



2022 State Championship Season in Review

Photos by Jan Roe & Hannah White • Written by Michael "Duba" Brewer

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Woodville Franklin

| | woodville | Franklin |
|---------------|-----------|----------|
| First Downs | 13 | 19 |
| Rushing Yards | 110 | 279 |
| Passing Yards | 97 | 27 |
| Total Yards | 207 | 306 |
| Total Rushes | 32 | 47 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 8-19-2 | 1-5-0 |
| Fumbles Lost | 0 | 1 |
| Punts / Avg | | 2/28.0 |
| Pen / Yards | 4-20 | 15-135 |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer Franklin Advocate

The Franklin Lions kicked off the 2022 season last Friday night with a workman like 22-12 win over the Woodville Eagles in front of a large opening night crowd at Hedrick Field.

While sloppy at times, the Lions found a way to overcome several self-inflicted miscues, including 15 penalties for 135 yards, to make their 22-0 halftime lead hold up for the victory.

"We made a lot of mistakes tonight, and we have a ton to work on," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "But, I am really proud of the way the kids kept battling. That is what preseason games are for and we will to go back to work and get better."

He added, "Even when we had some things not go our way, it was good to see the team fight through the adversity and find a way to get the win,"

The win marked the 17th straight victory for Franklin and the Lions have now won 29-of-30 games dating back to the 2020 season.

The Franklin win coupled with a loss by the Brock Eagles moved the Lions into the No. 1 ranking in the Dave Campbell Texas Football Class 3A Division I poll.

Franklin opened the scoring on its first offensive possession of the season when Jayden Jackson capped a 10-play 59-yard drive with a 1-yard dive into the endzone. Cort Lowry added the point after for a 7-0 Lion advantage.

WEEK 1 Franklin defeats Woodville 22-12 in 2022 season opener

The Lions increased the lead to 14-0 on their next possession when Bryson Washington found a hole on the left side of the line and outraced the Woodville defense for a 60-yard touchdown.

Washington, the Dave Campbell's preseason offensive player of the year and Baylor Bear commitment, finished with a game-high 129 yards on 12 carries.

Sophomore fullback Collin Smitherman scored the Lions final touchdown when he squeezed through a hole at the line of scrimmage, and sprinted 32 yards to pay dirt. When Washington ran in the 2-point conversion, Franklin headed to the locker room with 22-0 lead.

"We wanted to establish our running game and control the line of scrimmage," Fannin said. "I thought we did a good job of that in the first half."

He added, "Woodville did some things defensively in the second half that gave us some trouble, and we had several penalties that took away some big plays. We will get back to work to clean those things up and I think it will help us become a better football team down the road."

While Franklin, the offense, was putting 22 points on the scoreboard, the Lion defense was shutting out the Woodville offense in the first half. The Eagles only managed 13 first downs and 207 yards of offense for the entire game.

After the Lions had a touchdown negated because of a penalty early in the second half, Woodville got on the scoreboard to cut the lead to 22-6 with :14 left in the third period. The Eagles capitalized on a Franklin turnover to close within 22-12 late in the fourth quarter, but could never get any closer.. Middle linebackers Brayden Youree and Colby Smith anchored the Franklin defense. Youree made a game-high 15 tackles while Smith added 12 stops.

Major Kimbrough, Fragiel Owens and Landen Lorenz each finished with 8 tackles while Lorenz and Noah Tart both had an interception for the Franklin defense.

Offensively, the Lions ran the ball for 279 yards on the night and Lowry passed for 27 yards.

Jackson rushed for 62 yards and a score while Devyn Hidrogo ran for 50 yards on seven tries. Smitherman added 31 yards on the ground while Braden Smith had the Lions' only reception.

Franklin will travel to Mexia for a non-district match-up with the Black Cats Friday night at 7:30 at Black Cat Field. The Black Cats dropped their season opener last Friday to Waco Connally.



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Jr. Devin Hidrogo (8) proved elusive on this 28-yard punt return in the Lions 22-12 win over Woodville.



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| | Franklin | Mexia |
|---------------|----------|--------|
| First Downs | 35 | 18 |
| Rushing Yards | 577 | 245 |
| Passing Yards | 134 | 121 |
| Total Yards | 711 | 366 |
| Total Rushes | 47 | 40 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 3-3-0 | 6-13-1 |
| Fumbles Lost | 0 | 2 |
| Punts / Avg | 1/44.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 2-15 | 4-35 |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer *Franklin Advocate*

The Franklin Lions put on a dominating performance in Mexia last Friday night when they scored 42 second quarter points in route to a 77-13 thrashing of the Blackcats.

After a scoreless opening period, the Lions exploded for six touchdowns to carry a 42-7 lead into halftime.

"We really only had the ball for

WEEK 2 Lion offense erupts in 77-13 thrashing of the Mexia Blackcats

one possession in the first quarter," said Franklin head coach Mark Fannin. "But, I thought the offense really got things rolling and took control of the game when we got the ball back."

"We had several guys run the ball well and Cort (Lowry) did a good job of throwing over the top of the Mexia defense for some big plays."

Sophomore fullback Jayden Jackson scored Franklin's first touchdown on 2-yard sprint to the pylon less than a minute into the second quarter. Lowry added the first of his PAT's for a 7-0 Franklin advantage. The junior finished 11-of-11 on extra point kicks.

The Blackcat offense took the ensuing possession and moved to the Franklin 2-yard line where they would face a second-and-goal. The Lion defense then got three straight stops to turn the Mexia offense away. Major Kimbrough and Jackson combined to make a tackle short of the goal line on fourth down.

It only took the Franklin offense just three plays to travel the 99 yards. Jackson started the drive with a 44yard run before Ike Eaton carried to the Mexia 49-yard line. From there, Lowry connected with tight end Braden Smith for a 49-yard touchdown to stretch the Lion lead to 14-0.

After Mexia cut the lead to 14-7 with a long scoring run, the Lions responded when Eaton capped a 6-play, 75-yard drive with a 7-yard touch-down run for a 21-7 advantage.

