

Chiefs drop season finale at Byrd 42-14

SHREVEPORT, La. – The Natchitoches Central Chiefs' football team lost its season finale to Byrd, 42-14, Friday night on the road at Independence Stadium.

NCHS (2-8, 1-6 1-5A) fell behind 7-0 as the Yellow Jackets scored on the opening drive of the game on a 19-yard touchdown run by Quinton Hillard with 6:37 left in the first quarter.

Byrd (4-6, 4-3 1-5A) added to their lead after a lengthy injury timeout which saw senior linebacker Landon Brossett carted off the field (no update as of the release of this story). Following the delay, the Yellow Jackets scored on a 21-yard touchdown run by Malakhi Johnson to make it 14-0.

NCHS responded with a 67-yard scoring drive capped off by a 36-yard touchdown reception by Dillon Braxton from Owen Smith making it 14-7 with 7:44 to go until halftime. However, Byrd scored on a pair of touchdown runs 46 and 20 yards to take a commanding 28-7 halftime lead.

Natchitoches Central struck quickly in the third quarter to cut the lead to 28-14. Smith found Braxton for a slant who broke free for a 73-yard touchdown reception with 10:12 left in the third.

The Chiefs fumbled inside their own 30-yard line late in the third quarter. On the following play, Byrd scored on a 26-yard touchdown pass to make it 35-14 with 15 seconds left in the third quarter.

NCHS had inside the Byrd 20-yard line but turned it over for the fourth time on a fumble clinching the win for the Yellow Jackets with 4:43 left.

Despite the loss, the Chiefs showed throughout the season that they are ready to compete. NCHS loss three straight games at home on the final play. Natchitoches Central fell in Week 7 to Captain Shreve, 32-24, as they were stopped on the goal line four times with under 2 minutes to go. The Chiefs lost in Week 8 to Parkway on a last second field, 27-26, and dropped a Week 9 contest to Haughton, 36-35, on a touchdown pass with 8 seconds left.

Natchitoches Central's season comes to an end as it appears they will miss the 32-team playoff bracket, but NCHS showed they are more than a threat in the years to come. (Final individual season stats will be posted Saturday)