

Borah's banner season ends

Lions make the playoffs, but drop first-rounder in exciting finish

By Bruce Smith
Matchup

Borah coach Darren Corpus thought the Lions' first-round 5A playoff game felt like a championship game. It turns out that we'll never know.

The Lions saw their banner 2012 season end with a 41-34 loss to Eastern Idaho's top team – the Highland Rams. Borah led for much of the way at Dona Larsen Park, but a 3rd-and-35 conversion by the Rams made the difference.

"We were beat up," is how Corpus remembered the game. "We lost our No. 1 running back Hunter Kenyon, Hawkins Mann was not at full strength and our center was playing with two bad shoulders."

Quarterback Cole Skinner, receiver Justin Coburn and kicker Jacob Szuch had the best games of their career, and may have sewn up postseason awards with their performances. Borah was clearly on the defensive for much of the second half. Still, the game was tied late in the game when Highland faced the dismal chance of keeping the ball at its own 30-yard line.

Mariani gave quarterback Neil Jewell the OK to run, and the Rams senior escaped a bevy of tacklers for a 69-yard,



Kadeen Torgeson shows some intensity as he takes a pass and moves downfield during Borah's 5A playoff game vs. Highland at Dona Larsen Park.

momentum-stuffing play.

"I told my boys, 'I'll go get this if you guys help me out,'" Jewell said. "That's it."

Highland converted on the ensuing play for what turned out to be the game-winning touchdown and advanced to play Coeur d'Alene, where the Rams fell.

"Highland was the best team we saw," Corpus said. "I'm not going to say they were the

toughest, but they were the best. If we're healthy and each team plays the best they can, it would have been the two best teams in the state."

"That's a good football team. Borah does a lot of good things and we are fortunate," said Mariani. "That was a hard-fought battle on both sides and that's the playoffs in a nutshell."

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TOP LEFT: Trey Dennis gets position and tries to make a touchdown catch.
TOP RIGHT: Karsten Niederer finds running room.
MIDDLE: Emilio Trevino holds on to the runner as Clint Langston watches.



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The quarterfinal loss ended Borah's season. The Lions had earned the 5A SIC's No. 1 seed to advance to the postseason for the first time since 2001. Their 7-3 record was their best since 1995.

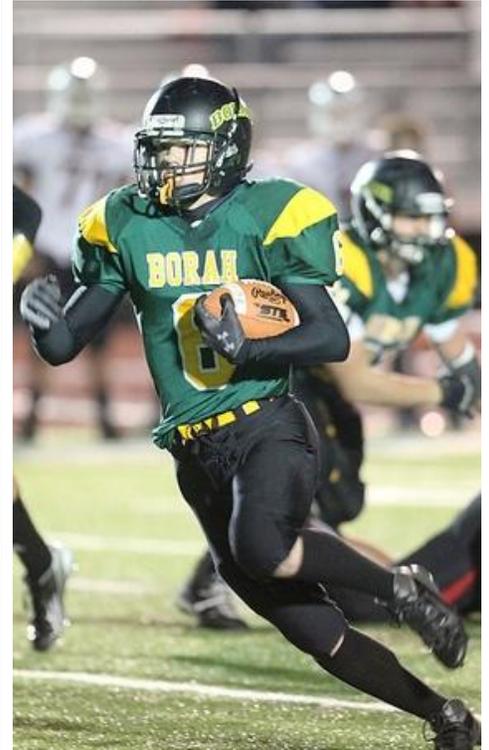
"Our kids never quit, and for that we are so grateful," said Corpus. "To have such quality young men, it makes our job easy."

Kenyon — the 5A SIC's regular-season rushing leader — sat out all but two plays with an ankle sprain.

But even without Kenyon, the Lions held their own. Borah had a 20-14 lead at the half and led 34-27 early in the fourth quarter of a back-and-forth game.

Skinner completed 28-of-44 passes for 428 yards and two touchdowns, and Szuch went 4-for-4 on field goals, including a long of 33 yards.

"Borah played their butts off, the whole team," Jewell said. "They never gave up. They gave all their heart and it was actually cool to see and fun to play against. It's a memory I won't forget."



Game Notes

- * - Colton Skinner, Justin Coburn and Jacob Szuch had their best games.
- * - All four SIC teams lost in the first round of the 5A playoffs this year.

GAME SUMMARY

Highland	0	14	13	14	-	41
Borah	3	17	6	8	-	34

- B – FG Jacob Szuch 22
- H – Neil Jewell 1 run (Dallan Rodriguez kick)
- B – Justin Coburn 81 pass from Cole Skinner (Szuch kick)
- B – Coburn 3 pass from Skinner (Szuch kick)
- H – Jewell 10 run (Rodriguez kick)
- B – FG Szuch 25
- H – Michael Besiser 75 run (Rodriguez kick)
- B – FG Szuch 26
- B – FG Szuch 33
- H – Thad Hansen 1 run (pass failed)
- B – Clint Langston 1 run (Skinner run)
- H – Christian Atkinson 22 pass from Jewell (Rodriguez kick)
- H – Jewell 1 run (Rodriguez kick)

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING: Highland – Besiser 17-153, Jewell 12-89, Hansen 6-11. Borah – Karsten Niederer 11-52, Skinner 7-37, Eric Thrift 4-17, Langston 4-15, Hunter Kenyon 2-7.

PASSING: Highland – Jewell 11-22-2-191 yards. Borah – Skinner 28-44-0-428 yards.

RECEIVING: Highland – Ockey 3-65, Aaron Thomson 2-38, Christian Atkinson 2-29, Hansen 1-29. Borah – Coburn 11-212, Kadeem Torgeson 6-64, Montana Bilger 5-48, Williams 3-61.