Following another defensive stop, the Lions took a 28-7 lead when Lowry found Bo Jimenez open behind the Blackcat defense for a 28-yard scoring strike with 2:21 left in the first half.

After a quick 3-and-out by the Franklin defense, Jackson broke loose for a 59-yard run to the Mexia 4-yard line. From there, Devyn Hidrogo scored to increase the lead to 35-7 with only 1:17 left on the clock.

On Mexia's ensuing possession,

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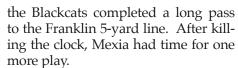
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However, Hidrogo stepped in front of the Blackcat receiver for an interception at the 1-yard line and outraced everyone for a 99-yard touchdown return on the final play of the first half

"What a crazy way to end the first half," said Fannin. "The kids battled on both sides of the ball tonight. I was really proud of the way the defense buckled down and kept them out of the endzone."

Junior linebacker Brayden Youree anchored the Franklin defense with 14 tackles while Colby Smith had 12 stops and Noah Tart added nine. Cole Brantner finished with 8 tackles while Landen Lorenz made seven stops.

Defensive linemen Andrew Elmore, Cemion Smith and Kimbrough combined to 13 tackles, including five stops behind the line of scrimmage.

In the second half, the Lions got touchdown runs for Jayden Jackson, Bubba Jackson (2), Andrew McCelland and Collin Smitherman to round out the scoring.

Offensively, Franklin finished with whopping 711 total yards. The Lions ran for 577 yards and passed for an additional 134.

Jayden Jackson led the rushing attack with 193 yards and a pair of touchdowns on just eight carries while freshman Bubba Jackson added 85 yards and two scores on seven tries.

Eaton finished with 72 yards on seven carries while Smitherman carried for 65 yards. Fragiel Owens and McCelland added 58 and 51 yards respectively.

The Lions will be back in the friendly confines of Hedrick Field this Friday when they play host to the Diboll Lumberjacks for a 7:30 kickoff.

BACK 2 BACK, BABY!



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(ネ 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship デ)

WEEK 3

| | Diboll | Franklin |
|---------------|--------|----------|
| First Downs | 12 | 21 |
| Rushing Yards | 141 | 386 |
| Passing Yards | 175 | 42 |
| Total Yards | 316 | 428 |
| Total Rushes | 47 | 49 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 8-14-0 | 2-4-0 |
| Fumbles Lost | 1 | 2 |
| Punts / Avg | | 0/0 |
| Pen / Yards | 3-20 | 5-60 |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The top ranked Franklin Lions remained undefeated on the young season last Friday night with a hardfought 35-23 win over the Diboll Lumberjacks at Hedrick Field.

With the win, Franklin improved to 3-0 against a competitive non-district slate. The win also extended the Lions winning streak to 19 games.

"Diboll came in here ready to play and gave us all we wanted," said Franklin Head Football Coach Mark Fannin. "It was good to see our kids respond and do what they had to do for us to get the win."

He added, "We have several kids back from last year's team, but we also have a bunch of kids who were playing on Thursday night's last season. This kind of game is important and will help us when we get into district play and into the playoffs."

Diboll got on the scoreboard first when quarterback Haydyn Harris connected with Zach Phipps on a 58-yard touchdown pass.

After recovering an onside kick on the ensuing kickoff, the Lumberjacks connected on a 37-yard field goal to extend the lead to 10-0.

Franklin responded quickly with a nice kickoff return from Fragiel Owens to the Diboll 30-yard line. Bryson Washington scored two plays later when he took a pitch and sprinted in for a 27-yard touchdown.

After the Franklin defense forced a 3-and-out on the Lumber-

Franklin Lions out duel Dibold 35-23 to remain undefeated

jack's next possession, the Lions put together an 8-play, 51-yard touchdown drive to take a 14-10 lead. Washington and Jayden Jackson combined for 44 yards on the possession with Washington capping the drive on an 8-yard run.

After Diboll scored to take a 17-14 lead with 3:03 remaining in the first half, the Lions again responded. This time it was Jackson who found a crease in the middle of the Lumberjack defense and raced in for a 46-yard touchdown run and a 21-14 halftime advantage.

Diboll moved the ball to the Franklin 47-yard line on their first possession of the second half where they faced a fourth down and 2. But, it was Colby Smith and Brayden Youree who made a big play for the Franklin defense to drop the Lumberjacks for a 3-yard loss and give the Lions the ball at midfield.

The Franklin offense quickly moved the 50 yards to push the lead to 28-17 when Jackson scored on a bruising 25-yard run through the Diboll defense, breaking five tackles along the way.

After Diboll cut the lead to 28-23, the Lions again responded.

Franklin moved the ball to the Lumberjack 36-yard line where it faced a fourth-and-8. Then, quarterback Cort Lowry found tight end Braden Smith behind the Diboll defense for a 36-yard touchdown and a 35-23 lead.

Jackson and Washington led the Lions offensive attack that rushed for almost 400 yards on the night. Jackson carried for 149 yards while Washington added 137. Collin Smitherman ran for 48 yards and Owens added 31.

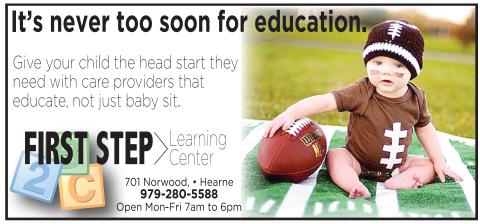
The Franklin defense was anchored by Youree who finished with game-high 12 tackles. Landen



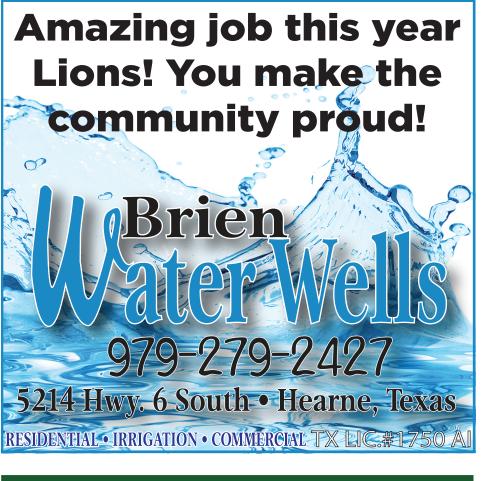
JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Sr. sensation Bryson Washington (15) rewards key o-line blocking with a 30 yard burst to put Franklin on the board in the first guarter.

