

Gutsy call leaves a question afterward

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It was as good a game as anyone could ever ask for.

It came down to the last play of double overtime to decide the 4A championship at Rice-Eccles Stadium Friday night.

Highland took the seven-point lead in the second overtime when the Mustangs answered right back with a score of their own. However, rather than kick the extra point and hopefully force a third overtime, Mountain Crest opted to go for two.

After an encroachment penalty, the Mustangs were a yard and a half away from victory. Unfortunately for Mountain Crest, the dive play was stuffed by Highland linebacker **Ben Johnson** before it had even started, giving Highland its first state championship since 1986 with a dramatic 37-36 win.

"We (had) to get the two-point conversion. They got up and made a play, and we didn't get into the end zone," said Mustangs coach Mark Wootton, who was searching for words.

The Mustangs approached the line of scrimmage expecting the penalty to push the conversion into short yardage. Therefore, the dive play was the original play call.



Ben Johnson's hit on Nate Rigby here was the deciding play in the 4A title game.

"I didn't know if we should have been in that situation to begin with," said Highland coach **Brody Benson**, "We missed the extra point and the defense came over and said, 'We're going to get it. We'll stop them.' You have to have faith. You got to have trust in your kids."

The option to kick the extra point or go for the win is often debated. The arguing point echoing throughout the high school football world is the fact that Alex Kuresa didn't have the ball in his hands on the last play of his career.

"We ran about four in a

row and were able to get a yard and a half. They made a great play," said Wootton.

Kuresa finished his career with 12,917 yards of total offense and 10,951 passing yards. He tossed 101 touchdowns and was responsible for 130 touchdowns, which is tied for the most in state history.

"We played a good game but they were able to make one more play than we did," said an emotional Kuresa, "We fought hard and left it on the field. It comes down to making plays and they made more than we did."