

Chiefs drop playoff heartbreaker in overtime, 27-24, to Terrebonne

HOUMA, La. – A chaotic sequence at the end of regulation and tough luck in overtime ended the 24th-ranked Natchitoches Central Chiefs' season with a 27-24 loss in overtime to the ninth-ranked Terrebonne Tigers Friday night in the first round of the Division I non-select football playoffs at Thomas B Smith Stadium in Houma.

The Chiefs (6-5) couldn't have started the game better. They drove 71 yards capped off by a 21-yard touchdown reception to KJ Newton from Owen Smith with 7:22 left in the first quarter (Amsden Pasche kicked the extra point) to give NCHS a 7-0 lead.

The Tigers (8-3) responded with a drive of their own going 80 yards capped off by a two-yard touchdown run by Owen Oliver (PAT good) to tie the game 7-7 with 2:37 to go in the quarter.

On the following possession, the Chiefs turned it over on downs as Smith was sacked for a 17-yard loss into NCHS territory at the Chiefs' 43-yard line. On the next play, Oliver connected with Alvin Celestin Jr. for a 43-yard touchdown pass (PAT good) to make it 14-7 Tigers with 7:08 left in the first half.

The Chiefs would answer as they recovered the onside kick at their own 48. Moments later, Smith connected with Newton for 36 yards inside the 5-yard line. On the next play, Kaden Kuykendoll scored on 4-yard touchdown run (Pasche PAT good) to tie the game 14-14 with 5:43 left in the half.

But the Chiefs had some more noise to make before halftime. After Case Singletary recorded his second sack of the first half, the Chiefs forced an interception on third down by Jeremy Lowe as he returned it to the Chiefs' 20-yard line. NCHS marched down field and capped off an 8-yard drive with a 22-yard touchdown reception by Lamontrey Holden from Smith (Pasche PAT good) to give NCHS a 21-14 halftime lead.

However, the Chiefs were dealt some bad news at halftime as senior running back Kelton Howard, who left the game late in the first quarter, would not return with an ankle sprain.

In the second half, the Chiefs' offense never could get going allowing the Tigers to get back in the game. Despite the Chiefs' defense pitching a shutout for much of the second half, the Tigers broke through as Quincy Adams scored on a 9-yard touchdown run with 9:42 to go.

After both teams punted on their next possessions, the Chiefs got the ball back with 6:08 remaining at their own 24-yard line setting up a heart-stopping finish to regulation.

NCHS opened the drive with a 37-yard half back pass from Newton to Holden inside the Tigers' 40-yard line. Later in the drive, Smith converted on fourth and four running five yards to the Tigers' 29-yard line. After a 13-yard completion from Smith to Demarcus Nicholas, Smith converted on fourth down again with a two-yard run on fourth and one inside the Tigers' 20. Kuykendoll would run the next play 12 yards to the Tigers' 8-yard line with under a minute to go

and the Chiefs out of timeouts. On third down, Smith would be stopped with just 15 seconds left as the Chiefs had to rush out onto the field for a 25-yard field goal with no timeout remaining. They ran out of time just as they got set for the kick, sending the game to overtime.

In the extra frame, the Chiefs' drive stalled before Pasche kicked a 24-yard field goal to make it 27-24. However, the Tigers scored a touchdown on their possession as Terrance Diggs scored from eight yards out to give Terrebonne the win in overtime.

The Chiefs' opportunity to break a 23-year drought will have to wait as NCHS was looking for their first playoff win since Nov. 15, 2002 (19-18 for Barbe in the first round).

The Tigers will take on the eighth-ranked Southside Sharks in the second round of the playoffs Friday, Nov. 21.