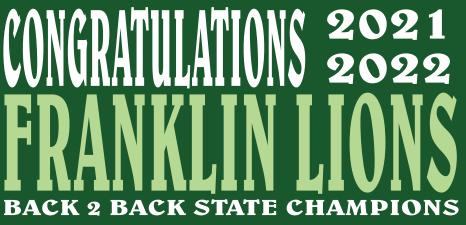
Lorenz made 11 stops while Colby Smith and Noah Tart each added road Friday night when they travel seven. Cameron Zamora had a fumble recovery for the Lions.

The Lions will go back on the to east Texas to face Class 4A Jasper for a 7:30 kickoff.



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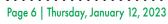


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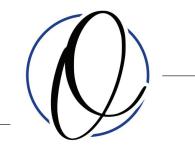
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| | Frankiin | Jasher |
|---------------|----------|---------|
| First Downs | 27 | 24 |
| Rushing Yards | 380 | 168 |
| Passing Yards | 31 | 279 |
| Total Yards | 411 | 447 |
| Total Rushes | 59 | 25 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 2-4-0 | 18-28-1 |
| Fumbles Lost | 1 | 1 |
| Punts / Avg | 0/0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 5-40 | 3-20 |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The top-ranked Franklin Lions wrapped up their rugged non-district schedule Friday night with an exciting 41-35 win over Class 4A Jasper.

Franklin fans who made the threehour drive into deep east Texas were treated to an entertaining game which saw the Lions build a 21-0 lead before the Bulldogs fought back to tie the game at 28 late in the third quarter.

The Lion offense responded with a 1-play, 66-yard drive when sophomore fullback

Jayden Jackson broke a tackle and outraced the Jasper defense for a touchdown to give Franklin a 35-28 lead.

Franklin then came up with a defensive stop on the Bulldogs' next possession when linebacker Brayden Youree sacked quarterback Britain Simmons to force a 3-and-out.

From there, the Lion offense put together an incredible 17-play, 61-yard scoring drive that consumed over nine minutes and gave Franklin a 13-point cushion with 1:51 left in the game.

"That was a great drive," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "This is a special group of kids that always believe they can find a way to win. They don't back down when things get tight."

He added, "Jasper has a very good football team, and we knew this was going to be a tough non-district schedule. But, we felt like it was important to get us ready for a really strong district."

WEEK 4 Lions beat Jasper 41-35 to wrap up non-district play

Jasper scored late to cut the lead to 41-35, but the Lions recovered the ensuing onside kick to secure the victory.

Franklin got on the scoreboard first when Jackson got into the endzone for an 11-yard touchdown. Bryson Washington then scored to give the Lions a 14-point lead midway through the second quarter on a 13-yard run.

The Jasper offense threatened on their next possession when they drove inside the Franklin 5-yard line. But, for the second time this year, junior safety Devy Hidrogo intercepted a pass in the endzone and returned it 105 yards for a Franklin touchdown.

Jasper then sandwiched a pair of touchdowns around a 32-yard scoring run for Collin Smitherman to close within 28-14 early in the third quarter.

The Bulldogs connected on two touchdown passes to tie the game late in the period, and set up the dramatic finish.

Jackson paced the Franklin rushing attack with 148 yards on 15 carries and three touchdowns. Washington ran for 97 yards on 17 tries while Smitherman carried 7 times for 57 yards. The Lions ran for 380 yards on the night and averaged almost 7 yards per carry.

Quarterback Cort Lowry completed 2 of 4 passes for 31 yards. Washington and Ike Eaton each finished with one reception.

Sophomore Colby Smith anchored the Lion defense with 13 tackles and a forced fumble while Youree added 12 stops, a fumble recovery and the big third-down sack. Landen Lorenz made 9 tackles while Walker Anderson and Noah Tart each added 7 tackles

"We are looking forward to getting into district play," said Fannin. "The UIL put together a very tough



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Beautifully placed and timed (QB) Cort Lowry pass to lke Eaton (34) for a 15-yard completion to keep a Lion drive alive.

district and it will be a challenge every Bulldogs to open District 11-3A play week, but we are excited to take on the challenge."

The Lions host the McGregor ing game.

Friday night at 7:30 at Hedrick Field. The game will be the 2022 HomecomProud and long time supporter of our local Lions. You've made us all proud! Congratulations on winning State!



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5 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship

McGregor Franklin

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|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| First Downs | 15 | 32 |
| Rushing Yards | 259 | 463 |
| Passing Yards | 78 | 51 |
| Total Yards | 337 | 514 |
| Total Rushes | 36 | 51 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 5-17-3 | 2-4-0 |
| Fumbles Lost | 2 | 5 |
| Punts / Avg | | 1/45.0 |
| Pen / Yards | 4-20 | 12-107 |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The No. 1 ranked Franklin Lions celebrated Homecoming Friday night with a convincing 69-32 win over the McGregor Bulldogs in front of a packed home crowd at Hedrick Field.

Senior Hailey Fannin was named the 2022 Homecoming queen at halftime as the Lions opened the District 11-3A play portion of their schedule.

Franklin (5-0, 1-0) was led by running back, Bryson Washington, who rushed for 257 yards and five touchdowns on just 13 carries. The senior has rushed for a team-high 620 yards on the season.

The Lions racked up 438 yards rushing and averaged over nine yards per carry on the McGregor defense.

