

### **Chiefs clinch playoff spot with 27-13 win over Benton**

**BENTON, La.** – The 28<sup>th</sup>-ranked Natchitoches Central Chiefs secured a spot in the Division I non-select playoffs after a 27-13 win over the Benton Tigers in the regular season finale of the 2025 high school football season at BHS.

The Chiefs (6-4, 4-4 in 1-5A) took the early lead in the first quarter as senior Owen Smith scored on a 15-yard touchdown run. Amsden Pasche kicked the extra point giving NCHS a 7-0 advantage with 5:41 to go in the first quarter.

The Chiefs had a chance to add to their lead in the second quarter. They drove 89 yards highlighted by a 42-yard run by Kelton Howard before stalling at the Benton 3-yard line and turning it over on downs. NCHS led 7-0 at halftime.

On the first play of the second half, senior Jeremy Lowe exploded for a 90-yard kickoff return for a touchdown (Pasche PAT good) giving NCHS a 14-0 lead.

The Tigers' (2-7, 1-6 in 1-5A) offense came into the game scoring 40 points or more six times. But the Chiefs' defense was relentless as Benton could get nothing going.

Late in the third, the Chiefs scored on a 26-yard touchdown run by Howard (Pasche PAT good) making it 21-0 with 2:07 to go in the third quarter.

The Tigers finally got on the board early in the fourth quarter on a 27-yard touchdown reception (PAT no good) making it 21-6 Chiefs with 10:32 to go in the game. Then, after the Chiefs' offense stalled, the Tigers scored on a 12-yard touchdown run to make it 21-13 with 7:08 to go.

With the Tigers having all the momentum in their corner, the Chiefs responded. Smith connected with Samaj Thomas for a 79-yard touchdown reception with 5:33 to go giving NCHS the 27-13 lead (PAT no good) to seal the win.

NCHS finished the season with six wins for just the fourth time in 20 years under second-year head coach Brad Laird.

The Chiefs will be on the road in the first round next Friday night and will find out their opponent Sunday afternoon.