

An upset for the books

They were simply a team with a three-game losing streak. A team looking for a chance, desperately clinging to the hope of qualifying for playoffs. However, on Friday, Oct. 18th, the players walked off the field with a different look. They walked off the field with smiles on their faces, helmets raised over their heads and spirits higher than the sky. Every game since that Friday night has been in the same manner, including their first playoff game in the past two seasons.

The outcome of the bi-district playoff game between the Lufkin Panthers and the Texas High Tigers was unexpected to most critics and fans. The knowledge that Texas High, the 270th ranked team in Texas, was facing the 34th ranked team in the state was the root of most doubt, but the Tigers showed no sign of backing down as they went on to defeat the Panthers 41-35 in double overtime, clinching a spot in the area round of playoffs.

“

You didn't quit, when the odds were stacked against you, you did not quit. We won because you didn't let up, and you made them quit.”

– head coach Gerry Stanford

The task at hand was to win their final three district games for a legitimate shot at qualifying for the playoffs, and that is precisely what they did, in what many would deem an impressive fashion. They overcame the odds and won by large enough margins to claim the fourth spot in district and an opportunity to play in the bi-district round of playoffs.

“We didn't start off very well, but we started to give our best effort. We fought hard and it paid off for the boys,” Stanford said. “We built confidence and progressively gave

ourselves the shot we needed.”

On Friday, Nov. 8th, the Tigers faced the West Mesquite Wranglers. A triumph took place on the field that looked nearly identical to Friday night in Lufkin. It was a celebration of victory and a reward for long hours and numerous sacrifices, but most importantly, it was a realization that their season was not over. Questions of who they would play next and how great a challenge they posed were distant from the players’ minds because the on-field excitement was simply a time to say, “We did it!”

“We came out, did our thing and did our job; we proved the doubters wrong,” senior wide receiver Kobe Webster said. “For now, I’m just happy I have another game to play with the boys.”

In Abe Martin Stadium in Lufkin, Texas, the Tigers, and fans alike, reveled in their win. This specific celebration carried a new emotion, a sense of pure joy and pride as Texas High had just upset the 7th ranked team in Texas 5A football. This victory carried so much weight because the Tigers had been told that, statistically, there had little chance of leaving Lufkin with a win under their belt. However, they refuted this skepticism entirely; they persevered and triumphed over the Panthers in a game that kept fans on their toes.

“To sum up everything up to the game against Lufkin, I would say tremendous effort, fight and care,” Stanford said. “Care for our school, care for our community, care for each other, and the most effort among any high school football team I’ve seen in a long time.”

The Tigers now move on to the area round of UIL football state playoffs and are scheduled to play Frisco Independence High School, the 7th ranked team in the state. The game will be Friday night at 7:00 pm at Tiger Stadium.

Tigers dunk on the Leopards

Ten seconds remain on the board.

It's a tied game until Texas High drains in a final layup followed by a free throw shot.

On Nov. 15, the Tigers and Leopards battled it out on the court with a final score of 46-43, the Tigers taking the win.

Lady Tigers shut out the Pirates

The girls' soccer team opposed the Pine Tree Pirates on Friday, Feb. 23 with the Lady Tigers delivering a 1-0 victory.

The first half of the game was filled with several opportunities to score for both teams. Texas High attempted several goals that were either blocked or missed. The same occurred for Pine Tree with several crucial saves made by senior goalkeeper Summer Stussy. The half ended with a 0-0 score.

"Summer has been real big for us all year. We've had a lot of really narrow wins and really narrow losses this season, but none of those losses are because of her," coach Jesus De Leon said. "She has always stood up and done what she needs to, and that's what she did tonight."

The second half consisted of the same back and forth attempts

at scoring between the Tigers and Pirates. The Lady Tigers pulled ahead towards the end of the half with a goal by sophomore Mya Bowers. The team maintained their leverage for the rest of the game giving them a definitive win.

“I think the team is doing a lot better than what we were expecting,” Bowers said. “The coaches have helped us a lot more with our formation, passing, and overall making plays so that we can get a goal like I did today.”

This win was an essential factor in Texas High’s progression to the playoffs in the coming weeks. The team hopes to carry this momentum into games to come.