"When we go into a game, we want to establish our running game and control the line of scrimmage," said Franklin Head Football Coach Mark Fannin. "Bryson had a really good game and several other guys also ran the ball well. The offensive line was giving them holes to run through and the backs took advantage."

He added, "One of our goals every season is to win a district championship. McGregor is a team who always plays tough and is well coached; so it was big for us to open up district play with a win."

Sophomore fullback Jayden Jackson opened the scoring when he capped the Lion's first possession with a 1-yard touchdown plunge.

WEEK 5 Lions celebrate Homecoming with 69-32 win over McGregor



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Sr. Landon Lorenz makes a huge tackle for loss setting up a McGregor punt in the first guarter. Lorenz finished the night with 5 tackles, 1 tackle for loss, 1 INT and 1 pass broken up.

Washington ran in the 2-point conversion to give the Lions an early 8-0 lead.

Franklin increased the lead to 15-0 late in the first quarter when Devyn Hidrogo scored on an 11-yard sweep around the left end to cap a 12play, 67-yard drive.

McGregor then sandwiched a pair of touchdowns around a 46-yard scoring run from Washington to cut the Lion lead to 22-13.

Then, Washington scored on three straight possessions on runs of 15, 32, and 11 yards to give Franklin a commanding 42-13 lead at halftime. a pair of touchdowns on six carries

The Lions got a touchdown pass from Cort Lowry to Bo Jimenez and scoring runs from Washington, Hidrogo and Bubba Jackson in the second half to round out the scoring.

"I'm really pleased with the way we are playing at this point in the season," Fannin said. "We will have to continue to execute and play our best football, because it is only going to get tougher from here on out."

With the victory, the Lions have now won 21 straight games and have won 33 of their last 34 games.

Hidrogo rushed for 78 yards and

while Ike Eaton carried for 53 yards and Jayden Jackson finished with 51 vards.

Brayden Youree and Colby Smith each had 10 tackles to lead the Lion defense while Major Kimbrough added six stops and a forced fumble.

Noah Tart, Landen Lorenz, and Walker Anderson each had an interception for the Franklin defense while Blake Autrey and Smith also had fumble recoveries.

The Lions will travel to Rockdale Friday night to face the Tigers in a District 11-3A contest before having a bye the next week.

Franklin Rockdale

| | FIGHKIIII | ROCKUAIE |
|---------------|-----------|----------|
| First Downs | 27 | 15 |
| Rushing Yards | 525 | 146 |
| Passing Yards | 10 | 247 |
| Total Yards | 535 | 393 |
| Total Rushes | 54 | 28 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 1-1-0 | 7-12-0 |
| Fumbles Lost | 2 | 3 |
| Punts / Avg | 0/0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 7-51 | 5-40 |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER

Sports Writer Franklin Advocate

The Franklin Lions opened the District 11-3A portion of their schedule in Rockdale Friday night where



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE JR QB/Kicker Cort Lowry (16) and holder JR. Blake Autrey (6) have paired with long snappers Braden Smith and Josh Bush for 39 points after touchdowns for the Lions this season.

Top ranked Franklin runs past Rockdale in district opener

WEEK 6

they pulled away from the Tigers in the second half for a 63-42 win.

Franklin (6-0, 1-0) got a huge play to close out the first half and carry a 28-21 lead into the intermission.

Following a pass interference penalty, the Lions had the ball at the Rockdale 10-yard line with only :10 on the clock and no timeouts.

Quarterback Cort Lowry faked a pitch to Bryson Washington, rolled to his right and found a wide open Bo Jimenez in the endzone for a 10-yard go ahead touchdown.

"That was a crazy end to the first half," said Franklin head coach Mark Fannin. "We had to use our last timeout before the pass interference penalty, but Cort made a great play fake and hit Bo for the touchdown."

He added, "That was big to get the score there because we knew we were getting the ball to open the second half."

After Jimenez recovered an onside kick to open the second half, the Franklin offense went to work on a 6-play, 50-yard drive. Tailback Devyn Hidrogo ran for the final 21 yards to give the Lions a 14-point cushion.

On the Tigers next possession, Washington came up with a huge fumble recovery for the Franklin defense to give the ball back to the Lion offense at the Rockdale 44-yard line.

On the ensuing Franklin drive, Washington converted a third down with a 28-yard sweep around the right end and Ike Eaton carried down to the Tiger 2-yard line. From there, Collin Smitherman scored to increase the Franklin lead to 42-21.

Smitherman led the Franklin rushing attack with 183 yards and four touchdowns while Washington added 158 yards and a touchdown on 16 carries.

Hidrogo carried for 90 yards and a touchdown while Eaton added 83 yards and a pair of scores as the Lions racked up an impressive 525 yards on the ground, averaging almost 10 yards per carry.

The Lion defense was led by Washington who finished with 10 tackles and the fumble recovery. Colby Smith added 9 stops while Major Kimbrough finished with 8 tackles and a fumble recovery. Brayden Youree also had 8 tackles while Cemion Smith forced a fumble.

"I am really proud of the guys for coming in here and taking care of business against a very good Rockdale team," Fannin said. "We have a group of guys



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Finding the endzone 4 times against the Tigers, SO Colin Smitherman (25) takes this one through the middle. Smitherman finished the night leading rushers with 13 carries for 183 yards (avg. 14 yards per carry)

that know what it takes to win and don't back down from a challenge. They showed a lot of toughness tonight and never flinched when things got tight.

The Lions will have a bye this week before hosting the Troy Trojans next week at Hedrick Field.

"We are glad to have the bye week right now," said Fannin. "There are a lot of things we need to fix and we need to get some injuries healed. I told the guys that we have to take this bye week seriously so we can get prepared for the rest of the district schedule."

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 $\sqrt{2}$ 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship \approx



Amazing Season Lions!

You did great this year, and the whole community is proud of you! Keep up the good

CONGRATULATIONS on a fantastic football season. We enjoyed every minute of it!

GO LIONS!

