

?Pirates roll 33-15 over North Harrison in Sectional 23 play

Written by Michael Ross

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? The temperatures had dropped significantly as rain had swept through the area Friday morning and into the afternoon, and the Pirate faithful, along with the visiting Cougar fan base, had bundled up with multiple layers trying to stay warm in the true football weather.

The Cougars had traveled to Dutch Reis Field, affectionately known as The Boneyard, for the opening round of Sectional 23 play.

North Harrison took the opening possession and methodically worked their way down the gridiron. The Cougars took the entire opening quarter and five seconds of the second period to produce the first touchdown of the ballgame. Sophomore Zach Stephenson's kick was good to give the visiting Cougars the early 7-0 lead.

Charlestown looked to answer the Cougars but on the second play of their first possession Cameron Metzger fumbled the pigskin. The roar from the North Harrison sideline proved the Cougars had recovered the turnover.

The Pirate defense stepped up to the challenge as they forced North Harrison to a three and out.

It only took Charlestown six plays after regaining the ball to find the endzone.

Senior Mike Blackford scampered 15 yards to the goal line with 7:38 remaining in the first half. Charlestown head coach Jason Hawkins opted for the two point conversion opposed to the extra point attempt. The decision was a good one as Metzger pushed his way into the endzone for the two point conversion. Charlestown took the 8-7 lead and never trailed again.

After a North Harrison punt, junior Josh Graham discovered a little running lane. The runningback took the lane into the endzone from three yards out. The extra point attempt by junior Ariel Stephens was blocked by the North Harrison defense. Charlestown held the 14-7 lead at the 3:17 mark of the second stanza.

The Pirates would find the endzone one final time in the first half. Charlestown's Graham ducked and dodged North Harrison defenders for the 24 yard touchdown run. The two-point conversion failed as Charlestown held the 20-7 lead at the halftime break.

The second half began with the Pirates driving 64 yards to the goal line. Metzger bulldozed his way into the endzone from one yard out at the 9:54 mark. The two point conversion attempt again failed. Charlestown held the 26-7 advantage.

Metzger's touchdown proved to be the only score in the third period.

The final 12 minutes of play began with North Harrison sophomore running back Matt Bruderle attempting a half-back pass. Charlestown's Damon Vest picked off the pass and sprinted 54 yards for the Pirate touchdown. Stephens nailed the extra point to give Charlestown the 33-7 lead with 11:44 left in the ballgame.

North Harrison would find the scoreboard for the last time this season when Corey Isaac dove from one yard out with 6:17 remaining in the game. Senior Levi Simpson hooked up with junior Michael Cundiff for the two point conversion. The score would prove to be the final one of the ballgame, as Charlestown ended the Cougars' season, 33-15.

North Harrison finished their season at 4-6.

Charlestown advanced to the second round of Sectional 23 play with the victory. The Pirates will travel to Heritage Hills this Friday night for the rematch of last year's second round action. Kick-off is set for 8 p.m. local time.

"Step one, complete. Step two is going to be tougher. Each week it is going to get tougher. As of right now we are better than half the teams in the state," Coach Hawkins stated after the victory.

When asked about the first quarter, Hawkins stated, "The first quarter was frustrating for me

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since I call the plays.”

He continued, “We stepped it up tonight. We didn’t quit and we played hard. Week 10 was one of our best outings.”

Hawkins had praise for one of his seniors during the team huddle after the ballgame.

North Harrison had 12 seniors who suited up the last time as a Cougar. Senior team members were: Tony Powell, Levi Simpson, Marcus Stone, Josh Martin, Levi Luther, Jacob Snook, Ray West, T.J. Sanders, Nick Morris, Derek Dubree, Thomas Green and David Reeseman.