The next home game for the Lady Tigers is against Marshall on Tuesday, Feb. 27.

Tigers shipwreck the Pirates

Tigers boys’ basketball hosted the Pine Tree Pirates on Feb 13. The game began with a contested floater by JJ Sparkman-Hawkins of Pine Tree after the Pirates won the tip off. The Tigers’ first bucket came off a three pointer in the corner by Vonderic Stanley making the score 3-4 Pine Tree.

Throughout the first quarter, both teams stayed fairly even with one another as they each struggled to get into a groove offensively, but the score was 13-14 Pirates to end the first. The Tigers got their first score of the second quarter with a three by Kyle Wright taking a 14-16 lead.

From there on, the Tigers ran away with the game offensively and the Pirates weren’t able to keep up. The Pirates were effectively shut out on offense by a strong defensive

performance by the Tigers in the second quarter, characterized by two blocks by Cole Drumm and CJ Kelley during the fourth minute of play. Texas High went on to dominate the second quarter with a score of 40-26 thanks to numerous three pointers and good ball movement.

“We came in with a lot of confidence after losing at Pine Tree last time, and we wanted to make sure that we got a win at home,” junior Cole Drumm said.

The third quarter was structured much like the first as both teams struggled to score efficiently. However, it was the Tigers’ advantage in raw athleticism and shooting which ensured that it would be impossible for the Pirates to come back; by the end of the third quarter the Tigers led 55-39.

The fourth quarter was dominated by Texas and was mainly characterized by the 22-1 run that helped them finish the game. This run made the Pirates look overwhelmed with the sheer amount of offense generated by Texas from numerous three pointers and multiple fast break layups. Texas ended the game after a final three-pointer by senior Taylor Turner, his first career three-pointer. The final score was 85-50.

“It felt great having the crowd on our side; I’m just happy to be here. Hitting that three felt natural and it’s all thanks to my teammates,” senior Taylor Turner said.

The Tigers moved to 7-3 in district while the Pirates became 1-8 in district.

“Going into playoffs is obviously a big deal but we have a lot of confidence,” Drumm said. “We have to make sure we work hard and take every practice seriously.”

Fly, Eagles Fly

“Fly, Eagles Fly” could be heard all around the city of Philadelphia on Sunday night after the Eagles defeated the Patriots in Super Bowl LII.

I think it is safe to say that at the beginning of this season, hardly anyone thought the Eagles would be able to pull off their first Super Bowl win. However, despite the circumstances they’ve faced, they were able to defeat Tom Brady and his crew with a final score of 41-33.

The fact that the Eagles’ [backup quarterback](#) Nick Foles had to come in and take over starting quarterback Carson Wentz’s spot and they still ended up winning the Super Bowl really speaks for the coaches and the players on that team.

The birds of Philly are on an emotional high after this game. However, on the other hand, the Patriots are facing a lot of uncertainty in this upcoming offseason. Tom Brady is not getting any younger, their defensive coordinator is leaving to be the head coach for the Detroit Lions and some players are expected to leave or are needing to agree to a contract extension in order to stay in New England. While this is a part of most offseasons, it seems especially questionable for New England this go-around.

One question that many people are debating over now is “does this loss diminish Tom Brady’s legacy and/or give Joe Montana the greatest of all-time title back”? Some say yes, some say no. Personally, I don’t believe it does one bit. Brady put up 505 yards and three touchdowns in this eight-point loss. For him to put up those kinds of numbers and yet still lose the game, that’s not his fault at all. If it’s not Brady’s fault, whose fault is it? Well, the Patriots’ defense didn’t do their job. They allowed Nick Foles, a backup quarterback, to throw for 373 yards and three touchdowns with only one interception

that was caused by the receiver, not Foles. Also, their defensive line didn't even get one sack the whole game. So, I'd say their defense needs to step it up next season or they need to find better personnel to do the job if they want to get back to the Super Bowl. However, with the expected departure of cornerback Malcolm Butler, the one who intercepted Russell Wilson in Super Bowl XLIX versus the Seattle Seahawks to save the game, New England will have to be on the grind to make some significant additions to the team.

