By Pastor Vince Carrig
Sports Writer

Nick Turner rushed for 172 yards and a touchdown to pull the Plainsmen away from the upset-minded Bridgeport Tigers, leading Perkins County to a 21-12 win Friday night in Grant.

The 1-6 Tigers kept the score between the 5-2 Plainsmen and themselves deadlocked at 0-0 deep into the third quarter.

With 6:55 elapsed since Perkins County's Kyle Schulze ran back the second half kickoff, Plainsmen quarterback Michael York surged into the end zone from one yard away and gave his team the lead it would never relinquish.

"I really wasn't concerned [about the tie]. I think we were pretty consistent all the way through and it was just a matter of time before we started opening up the door on them, before our conditioning paid off for us," Perkins County senior offensive lineman Max Jones said after the game.

Turner rushed for 41 of the Plainsmen's first scoring drive's 63 yards, gashing the middle of the defense twice.

The reason we're doing it [seeing Nick Turner gain nearly 200 yards per game] is our offensive line's playing so well. We've relied pretty hard on our offensive line this year to get the job done in the run game, and at times against ridiculous odds; when you're asking your line to block seven or eight guys in the 'box,' that's ridiculous, but we've still done it," Head Coach Chip Kay said after the game.

Freshman running back Alex Johnston gnawed off 19 more yards in the drive, making a nifty catch on a ball at his knees right in stride.

The Tigers certainly gave the home team reason for concern when they roared back and answered that touchdown. After Bridgeport cornerback Nick Lapaseotes tracked down a long interception at the Tigers' 14-yard line, quarterback Jamie Galvan completed a 12-yard throw to receiver Mike Beyer; Beyer then found room to run and tacked on 62 more yards before Plainsmen linebacker Erik Hagan ended the 74-yard play.

Bridgeport running back Collin DeCora bolted the final 10 yards to crack the egg on the Tigers' side of the scoreboard. Jones, however, blocked Tyler Fricke's extra point kick to keep the Plainsmen on top, 7-6, with 77 seconds left in the third quarter.

The stingy Plainsmen then took the ensuing kickoff and jammed it 68 yards down the field for a 14-6 lead. Turner advanced for 33 of those yards, and York kept the ball and took 18 all in one whack. York finally rolled left and backhanded a perfect pass to an accompanying Erik Hagan, who hustled 20 yards for a 14-6 Plainsmen lead.

Turner needed only four carries to carve 33 yards out of Bridgeport's defense, including the last 10 on Perkins County's final scoring drive.

To get the short field, the Plainsmen needed to explode on Bridgeport's third fake punt of the night. Perkins County's Jeremy Hagan caught Collin DeCora sneaking around scheming Tigers punter Nick Pappas to clamp down on that nonsense.

Lapaseotes ripped away a four-yard touchdown catch after Beyer revived a sputtering drive with a 17-yard grab while leaping and falling away; Bridgeport pulled to within nine points at 20-12 with a shade under two minutes left in the game. Brody Prante broke up Galvan's throw to Lapaseotes and denied the Tigers another extra point.

Riley Kosmicki led the Plainsmen in tackles with nine-and-a-half and assists with seven. Kosmicki planted a roadblock in front of the Tigers speedy DeCora all evening long, and helped Jones squash an early reverse to Lapaseotes. Three of Erik Hagan's tackles set Bridgeport back, including the fake punt he helped kill.

The offensive line that features Tyler Brott, Jones, Chad Fosbinder, Derek Brueggeman, Vinny Ross and Kye Kurkowski at tight end played a big part in creating the running room Turner, York and Johnston found.

"Our receiver blocking was outstanding, probably the best it's been all season. The wide receivers showed a lot of unselfishness in putting their blocking as the primary thing to do. Their blocking was pretty fantastic, which opened some things up on the outside for us, so, that was huge—that was probably as big as anything in the game," Coach Kay said.

Jeremy Hagan blasted all three extra points offered him through the uprights and added two kickoff touchbacks, keeping the Lions stuck on their side of the field.

Two seemingly evenly-matched teams clash tonight (Thursday, October 22) in Grant, as the 5-2 Chase County Longhorns herd north to line up against the 5-2 Plainsmen. Both teams have gone 4-1 against common opponents, with both losing by double digits to the Sutherland Sailors.