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By EARL WATT

• Daily Leader

NEWTON — Until a fake punt midway through the second quarter, the Liberal defense had the Newton Railers confused.

After the fake punt, Newton scored 20 points in less than eight minutes to take a 20-0 halftime

lead in a 32-8 victory over the Redskins to open the 2009 season.

Liberal coach Wade Standley wanted the Redskins to avoid big plays, but it was the big play that led to the loss for the Redskins.

Liberal had Newton facing a punt, but after an offside penalty against the Redskins, the Railers decided to run a fake. The ball was snapped directly to Miguel Johns who scampered around the right side, and not only picked up enough yards for the first down, gained an additional 20 yards on the play.

Newton quarterback Evan Thomas then exposed a weakness in the Redskin secondary by throwing a pass down the seam to an open Railer for a 43- yard gain. Joseph Floerke then ran the ball in from 13 yards out for the first touchdown of the night for the Railers.

Four minutes later, Johns again torched the Redskin defense for a 44- yard run. Another seam pass later and the Railers were back in the end zone with a 14-0 lead.

With less than a minute to go before the half, the Railers had the ball at midfield, and Thomas once again threw a seam pass that put the Railers at the goal line.

It appeared the Redskins stopped the Railers on the next play when Newton fumbled, but the Railers were able to recover and score on the next play on a quarterback keeper.

Liberal’s Michael Cummins blocked the extra point attempt, and the Redskins trailed 20-0 at half.

Liberal’s offense struggled in the first half, but did not turn the ball over. The Redskins managed one first down in the first half.

Liberal punted the ball five times in the first half.

In the second half, the Redskin defense would bottle up the Railer runners, but could not finish the tackle. Redskins had a ring around Thomas on a third-and-10 play, but Thomas escaped and ran for the first down. Then, on a third and eight, Thomas handed off to Cody Opland on an end around-style play. Opland cut straight up the middle , and 52 yards later found the end zone.

That's when Liberal struggled to hold on to the ball for the next few possessions.

Charles Turner was tackled in the backfield and appeared to be down, but the ball squirted loose, and the Railers recovered at the Redskin 11 yard line.

The Angry Red defense stiffened, and the Railers had to settle for a field goal and a 29-0 lead.

Tow drives later, Slader McVay attempted a pass to the sideline, but an acrobatic interception by Ben Koerner gave the Railers the ball at the Redskin 12 yard line.

Again, the Redskin defense denied the Railers a touchdown on the short field, and Newton kicked another field goal for a 32-0 lead.

Liberal had a chance at a short field touchdown early in the fourth quarter after a Newton fumble at the 12 yard line, but a Redskin receiver tripped in the end zone, and Newton's Nathan Briar made a diving interception in the end zone that gave the Railers the ball at the 20 yard line.

Liberal's best drive of the night came with nine minutes to play. The Redskins put together a six-minute, 16-play drive that covered 87 yards and ended with an 18-yard touchdown pass from McVay to Kowan Russell.

The Redskins couldn’t close the gap in the 32-8 loss.

It was the inaugural game for Standley, and he tried to keep the game in perspective even though the frustration mounted as the game advanced.

Still, Standley continued to motivate his players and provide individual coaching during critical moments f the game.

“I told them this is one game,” Standley said after addressing his team. “I would have told them the same thing if we had won. We have some things to work on. We have to continue to get better.”

It was the big play that hurt the Redskins. Three big passes in the first half and one big run in the second. Other than those four plays, the Redskin defense played solid.

“We played well defensively,” Standley said. “We gave up some big plays. On the fake punt, we lost containment. That;s a mistake we have to correct.”

The passes over the middle that led to three touchdowns were also a concern to Standley.

“We’re missing our read keys,” he said. “We had deep quarters. That’s designed to not allow big plays.”

Offensively, Standley said the team was just out of sync.

“We had no rhythm,” he said. “When you don’t have any rhythm, they can start to tee off on you, and that’s what they did.”

Charles Turner had some nice gains on the night, something that was a positive for Standley.

“He ran hard,” Standley said. “We just have to go back offensively and find some rhythm and an identity.”

Liberal will return to the Burial Grounds for the home opener at 7 p.m. Friday. Liberal will host Guymon.