- Septic repairs
- Lid replacement

| | Troy | Franklin |
|---------------|--------|----------|
| First Downs | 11 | 22 |
| Rushing Yards | 128 | 439 |
| Passing Yards | 79 | 58 |
| Total Yards | 207 | 497 |
| Total Rushes | 38 | 39 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 7-26-2 | 4-6-1 |
| Fumbles Lost | 1 | 1 |
| Punts / Avg | | 0/0 |
| Pen / Yards | 6-56 | 5-50 |
| | | |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer Franklin Advocate

The Franklin Lions found themselves in unfamiliar territory Friday night when they trailed the Troy Trojans 14-12 with 1:34 left in the first half.

After building a 12-0 lead in the first quarter, the Lions lost fumbles on their next two possessions inside their own territory.

Troy capitalized on the second fumble to close within 12-7. Then, after the Trojans recovered an onside kick, Troy running back Cooper Valle scored on a 40-yard run for the 14-12 lead.

But, it was all Franklin from that point, as the Lions scored 37 unanswered points to pull away for a 49-14 win.

"We made a lot of mistakes tonight and we will have to clean those up as we get deeper into our district schedule," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "But, the kids never stopped battling and we are happy to come away with the win."

Following the Troy touchdown, Devyn Hidrogo made a leaping recovery of another onside kick try by the Trojans.

From there, Franklin marched 55 yards in 7 plays to regain the lead. The Lions got runs from Bryson Washington, Jayden Jackson and Ike Eaton on the drive with Washington running for the final 7 yards. Washington then bulled his way in for the 2-point conversion to give Franklin a 20-14 advantage at the half.

"That was a big drive for us to get the momentum back heading into the locker room," Fannin said. "We Page 12 | Thursday, January 12, 2023

WEEK 7 Franklin overcomes early mistakes to handle Troy 49-14

wanted to establish our running game and control the line of scrimmage. I thought we did a good job of that when we didn't put the ball on the ground."

After receiving the kickoff to open the second half, the Lion offense went to work with a 6-play, 61-yard drive. Washington carried for 40 of the yards, including an 8-yard touchdown run. Jackson added the 2-point run for a 28-14 lead.

On the ensuing possession, Troy converted fourth down with a fake punt and moved to the Lion 40-yard line. But, the Franklin defense stiffened and came up with a take away when Jackson recovered a Trojan fumble.

The Lions took advantage when Jackson capped a 60-yard drive with a 17-yard scoring run around the right end.

Franklin took complete control of the game on their next possession following an interception by sophomore safety Josh Lopez.

Jackson again did the honors, this time on a 33-yard dive up the middle with 26 seconds left in the third quarter. The Lions increased the lead to 42-14 when Cort Lowry added the PAT.

Fullback Collin Smitherman rounded out the scoring when he exploded out of the backfield for a 60yard touchdown run midway through the fourth period.

"I am really proud of the guys for coming out and taking care of business." said Fannin. "They worked hard during the bye week and came out and did a great job on both sides of the ball against a good Troy football team,"

Jackson opened the scoring for Franklin when he busted loose for a 54-yard scoring romp early in the first quarter. Eaton also scored a first period touchdown for the Lions.

Franklin had another big night running the ball as the Lions rushed for

ূর্ব 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship 🏹



HANNAH WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Sr. Bryson Washington (15) rewards key o-line blocking with a 40 yard burst, including an 8-yard touchdown run.

439 yards on 39 carries. Jackson led the ground attack with 154 yards and three touchdowns.

Washington rushed for 123 yards and a pair of touchdowns on 12 carries while Smitherman also hit the century mark with 104 yards on just 5 tries.

Quarterback Cort Lowry completed 4-of-6 passes for 58 yards as the Lions amassed 497 total yards.

The Lion defense limited Troy to just 207 total yards, including seven tackles behind the line of scrimmage.

Junior linebackers Colby Smith and Brayden Youree anchored the Franklin defense. Smith finished with a team-high 13 tackles while Youree added 12, including 3 for loss.

Noah Tart had 8 tackles for the Lion defense while Major Kimbrough added six tackles and forced a fumble.

The Lions face a familiar foe this week when they travel to Lorena to face the defending Class 3A Division I state champion Leopards.

This will mark the seventh straight year the two teams have met, the first as district opponents. The two schools have each won three of the prior six meetings.

"We know how tough Lorena will be," said Fannin "Coach (Ray) Biles has been there for over 30 years and they are always very good on both sides of the ball. They are the defending state champions for a reason."

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 $\sqrt{2}$ 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship \approx

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Franklin Lorena

| | Frankiin | Lurena |
|---------------|----------|---------|
| First Downs | 34 | 19 |
| Rushing Yards | 551 | 194 |
| Passing Yards | 0 | 244 |
| Total Yards | 551 | 438 |
| Total Rushes | 61 | 25 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 0-2-1 | 17-19-1 |
| Fumbles Lost | 2 | 3 |
| Punts / Avg | 0/0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 5-30 | 6-56 |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER

Sports Writer FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

When the UIL announced the 2022 football realignment in February, one of the things that stood out was Franklin and Lorena both being put in District 11-3A.

After all, it's not everyday that two defending state champions are matched up in the same district.

When the two teams met last Friday night in Lorena, they didn't disappoint the fans.

The Lions (8-0, 4-0) scored a pair of late touchdowns to pull out a thrilling 49-35 victory that had more twists and turns than the Brazos River.

For the second year in a row, the Lion defense came up with a game-winning turnover as Lorena was driving for a potential tying touchdown.

Friday night, it was a forced fumble inside the Franklin 5-yard line, recovered by Landen Lorenz with just 33 seconds left in the game.

"Those are two really good football teams that just got after each other for 48 minutes," said third year Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "This was an important game for both teams and they both played like it. I couldn't be more proud of our kids. They never stopped battling and did what they had to do to get the win."

The Franklin offense put on a rushing clinic all night, lead by Bryson Washington. The senior halfback finished the night with 306 yards and six touchdowns on 26 carries.

