddell also singled out several of his players stating, "David Metcalf is a warrior, he has fought through a lot of injuries, Beau Schilig played well, Austin King grew up tonight making plays on offense and defense."

Wayne County	7	0	14	7	— 28
Cornersville	6	6	0	0	— 12

First Quarter:
WC — Ryder Butler 50 pass from Dawson Willis, (Carl Britt kick), 10:13.
C — Ben Franklin 38 run, (kick failed), 4:30.
Second Quarter
C — Austin King 6 pass from Woodard, (failed) 3:48.
Third Quarter
WC — Austin Whitson 6 run, (Carl Britt kick), 3:28.
WC — Saylor Skelton 15 interception, (Carl Britt kick), 3:09.
Fourth Quarter
WC — Austin Whitson 6 run, (Carl Britt kick), 8:19.

SURF'S UP

Marshall County native Sloan Michael, 11 year old son of Eric and Carrie Michael, placed second in the Quintana Roo state surfing championship. Sloan will head to Mexico to represent Quintana Roo in the National Surfing Championship of Mexico.

Submitted photo

