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Chiefland loses FHSAA Regional Final 49-14



Jalen Rutledge finds running room around left end as he follows blockers.

Story and Photos

By Terry Witt

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MADISON -- The Chiefland High School Indians lost 49-14 to Madison County High School Cowboys Friday night in the Florida High School Athletic Association's

Class 1A Regional Final football game in Madison.



Kirk Williams plants his foot and cuts sharply behind blocking by Hunter Barrand and other players.

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Following the game, Coach Adam Gore thanks his players for their hard work in reaching the regional finals and congratulates them on a 10-win season. The last time Chiefland reached the regional finals was 2003.



The Chiefland Band belts out music as the game goes on. The band played exceptionally well.

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CHS Varsity Football Head Coach Adam Gore said his talented team was forced out of its typical style of play by the Cowboys' physical defense and was unable to move the ball in its customary way.

"We had a hard time handling them up front and it put us into doing things we're really not accustomed to doing and we're really not kind of good at, so to speak," Gore said. "That was really the difference in the game."

Gore said Chiefland had opportunities to score, but the Indians weren't disciplined enough, and didn't execute well enough to "jump on those opportunities."

But he took nothing away from Madison County's ability to move the ball in whatever way it chose.

"They do what they do," Coach Gore said. "They can get in a spread and throw it around; they can pound you and run it down your throat. They can do numerous things. They're pretty electric with their athletes and their size and strength."

Gore said he was extremely proud of his squad. He said the coaching staff knew they had a special group of football players after watching them in spring practice.

He said football is about being physical with opposing teams, and he said this particular group of athletes was especially fond of hitting opposing players and being physical with each other in practices.

But Gore said the Indians had one other quality he recognized when he remembered the words of the late Coach Tommy Malloy, who coached in Chiefland and Trenton. Gore said nine or 10 years ago, he walked up to Malloy when he was watching his grandson in a baseball game and asked whether he liked coaching football or baseball the best. Malloy said he liked coaching football the best.

He said, "There's nothing like when you get a group of 40 kids or however many you have and they all come together; they love each other, they care for each other and they play for each other. He said that's the best feeling in the world. You don't feel that every year."

"We got to feel that this year," Gore said. "I got to feel that. The love I will have and that the players have for each other; the coaches have for the players. It's going to last a lifetime," Gore said.

Gore will lose 16 seniors from the 2018 Indian team, but he said he has a core of returning starters that will make Chiefland competitive in 2019.

The Indians finished the regular season with a 10-2 record. Gore said there have been many Chiefland teams that have never seen a 10-win season. But he said this team experienced the thrill of 10 wins and the players will carry it with them for life.

Chiefland brought a record crowd to Friday's game. They packed the rather spacious Boot Hill Stadium visitors' bleachers on a chilly, blustery night. The announcer made note of the fact that Chiefland brought the largest crowd of the season. The crowd spilled over into the fenced area on the visitor's side of the stadium.

Chiefland didn't look like the same team fans were accustomed to seeing during the regular season. They weren't making a lot of the big offensive plays that were the Indians' trademark during the regular season. But there were two big scoring plays nevertheless.

Late in the second quarter, Chiefland quarterback Ty Corbin, who had been chased mercilessly by Madison County's speedy defense all night, threw a 30-yard pass on the dead run to Jalen Rutledge at the goal line.

Rutledge and the Madison defender fought for control of the ball in mid-air. Rutledge

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snatched it away from the defender as they came to the ground. He stepped into the end zone for Chiefland's first touchdown of the night with 2:24 left in the half.

The final touchdown came with 3:40 left in the game when Kirk Williams blasted through the stingy Madison County defense and ran 74 yards for a touchdown. Noah Nguyen kicked his second extra point of the night. But the clock was running continuously under the mercy rule. The game ended soon after the score.