"Bryson had an incredible game tonight," Fannin said. "He is a special player and he showed why on both Page 14 | Thursday, January 12, 2023

WEEK 8 **Franklin remains undefeated** with 49-35 thriller over Lorena

sides of the ball tonight."

As a team, the Lions rushed for 551 vards behind the offensive line of Colton Medders, Lucas Lincecum, Josh Bush, Quade Lopez, Trent Ellison, Bo Jimenez and Dean Rampy.

"That group of guys have to battle on every single play," said Fannin. "I thought they came off the ball well all night and played one of their best games of the year."

Franklin grabbed an early 14-0 lead when Washington sandwiched a pair of first quarter touchdowns around a Brayden Youree fumble recovery.

After Lorena (6-2, 3-2) cut the lead to 14-7, the Lions used five different running backs to drive 60-yards in 10 plays to go ahead 21-7. Washington ran for the final 8-yards around the right end for the touchdown.

With Franklin leading 21-14, Lorena capitalized on a Franklin fumble to tie the game heading onto the half.

The Lions regained the lead on their first possession of the second half when Javden Jackson took a sweep around the left end and outraced the Lorena defense to the corner of the endzone. The touchdown was set up by a 59-yard kickoff return by Devyn Hidrogo to the Leopard 12-yard line.

The Franklin defense then came up with huge play when senior defensive back Fragiel Owens chased down running back Jaydon Porter to force a fumble at the 1-yard line as Porter was heading in for a game-tying touchdown.

Franklin took advantage of the turnover to increase its lead to 35-21 late in the third quarter.

Then, with the Lions in front 35-28 and driving to increase the lead, the Leopard defense forced a stripped fumble and returned it 80 yards to tie the game at 35.

Franklin responded with a 3-play, 75-yard scoring drive to take a 42-35

(茶 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship 学)



HANNAH WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE The Lions regained the lead on their first possession of the second half.

lead. A 65-yard sweep by Jackson down the left sideline set up a Washington 5-yard run for the go-ahead score.

That set the stage for the huge defensive stop by the Franklin defense with under a minute to play in the game.

Looking to run out the clock, the Lions handed the ball to Washington who hit a crease in the middle of the line and raced untouched for an 88vard touchdown to nail down the 49-35 win.

Lorenz had a big night for the Franklin defense finishing with 10 tackles, a forced fumble, an interception, a sack and the game clinching fumble recovery.

Junior linebacker Colby Smith led the Lions in tackles with 11 while Youree and Major Kimbrough each had 7 stops. Youree and Owens also had fumble recoveries.

In addition to Washington's huge night rushing, Jackson carried for 168 vards on 20 carries while Collin Smitherman and Ike Eaton finished with 30 and 29 yards respectively.

Franklin will face another district lenge."

showdown when they host the Cameron Yoe Friday night at Hedrick Field.

The Yoemen are also undefeated in district play and enter the game ranked No. 6 in Class 3A-Division 1 while the Lions come in with the No. 1 ranking. The two programs have combined for seven state championship appearances in the last ten seasons

Cameron enters the game outscoring its opponents 48.5 to 32 on the season while the Lions have outscored their opponents by a 50.5 to 25.5 clip.

Franklin comes into the match-up averaging 493 yards per game offensively. The Lions are rushing for 450 yards per game and are passing for 44.

The Cameron offense is putting up 386 yards per game. The Yoemen have rushed for 173 yards per game and passed for another 213.

"It certainly doesn't get any easier with Cameron coming into town," said Fannin. "They have an incredible program and we know it will be a battle all night."

He added, "These games are the reason you come to practice every day. We are looking forward to the chalYou gave us all a wonderful performance this year Lions! We are expecting great things as well next year!

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Cameron Franklin

| | Cameron | ГГАНКІШ |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| First Downs | 8 | 31 |
| Rushing Yards | 56 | 631 |
| Passing Yards | 125 | 37 |
| Total Yards | 181 | 668 |
| Total Rushes | 15 | 63 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 10-26-2 | 1-2-0 |
| Fumbles Lost | 3 | 0 |
| Punts / Avg | | 1/56 |
| Pen / Yards | 2-35 | 5-50 |



JAN ROE

FRANKLIN ADVOCATE A Cameron turnover just before the half brought the Lions out swinging with a 37-yard Cort Lowry touchdown to JR Devyn Hidrogo (8). At half, the Lions lead Cameron 35-0.

The win gives Franklin (9-0, 5-0) its twelfth league title since 2007 and assures that the Lions will be the district's No. 1 seed when the UIL playoffs begin in two weeks. "I know that

MIKE "DUBA"

Sports Writer

The

FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

ranked Franklin

Lions dominated the Cameron

Yoemen in ev-

ery phase of the game last Friday

night at Hedrick

Field and came

away with a 63-7

win to wrap up

at least a share of

the District 11-3A

championship.

top-

BREWER

I have said this before, but our message all season has been to take the schedule one game at a time," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "The kids have bought into the message, and the results show that they have come out ready to battle and compete every week."

He added, "Cameron is a really good football team, and I was happy that we were able to come out and get on them from the start. The defense did a great job of getting themselves off the field and offense was able to capitalize."

The Franklin offense rushed for a season-high

Lions dominate Cameron 63-7 in showdown of Top 10 teams

631 yards on the Yoemen while the Lion defense limited the high scoring Cameron offense to just 180 total yards.

The Lions led 35-0 at the half and increased their advantage to 56-0 after the first play of the fourth quarter. Each team added a touchdown in the final period for the 63-7 final.

Senior Bryson Washington got the scoring started on the game's first possession when he capped an impressive 11-play, 74-yard drive with a pitch around the left end for a 15-yard touchdown.

After the Franklin defense forced a threeand-out on the Yoemen's first offensive series, the Lions put together another 11-play drive to take a 14-0 lead on the first play of the second quarter.

Fullback Jayden Jackson capped the drive when he scored the first of his five touchdowns with a 1-yard plunge. The sophomore finished the night with an eye-popping 328 yards on just 17 carries.