For the Eagles, the future is looking bright. However, there are some questions that they will have to face later on such as when will Carson Wentz be healthy again? Will there be any coaching changes? Will Nick Foles be leaving to sign with another team to be the starter? All of these are questions that they will have to address in the next couple of months. Although, they aren't going to be worrying about any of that for a little while because they'll be savoring every moment of this phenomenal season that they've had as the phrase "World Champions" accompanied by "Fly, Eagles Fly" rings through the streets of Philly.

Tigers dethrone Wildcats

Texas High Tigers boys basketball hosted the Sulphur Springs Wildcats on Jan 30. The game started with the Wildcats winning the tip and scoring with an easy pick and roll. The Tigers got on board with a three point shot by Kyle Wright but the Sulphur Springs towering defense kept the Tigers at bay for most of the 1st quarter, with the quarter ending 12-17 in favor of the Wildcats.

The 2nd quarter started quite the same with Texas High not

being able to score. However, after a fiery dunk by Sulphur Springs making the score 22-16 midway through the the 2nd quarter, the tide started to change. Texas High went on an 8-0 run spurred by two three pointers to make the score 24-22, their first lead of the game. The half would end with Texas High leading 29-24.

Sulphur Springs got off to a hot start in the beginning of the 3rd quarter, tying the game at 35 with five minutes left in the 3rd quarter. Texas High continued their strong performance by going on a strong run to finish that quarter with the score being 47-41.

“We knew it would be a hard fought game,” junior Cole Drumm said. “This was a big turnaround for us beating the best team in the district. This should boost us for the rest of the season.”

The start of the 4th quarter displayed the speed of Texas High, scoring on multiple fast breaks and outrunning the Wildcats, increasing their lead 57-44 with five minutes remaining. The Wildcats started to mount a comeback by using their big men to score in the paint and racking up fouls. But the Tigers offensive tenacity kept their opponent from catching up and clutch free throws down the stretch allowed the Tigers to hold on and win 77-66.

“This win is going to build our confidence for the next games,” senior Elias Thurman said. “We have to get more consistent but if we play like that every day, we can beat anybody.”

The Tigers upend the Hawks

Soccer is a sport built on opportunity. It pays to be in the right place at the right time.

This was the case for senior Eleanor Schroeder on Tuesday night as her tap-in midway through extra time gave the girls' soccer team a 2-1 victory over crosstown rival Pleasant Grove. The game-winning goal came after a hard-fought battle by both teams.

"When I scored the goal, I just lost control in the moment," Schroeder said. "I ended up jumping into my teammate's arms while everyone else was celebrating."

Early in the first half, the Lady Tigers came out firing and had many scoring chances. This eventually led to senior Aliyah Forte putting in a cross from junior Sarah Rogers to give them a 1-0 lead thirteen minutes into the game.

"The team was obviously motivated today," head coach Jesus De Leon said. "They passed the ball really well and created lots of opportunities with heavy possession and good ball movement."

This storm was quickly weathered by the Lady Hawks as they would go on to grab a goal minutes later. A low shot by a Pleasant Grove forward just squeaked by senior goalkeeper Summer Stussy to even the score at 1-1 before the half.

Both teams came out conservative in the second half as tensions slowly began to rise, exemplified by a yellow card given to senior Jillian Ross midway through. While they each had their fair share of shots and momentum, the game would have to wait to be decided in extra time.

"I think the team was a bit nervous at times," Rogers said. "When we began to build confidence towards the end, we were

able to stay calm and play our game.”

In the extra time, the Lady Tigers came out similar to how they did in the first half and tested the Pleasant Grove goalkeeper many times. The deciding goal would come on another cross from Rogers that found the feet of Schroeder in a prime position as she finished it off.

“This was a great win for the team,” Schroeder said. “I’m glad to have done it with such great teammates. I wouldn’t want to do this with anyone else.”

This signature win comes at an opportune time as district play approaches. The team looks to use this victory as a motivational boost for the rest of the year.

“We have been slowly building confidence in the way we play,” De Leon said. “Now, we can point to this game as an example of what happens when we play the right way. Success will build confidence, and confidence will result in more success.”

The next home game for the girls’ soccer team is against Sulphur Springs on Friday, Feb. 9.