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## Tigers beat Indians 37-21

Story and Photos By Terry Wit

Senior Reporter © Aug. 26, 2017 at 9:57 a.m.

**CHIEFLAND** -- The Tigers of Trenton High School defeated the Indians of Chiefland High School 37-21 Friday night (Aug. 25) in a non-conference varsity football game that saw huge swings in momentum on C. Doyle McCall Field in Chiefland.



Chiefland senior Brian Norris shakes off a Trenton tackler for a gain.



Trenton sophomore Wyatt Langford catches a touchdown pass over Chiefland defender Jason

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Chiefland Indians quarterback Wyatt Hammond pitches the ball to Brian Norris.



Trenton speedster Eric Henry applies the brakes before running for an opening in the Chiefland line.

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The Tigers grabbed an early 28-0 lead after recovering four Chiefland fumbles. Trenton ran 63 times for 352 yards.

Chiefland found its legs before the half, scoring its first touchdown. The Indians closed the gap to seven points by the fourth quarter.

But Trenton regained its composure late in the fourth when it stopped a Chiefland drive and drove 50 yards for its final touchdown.

THS Head Football Coach Lyle Wilkerson said his team played hard, but the players must learn how to finish when they take a big lead.

“We were up 28-0 and we let our guard down,” Coach Wilkerson said.

The Tigers got ready for the season with heavy summer workouts and by playing bigger schools, Coach Wilkerson said. Trenton played the Taylor County Bulldogs of Perry in the spring, Class 3A; the Fort White Indians last Friday; and the Class 7A Tigers of Columbia County two weeks ago.

The THS Tigers are scheduled to play bigger schools for the next two years. The Florida High School Athletic Association moved Trenton football from Class 1A competition to Class 4A this year as the result of a self-reported recruiting violation.

Coach Wilkerson commended Chiefland for never quitting when they were down 28-0. He said the Indians showed a lot of fight. He said CHS Head Football Coach Adam Gore has brought the team a long way in a short period of time.

Wilkerson’s star running back, Eric Henry, who weighs a whopping 130 pounds dripping wet, showed off his speed and elusiveness in the game. Trenton isn’t a big team. It uses its athletic talent and speed to overcome its lack of size, according to Wilkerson.

Coach Gore said he was extremely proud of his young team in Chiefland. The CHS Indians coach said they have bought into the program and showed him they were ready to battle even when they were down by 28 points.

“We’re not satisfied with just competing,” Gore said, “but I can lay my head on my pillow tonight and know they fought as hard as they could and gave it all they had. We fought a Class 4A team pretty hard tonight.”

Coach Gore said he had five sophomores starting on defense. In spite of its youth, he said the team demonstrated toughness and determination in overcoming the slow start.

Gore and the team battled through an outbreak of flu in the week preceding the game. He said practices had to stop when players needed to vomit. Some players missed school due to the bug. Gore himself was out with the flu.

The Tigers lit up the scoreboard of Wayne P. Pridgeon Memorial Stadium early when Trenton drove from its own 29 yard line to score on a one-yard burst by Henry. Wesley Mansfield added the extra point.

Trenton scored again with 11:56 left in the second quarter when Tyrique Baber ran for a 1-yard touchdown. The extra point failed.

A Chiefland fumble on its next possession gave Trenton the ball on the Indian 36 and led to the third Tiger touchdown, as a result of a pass from Henry to Randy Fuller. Henry ran for the 2-point conversion, giving Trenton a 21-0 lead.

A Chiefland fumble on its next offensive series, led once again to a Trenton touchdown, a 36-yard pass to Wyatt Langford. Mansfield added the extra point to extend the lead to 28-0.

The Indians fumbled yet again. Trenton responded by throwing a 40-yard touchdown pass to Jordan Fulmer that was called back for an ineligible receiver being down field.

Chiefland took advantage of the mistake and scored on its next possession with a 31-yard touchdown pass to Kirk Williams, who had to reach over a Trenton defender to pull in the score.

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The extra point was good, leaving the score 28-7 at the half.

The Indians drove from their own 41 on the first possession of the second half to score on a 22-yard pass. The extra point was good.

Trenton made a huge mistake on their next possession. A fake punt on fourth down never got any traction. Indian defenders saw the play develop and stopped it for a loss. The Indians took over on downs at Trenton's 26.

The Indians took advantage of the mistake, scoring on a 3-yard plunge by Wyatt Hammond. He was pushed over the goal line by teammates. The extra point was good. The score was 28-21 with 4:43 left in the game.

Trenton fumbled on the first play of its next offensive possession. Chiefland recovered at the Trenton 33, but an unsportsmanlike conduct call on the Indians pushed Chiefland back 15 yards and helped kill a drive.

The Tigers capitalized on Chiefland's misfortune, driving 45 yards to score on a 2-yard run by Fuller. The extra point by Mansfield was good. Trenton extended its lead to 35-21 with 8:08 left in the game.

Chiefland made one last defensive stand late in the game, shutting down Trenton at the Indian 6-yard line, but Chiefland was unable to generate any offense when it took over on downs and was caught in the end zone for a 2-point safety. The safety was the final score of the night.

Statistics:

- Chiefland rushed 27 times for 40 yards, Trenton 63 times for 352 yards.
- The Indians completed four of 13 passes for 94 yards. The Tigers completed four of eight passes for 55 yards.
- Chiefland was penalized five times for 45 yards, Trenton 12 times for 129 yards.
- The Indians had four turnovers in the first half. The Tigers had one turnover in the second half.