

By EARL WATT

• Leader & Times

Peyson Tempel's huge night for the Garden City came as no surprise to Liberal coach Cliff Abbott.

He predicted that Tempel might be the toughest offensive weapon the Redskins have faced all year, and Tempel lived up to his reputation by rushing for more than 330 yards and leading the Buffaloes to a 61-20 win over the Redskins.

"What they do with the boot and what we have as far as speed, I knew this was possible," Abbott said. "He hurt us last year as well. They use what he brings. I knew he was a great competitor, and that held true."

While Garden City was firing on all cylinders, the high-octane offense of the Redskins was sputtering.

"We were always a little bit off," Abbott said. "We dropped several passes we normally make. Garden City is a good football team, very well coached. They get their kids in the best situation for the talent they have. They use the quarterback and (receiver Caleb Tramp) with some double moves, they did a good job."

Liberal was without the services of one of its major weapons, Trenton Hammond, who was not allowed to play for violating school rules.

During the game, another major weapon, Nolan Larkin, was injured, making the receiving corps even thinner.

“On the initial exam (trainer Steve Zimmerman) didn’t feel it was a ligament,” Abbott said. “ It looked like a shot on the tibia and knee cap. We are hoping for the best there. There’s a lot of tenderness, we will see what it is. He is a big part of our offense and defense and special teams. That is another player that is missed. But he will respond quickly.”

Liberal appeared flat, and that could have been the result of two highly charged games against Hays and Dodge City.

“I felt that we played emotionally from the Hays game, and another in Dodge City, and that takes a drain after a while,” Abbott said. “We were always a little off, and sometimes that shakes you up and rattles you. We aren’t done. We are just halfway through the season. I will start here to see if I did everything to be prepared to compete and win. We will come back in Monday focused and ready to get after Great Bend.”

Abbott gave the players the weekend off to rest and recharge, but the coaches showed up Saturday morning to start the game plan for Great Bend.

“The WAC is as competitive as anything in the state,” Abbott said. “You want to win every game, but again, this is not the end of the road, it is another step, not as big as step as we would like. There is a lot of ball left to be played.”