Following another defensive stop by the Lion defense, Jackson broke a tackle and out-raced three Yoemen defenders for an 80-yards touchdown and a 21-0 Franklin lead.

Jackson increased the Lion advantage to 28-0 when he carried around the right end, stiffarmed a Cameron defensive back at the 25-yard line, and cruised in for a 32-yard score.

The Lions took complete control of the game on their next possession, following a forced fumble by Josh Lopez, which was recovered by Colby Smith.

The Franklin offense dove 92-yards in eight plays with the final 37 yards coming on a pass from quarterback Cort Lowry to Devyn Hidrogo over the middle of the Yoemen defense.

"The guys came out focused and never let up," Fannin said. "We have a team full of selfless players that don't care who gets the credit. They just come out and work hard and want to win football games."

The Lions continued their dominance in the second half with Collin Smitherman and Jackson each scoring a pair of touchdowns to round out the 63-7 final.

While Jackson got the bulk of the rushing k



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE The Lions defense kept Cameron contained with plays like this sack by Senior Andrew Elmore (75). The defense held Cameron to 8 first downs and only 181 total yards.

yardage for the Lions, five other players carried for at least 40 yards as Franklin had eleven different backs with rushes.

Lowry carried for 61 yards while Washington rushed for 57. Smitherman added 51 yards while Ike Eaton and Walker Anderson carried for 41 and 40 yards respectively.

The Franklin defense had their best showing of the season as they forced five turnovers and shut out the Yoemen offense through three quarters.

Linebacker Colby Smith finished with 10 tackles and recovered three fumbles to lead the defense while Brayden Youree, Major Kimbrough and Landen Lorenz added five stops each.

Kimbrough and Fragiel Owens each forced a fumble while safety Noah Tart had two interceptions as the Lions also broke up nine Cameron passes.

Franklin will close out the District 11-3A portion of its schedule Friday night when they travel to Little River Academy to face the Bumblebees. Kickoff is set for 7:30 at John Glover Stadium.

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Franklin Academy

| | I I GIIKIIII | Accuracity |
|---------------|--------------|------------|
| First Downs | 21 | 12 |
| Rushing Yards | 383 | 69 |
| Passing Yards | 8 | 198 |
| Total Yards | 391 | 267 |
| Total Rushes | 43 | 28 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 1-3-1 | 13-25-2 |
| Fumbles Lost | 1 | 0 |
| Punts / Avg | 1/48.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 7-80 | 9-60 |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The top ranked Lions last regular season game at Little River Academy may not have won any beauty contests and it may have caused stress levels to go up among the Franklin faithful, but in the end, the Lions pulled out a 27-15 win to remain undefeated heading into the UIL playoffs.

The start of the game was delaved almost two hours due to inclement weather, and the Lions were called for multiple untimely penalties, which negated three touchdowns.

"That was a strange football game," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "The delay got us out of our routine and I felt like we came out flat and just couldn't get things rolling."

He added, "This team has been great about being poised and taking care of their business. I thought they got out of sorts a little bit, and that we just needed to regain our composure and play our brand of football."

Franklin (10-0, 6-0) got on the scoreboard first when Cort Lowry made a 29-yard field goal with 1:26 left in the first quarter.

After Academy connected on a long touchdown pass to take an 8-3 lead, the Lions lost a fumble on their 15 with 10:46 remaining in the game, next offensive play.

The Bumblebees drove the ball to the Franklin 8-yard line, but the Lions defense made a stand and kept Academy from scoring.

WEEK 10

Franklin wraps up perfect regular season with 27-15 win over Academy



HANNAH WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Franklin will enter the game on a 26-game winning streak and have won 38 of its last 39 games. While the Lions have played for the last two Class 3A Division II state championships, winning in 2021, Hallettsville won the Class 3A Division I state title in 2020.

From there, the Lion offense drove 80 yards in 6 plays. Fullback Javden Jackson had four carries on the drive for 68 yards, including and 8-yard touchdown run the give Franklin a 9-8 lead heading into the intermission.

The Lions extended its lead to 15-8 on the opening possession of the second half when Jackson again capped off a drive with and 8-yard touchdown run.

After Academy tied the game at Jackson again put the Lions in front, this time with 40-yard touchdown sweep around the right end.

Senior halfback Bryson Washington scored from 8 yards out to cap a 6-pay drive for a 27-15 advantage.

Safety Noah Tart intercepted an Academy pass on the next play to seal the win. It was Tart's second interception of the game for the Lion defense.

"I'm proud of the way the kids never stopped battling," Fannin said. "It wasn't very pretty, but at the end of the day the guys kept fighting and found a way to come out with the win."

Jackson led all rushers to pace the Franklin offense with 237 yards and three touchdowns. The sophomore has rushed for 1,490 yards on the season to go along with Washington's 1,311.

Middle linebackers Colby Smith and Brayden Youree had big nights for the Lion defense. Smith finished with 15 tackles while Youree added eleven. Major Kimbrough had 9 tackles while Tart added 6 stops and the two interceptions.

The Lions will open the playoffs against the Hallettsville Brahmas Thursday night at 7:30 Waller Stadium.

Franklin will enter the game on a 26-game winning streak and have won 38 of its last 39 games. While the Lions have played for the last two Class 3A Division II state championships, winning in 2021, Hallettsville won the Class 3A Division I state title in 2020.

BACK 2 BACK, BABY!

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| | папесьчие | FIGURIU |
|---------------|-----------|---------|
| First Downs | 7 | 24 |
| Rushing Yards | 65 | 296 |
| Passing Yards | 93 | 93 |
| Total Yards | 158 | 389 |
| Total Rushes | 27 | 48 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 4-12-0 | 2-6-0 |
| Fumbles Lost | 1 | 0 |
| Punts / Avg | | 2/34.0 |
| Pen / Yards | 4-50 | 5-40 |
| | | |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer

FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The No.1 ranked Franklin Lions opened the UIL playoffs last Thursday night with an efficient 33-7 win over the Hallettsville Brahmas at Waller ISD Stadium.

