

Bears Advance To Championship Game With Barrow

Monday, 13 October 2008

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/081013.bears_whalers_football.mp3{/audio}

Jay Barrett/KMXT

The Kodiak

High School Bears football team continued its play-off comeback by beating the Barrow Whalers 19-13 Friday evening in the second round state championship play offs. The game was played at Anchorage Football Stadium.

The

Bears will play Soldotna in the state championship game for the third year in a row, after the Stars trounced Eielson 69-33 on Saturday in their semi-final game. The championship will be played on Saturday in Anchorage.

Like their

first round play off win against the Nikiski Bulldogs, the Bears spotlighted a former defensive player at running back. Kodiak won 19 to 13 with two touchdown runs by Raphael Matautia (MA-to-tee-ah) and a touchdown pass from quarterback Kevin Lapola to quarterback Zack Bailor.

Kodiak

started the scoring with that pass in the first quarter, and Barrow responded with a 74-yard punt return in the second. Matautia had TD runs of 16 and 13 yards in the third, which bookended a 60-yard Barrow touchdown pass from Albert Gerke (grr-key) to Justin Sanders. With that TD, Gerke surpassed Kodiak's Stuart McFarland's 2006 record for yardage and touchdowns in a season.

The ball

was in Gerke's hands with less than two minutes left, as Barrow marched down the field in a last-chance effort to win. We pick up the call from KVOK's Doug Letch and Charlie Madsen:

-- (Bears 1 37
sec "There's
1:37 left to go ... and hold on tight.")

That's exactly what the Bears did. Thought Matautia had the touchdowns and 39 yards total, Alex Woodell (w'dell) led the Bears in rushing, carrying the ball 32 times for 157 yards. Gary Anthony added 25 yards, but for the second week in a row provided key lead blocking for the Bear's two newest rushers.

The Whalers, in only their second full year as a varsity team, finished the regular season with an 8-and-1 record, and had worked their way up to the number 2 ranking in the state. The Bears went the other way in the second half of the season, dropping three straight by a combined 72-to-7, and were not ranked at all in the final poll of the year. But despite backing into the play offs, the Bears have played two strong opponents and came away with convincing wins. Once again Letch and Madsen:

-- (Bears
2 47 sec "I'll tell you what, the ... huge
plays when they needed to.")