

Special teams cost Boise a win

Three kickoff returns make the difference and motivates Patriots

By Bruce Smith
Matchup

Call this one the got that got away. Make it two ... or even three.

The Centennial Patriots returned three kickoffs for touchdowns in the first half, and the Patriots then held off a valiant Boise comeback to claim a 54-42 SIC victory at Dona Larsen Park.

"Ugh," Boise coach Bob Clark described the game. "Offensively, we had almost 600 yards. This was a nightmare."

Centennial coach Lee Neumann told the Idaho Statesman that he had never seen anything like this in his 23 years. After losing their first three games by a combined 10 points, the Patriots won their third straight and maintained a chance to make the 5A playoffs.

"Special teams were huge for us," Neumann said. "That was great."

After Deion Hardy caught a 12-yard touchdown pass from Tanner Gustavsen, Centennial junior Tanner Johnson started the kickoff return spree with a 95-yard run.

Junior Joe Murphy then added returns of 96 and 82 yards in the second quarter of the high-scoring affair.

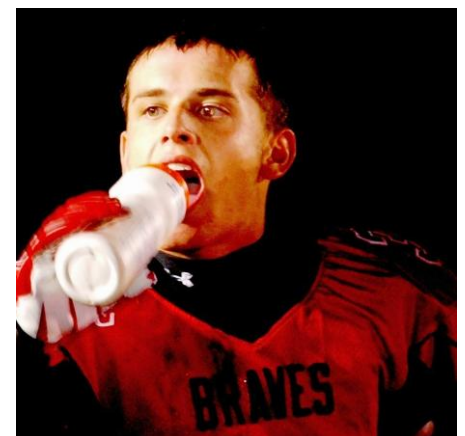
"We have a really good



Massimo Daltoso signals a score after Larry Evans recovered a fumble in the end zone.

kickoff return setup. We have really great blockers in there," Murphy said. "I just have to run the ball into the end zone. That's my job. I get the ball and go. They set up all the blocks for me. They are the ones that do it all."

Clark said injuries forced Boise to make adjustments on special teams for this game and it wasn't until halftime that they



Cameron Mayne

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BOISE FOOTBALL: Centennial 54, Braves 42



GAME SUMMARY

Centennial	14	13	13	14	-	54
Boise	7	21	7	7	-	42

C – Treyvion Foster 78 pass from Darian Seifert (Sean Coffey kick)
 B – Deion Hardy 10 pass from Tanner Gustavsen (Travis Browndyke kick)
 C – Tanner Johnson 95 kickoff return (Coffey kick)
 B – Brett Walton 1 run (Browndyke kick)
 C – Joe Murphy 96 kickoff return (Coffey kick)
 B – Walton 1 run (Browndyke kick)
 B – Gustavsen 4 run (Browndyke kick)
 C – Murphy 82 kickoff return (kick failed)
 C – Seifert 1 run (pass failed)
 B – Larry Evans recovered fumble in end zone (Browndyke kick)
 C – Foster 30 pass from Seifert (Coffey kick)
 C – Kody Denison 3 pass from Seifert (Coffey kick)
 C – Seifert 46 run (Coffey kick)
 B – Cameron Mayne 24 pass from Gustavsen (Browndyke kick)

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING: Centennial – Kiana Walker 14-79, Seifert 7-64, Kody Denison 5-26. Boise – Gustavsen 17-74, Walton 9-42, Chase Choate 7-26.

PASSING: Centennial – Seifert 11-17-1-209 yards. Boise – Gustavsen 26-55-0-354 yards.

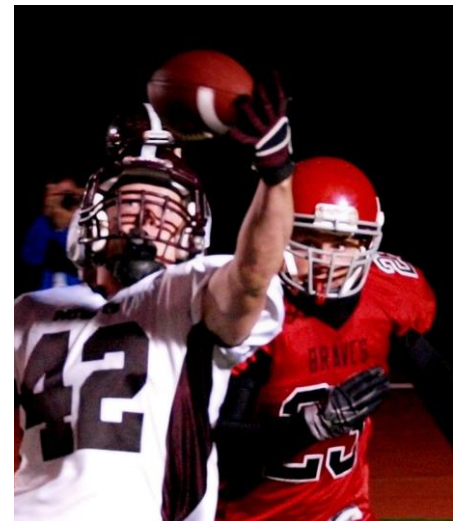
RECEIVING: Centennial – Foster 4-136, Jake Gyer 3-17, Denison 2-13, Johnson 1-31, Blake Bell 1-12. Boise – Skyler Rowe 8-123, Hardy 7-84, Mayne 6-69, Miller 3-65.



TOP LEFT: Avery Miller leaps high to catch a pass.

MIDDLE LEFT: Tyler Connelly and Nick DeAlba wait for the play to start.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Josh Maxfield sneaks up on a receiver.



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were able to be solved. Boise still led 28-27 at that point, but the returns allowed the Patriots to have the momentum.

“Most of the time, our kicker had been putting the ball out of the end zone, but it didn’t happen this time,” Clark said.

Quarterback Darian Seifert got Centennial’s offense going. He ended up passing for 209 yards and three touchdowns. He also ran for two scores as the Patriots managed to build a 19-point lead.

“We were up 35-33 and we got a turnover but we couldn’t convert and that cost us,” Clark said. “They were bigger and stronger than us and wore us out.”

Boise had 560 total yards. Gustavsen completed 26 of 55 passes for 354 yards and – most importantly – no interceptions. Gustavsen also rushed for 74 yards, setting up a back end of the season in which the Braves’ offense would have its best games.