

Hayes Center outlasts Brady in high scoring 66-56 game

Written by Deb Egenberger
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Playoff possibilities still alive

HAYES CENTER—The opportunities presented themselves multiple times, even late in the game Friday night, but the Brady Eagles couldn't capitalize on them.

Hayes Center's powerful running game outlasted Brady's long passing attack to win the D2-8 district matchup 66-56.

"If our defense would have gotten off the bus, I think it could have been different," said Brady coach Andy Seamann. "We came flying back in the second half but just couldn't make up enough ground."

Hayes Center cruised out to a 24-6 lead in the first quarter, carried largely on the back of Cardinal running back Seth Gohl.

"He's a big kid," Seamann said, "and our linebackers struggled."

In fact, Seamann said, Hayes Center gained more than 200 yards offense after the first contact by a Brady defender.

"We missed so many tackles," Seamann said, "and they just kept pounding it at us."

At halftime, the Eagles trailed 32-12 and in the third quarter Brady fell behind by as many as 30 points.

"But the kids didn't give up," Seamann said. "They kept fighting their way back into it."

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The Eagles went to the air and found success.

“They pretty much forced us to throw the ball and we managed to grab some deep passes,” the coach said.

Senior quarterback Zach Mann threw for 290 yards completing 17-of-27 pass attempts.

Three of the long passes resulted in touchdowns. Senior Cole Viter scored on a 58-yard pass from Mann while sophomores Troy Lusk and Jon Taullie had 34-yard and 31-yard scoring receptions, respectively.

Down 66-50 late in the fourth quarter, the Eagles scored to close the gap to 10 points but failed on the two-point conversion.

Seamann said Brady got the ball back with a little over a minute to play and couldn't get any closer.

“Our defense was non-existent,” the coach said. “You're not going to get anywhere when you allow 66 points.”

Senior Michael Neiman finished with 127 yards rushing on 16 carries to lead the ground attack and Lusk caught seven passes for 115 yards.

Defensively, Mann and Neiman led the way along with junior Dalton Simants. Each recorded 13 tackles.

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Seamann initially thought the loss would knock Brady out of the state playoff picture but so far, that's not the case.

The Eagles fall to 2-5 on the year but sit third in the D2-8 district and 28th in the class in playoff points.

That means the goal of making the state playoffs for the fourth consecutive year is still reachable.

Brady has a bye this week and will take the next two weeks to prepare for the final regular season game against Hitchcock County (2-4) at home on Oct. 18.

"We really need to get a win," Seamann said. "We might be sitting OK right now but a lot of things can happen with other teams between now and then."