

### *Chiefs let 11-point lead slip away in 36-loss to Huntington*

**NATCHITOCHES, La.** - The Natchitoches Central Chiefs let an 11-point lead slip away before falling, 36-25, to the Huntington Raiders Friday night at Turpin Stadium in Week 9 of the high school football season.

The Raiders (5-4, 5-2 in 1-5A) struck first on a one-yard touchdown run by Xavier Brown with 8:40 left in the opening quarter.

Natchitoches Central (1-8, 0-7 in 1-5A) showed they were ready to fight as the defense held on fourth down at their one-yard line to turn away HHS with 9:00 left in second quarter.

NCHS responded with a 99-yard scoring drive as Owen Smith scampered 24 yards then connected with KJ Newton for 54 yards. The Chiefs capped off the drive with a 1-yard touchdown pass from Smith to Caden Kuykendoll with 4:04 left until halftime (Mateo Restrepo PAT good) making it 8-7.

NCHS's special teams stepped up later in the second quarter as Titus Williams blocked at the Huntington 26-yard line. Three plays later, Smith connected with KJ Newton for a 26-yard touchdown pass to make it 13-8 NCHS with 1:16 until halftime.

The Raiders wasted little time in retaking the lead in the second half. After a punt by NCHS, Huntington put together a scoring drive of 60 yards capped by a one-yard touchdown run to make it 14-13 HHS with 9:11 left in the third.

The Chiefs refused to quit as once again the connection of Smith and Newton hooked up. Smith found Newton in the middle of the field for a 53-yard touchdown to make it 19-14 NCHS with 6:04 left in the third.

NCHS added to their lead as running back Kelton Howard exploded through the line for a 34-yard touchdown run to push it to 25-14 (PAT no good) with under two minutes left in the third.

The Raiders would cut into the Chiefs' lead as they scored on the final play of the third quarter on a two-yard touchdown run to trim it to 25-20 NCHS as the eventful final period was on the horizon.

Huntington appeared to be going in for the go-ahead touchdown with under six minutes to go in the game. However, the Chiefs recovered a fumble at the one-yard line as the Raiders fumbled just short of the goal line.

However, Huntington forced the Chiefs into a safety two plays later on a two-yard loss from the NCHS one-yard line to make it 25-22 NCHS with under four minutes to go.

The Raiders would cash in on the next possession. HHS converted on short field starting at midfield and scoring on a 7-yard touchdown run by Brown with 1:29 left followed by a two-point conversion to give the Raiders a 30-25 lead.

The nightmare continued for the Chiefs as Huntington recovered an onside kick moments later at the NCHS 40-yard line to all but put the nail in the coffin. The Raiders delivered the final as HHS stole the win from NCHS.

Next up, NCHS will wrap up the regular season Friday night at home as they host Benton at 7 p.m.