

Leonard headed to play-offs!

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Saturday, 05 November 2011 15:32 - Last Updated Saturday, 05 November 2011 22:11

After defeating the Tom Bean Tom Cats Friday night by a score of 14-13, the Leonard Tigers clenched a spot in the 2011 play-offs. Their appearance in the post-season hinged on the last day of regular season play. Not only did their win over Tom Bean play a part, but so did the result of the Gunter vs. Whitewright game, which was taking place at the same time in Gunter. Gunter won 42-26 to finish first place in district, and Leonard took second place with their win - finishing with a 4-1 district record. Whitewright finished in the district's third place position possessing a 3-2 record - with their other loss being to Leonard two weeks prior when their already-sought-after-by-college-scouts quarterback, junior Tyrone Swoopes, was unable to play due to an injury. Tom Bean was edged out of a play-off berth with the defeat by Leonard.

The Tigers received the opening kick-off, but were forced to punt shortly on a four and seven. Tom Bean got on the board first during their first possession with a touchdown and extra point with 5:35 remaining in the first. The Tigers fell to a four and 12 on the next possession after a flag against Leonard put them back five yards, but Tom Bean was unable to move forward following the punt due to three no-gain carries in a row forced by Tiger defensive linemen Jordan Buckaloo and Cody Winkler. Leonard joined Tom Bean on the scoreboard with 26.7 second remaining in the first by a 51-yard quarterback keep touchdown by Blake Hicks. Carries by Dario Gomez, Jarrell Washington and Bradley Dills had moved the Tigers from their own 20 yard line to their 49-yard line, when Hicks broke free for the touchdown run. The Tigers got an offsides penalty on the extra point kick, but Gio Soto was able to complete the kick successfully a couple of yards further back to tie the game at seven.

Tom Bean responded with their second score on the next possession, but their extra point kick was no good, and set the stage for the Tiger's win. With 7:30 remaining in the second quarter, Leonard scored with a pass from Hicks to Tyler Turner from the 14 yard line. Gio Soto gave the Tigers the one up they needed to go ahead for the first time in the game - and stay ahead.

Neither team was able to put together a successful scoring drive in the second half. With less than a minute remaining in the game, Tom Bean appeared to have momentum and even moved to the Tigers' 14-yard-line after a penalty against Leonard moved the ball forward half the distance to the goal from the 28-yard line. But, the Tigers recovered a fumble on the next play, and kneeled the ball as the clock counted down to 0 with them still up by one.

The Tigers now move into the Bi-District Round of the play-offs, and will face Alba-Golden next Thursday, Nov. 10, at 7:30 p.m. in Royse City.