

Red team still rules Victory Bowl, 42-21

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Both of the first two Heart of Texas Fellowship of Christian Athletes Victory Bowls were close, exciting contests that came down to the final play.

The third was decided by halftime.

Bob McQueen Offensive MVP Marquette Wilson of Temple rushed for 98 yards and three touchdowns, and the Red team moved to 3-0 in the game's short history with a 47-21 win over the Blue team Saturday at Floyd Casey Stadium.

Wilson found the end zone twice in the second quarter to help the Red fire out to a 27-0 halftime lead, and it never looked back.

"I was expecting a good game," Wilson said. "I knew we had good players on both teams. The Blue team did a good job, but all my teammates worked hard at practice and we just pulled out a win. It was unexpected, but I know we worked to get it, so I just thank God that we had a chance to win it."

Alex Shaw of Dawson added 59 yards and a score to the Red's cause, while Jonathan Paysse of Belton and Jasenio Anderson of Italy combined for 122 passing yards, with Anderson throwing two touchdown passes.

On the Blue side, Royce Asi of Killeen churned out a game-high 120 yards and a score on 14 carries, but the Blue was plagued by four turnovers, including three interceptions.

"The thing that was really impressive about this was having guys like Marquette, Jasenio and Jonathan, those guys all worked hard at trying to get ready for this game," Red coach Jack Welch of Copperas Cove said. "It wasn't a play-around thing, and that's what I appreciate.

"People tell me things like, this is just for fun. But I told the kids, fun for me is giving my best effort. These kids gave great effort, and I'm proud of them."

The Blue controlled the game's opening minutes with a prolonged march that took it from its own 26 to the Red 19, where it faced a third-and-2. But a high snap and incomplete pass stalled the march.

Disaster struck on the Blue's next possession.

On third-and-5 from its own 39, quarterback Jake McClain from Teague rolled left and looked for a throwback screen. Red defender Dylan Turner of Hico read the play all the way and knifed through traffic to pick off the pass and race 33 yards for the game's first touchdown at the 5:41 mark of the first quarter.

Turner also had four tackles in the contest and earned the Bob McQueen Defensive MVP award.

"We had a theme this week that was game-changers," Blue safety Chandler Snodgrass of Lorena. "For instance, (Turner) picks off the pass and takes it to the house. That was a big momentum change

because we had just driven down the field. We also get to go out and do service projects, and then we can go back and put into the community being something small and turn out to be something big.”

The Red owned the rest of the half. A pump fake from Anderson froze the Blue linebackers and allowed Joshua Hejl of Abbott to slip behind them for a 7-yard score and a 14-0 lead with 51 seconds left in the first quarter.

The second quarter belonged to Wilson, as he struck paydirt on runs of 2 and 5 yards, the latter of which came just 20 ticks before halftime and was set up by a 47-yard punt return to the Blue 8-yard line by Anthony Martin of Mart.

“I thought our kids really stayed focused tonight,” Welch said. “Going into halftime with such a big lead, you have a chance to let down. Our kids didn’t do that tonight.”

The Blue finally got on the scoreboard with its first possession of the second half. Asi took the ball on the first four plays of the march and totaled 39 yards before McClain faked to Asi and rumbled 15 yards and into the right corner of the end zone.

Momentum appeared to be on the Blue’s side after it forced a three-and-out, but Colin Pritchard of Live Oak couldn’t haul in the punt and the Red’s Payton George of Gatesville pounced on it at the Blue 21.

On the next play, Anderson found tight end Nick Renfro of Dawson with a step on his defender in the front corner of the end zone for a 21-yard TD, and the Red had things firmly in control again, leading 33-7.

The Red added to its lead with a 9-yard Shaw TD burst, but the Blue answered immediately. It called a timeout with six seconds left in the third to give its personnel group a chance to score, and Asi closed out the drive in which he had 52 yards on four carries with a 6-yard scamper around left end on the final play of the stanza.

Both teams scored once in the fourth, with the Blue’s coming on a 1-yard quarterback sneak from Cameron Cutrer of Corsicana, while Wilson capped his MVP performance with a 4-yard plunge up the middle.

“It just feels good (to win the MVP award),” Wilson said. “I know I worked hard and my teammates worked hard. It knew one of us was going to get it, but it was unexpected for me to get it. I’m just happy I got it.”

“It’s a blessed week,” Welch said. “To be able to coach in a game like this means more than just a game. This is bringing attention to the Lord. It’s a Christian event, it’s a Christian opportunity. The kids played hard, the coaches coached hard, and that’s what it’s all about.”