Franklin (11-0, 6-0) controlled the game from the opening kickoff, building a 19-0 lead by halftime and extending it to 33-0 midway through the fourth quarter.

"I was pleased with the way the kids came out ready to play from the start," said Franklin head coach Mark Fannin. "The defense played really well early and gave the offense time to get things rolling." He added, "I thought the de-

fense played one their better games of the season and really did a good job of shutting down a very good football team."

The Lion defense held Hallettsville to only 7 first downs a 158 total yards, 79 of which came on a late touchdown pass after the Franklin defensive back slipped and fell.

Franklin opened the scoring when Bryson Washington scored on a 17-yard run with 11:19 left in the second quarter.

The Lions increased the lead to 12-0 on their next possession when Washington capped a 12-play, 67yard drive with a 7-yard touchdown sweep.

Franklin began to pull away late in the second quarter when quarterback Cort Lowry completed a pass in the left flat to Devyn Hidrogo. Hidrogo made the first Brahma

WEEK 11 Lions down Hallettsville 33-7 advance to area-round of UIL playoffs

defender miss at midfield and out raced the defense the final 50 yards for a touchdown. Lowry added the PAT for a 19-0 lead heading into the break.

Fullback Jayden Jackson scored the next to Franklin touchdowns to close out the scoring for the Lion offense and a 33-0 advantage with 6:54 left in the fourth period.

Washington and Jackson paced the rushing attack with 110 and 74 yards respectively as the Lion offense rushed for a 296 yards. Lowry added 93 yards passing on two completions to Hidrogo.

The stingy Franklin defense was anchored by Colby Smith with 12 tackles. Major Kimbrough finished with 11 tackles while Brayden Youree added 10 stops. Smith and Kimbrough combined for a sack while Landen Lorenz had an interception.

The Lions will return to Waller ISD Stadium Thursday night to face the Anahuac Panthers in the area-round of the UIL playoffs.

The Panthers are 9-2 on the season and will enter the game having outscored their opponents 40.8 to 16.7 through the first eleven games of their schedule.

Franklin will enter the game with one of the top scoring offenses in Class 3A Division I, averaging 48 points per game. The Lions defense has continued to improve late in the season, allowing 21.3 points per a game

The Franklin offense will enter the match-up averaging 446 yards per game rushing and almost 45 vards passing.

Individually for the Lions, Jackson leads the rushing attack with 1,564 yards. Washington has 1,421 yards rushing while Collin Smitherman has carried for 607 yards.



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

Sr Landen Lorenz #11 runs the Halletsville QB out of the pocket for a rushed incomplete pass early in the contest. Lorenz had a great defensive game complete with an interception.

Ike Eaton has rushed for 457 yards on the season while Hidrogo and Fragiel Owens have carried for 349 and 184 yards respectively.

Lowry has thrown for 491 yards and 7 touchdowns while only throwing three interceptions on the season. Hidrogo comes in as Lowry's favorite target. The junior has 8 catches for 213 yards and two touchdowns.

Senior tight end Bo Jiminez has 3 catches on the season for 57 yards. All three receptions have gone for touchdowns.

The Lion defense is anchored by the linebacker duo of Smith has and Youree who each have over 100 tackles on the season. Smith will enter the game with a team-high 124 tackles and Youree comes in with 117. Kimbrough has 75 tackles while Lo-

renz and Noah Tart have 68 and 58 respectively.

The defensive backfield of Washington, Tart, Hidrogo and Owens have helped limit opposing offenses to 299 yards per game. They have intercepted 14 passes while allowing 157 yards per game through the air.

"This group of guys understand what they have a chance to accomplish," said Fannin. "They have played a lot of football games over the past two seasons and they know what it takes to advance each week."

He added, "We have had some really good football players and teams over the past several years that laid the foundation for this program. Now it is time for us to go keep working hard each week and find a way to keep moving on each week."

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BACK 2 BACK, BABY!

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| | Ananuac | Franklin |
|---------------|---------|----------|
| First Downs | 14 | 25 |
| Rushing Yards | 76 | 315 |
| Passing Yards | 118 | 10 |
| Total Yards | 194 | 325 |
| Total Rushes | 29 | 53 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 10-24-2 | 1-4-1 |
| Fumbles Lost | 0 | 0 |
| Punts / Avg | | 0/0 |
| Pen / Yards | 6-55 | 4-40 |
| | | |

Anahuna Eranklin

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The top ranked Franklin Lion football team continued its quest for a third straight state championship game appearance last Thursday night with a 32-7 win over the Anahuac Panthers in the area round of the UIL playoffs.

Franklin scored 26 unanswered points in the second half to improve to 12-0 on the season and advance to face the Hitchcock Bulldogs in the regional semi-finals Friday night at Wood Forest Bank Stadium in Shenandoah. Kickoff is set for 7:00.

The Lions trailed 7-6 at halftime after only having two offensive possessions in the first half.

"I thought Anahuac came out and did a good job of controlling the ball in the first half," said Franklin head coach Mark Fannin. "We had a penalty that cost us an opportunity just before the half, but the defense stepped up and kept it at 7-6."

He added, "The offense started putting together some good drives in the third quarter and gave us some breathing room."

The Franklin defense held the Panthers to under 200 total yards and a season-low seven points. The Lions have held their last four opponents to an average of 9 points per game.

Franklin struck first to take a 6-0 lead when Javden Jackson plowed in from 2 yards out. The run capped a methodical 13-play,

Lions score 26 unanswered points in second half to down Anahuac 32-7

WEEK 12

78-yard drive which saw four different backs carry the ball.

The Panthers took a 7-6 lead midway through the second quarter when Landon Corbit capped a long drive with a 1-yard touchdown run.

The Franklin offense began to take over when they scored on the opening possession of the second half. Jackson ran for the final yard to get the touchdown and put the Lions back on top 12-7.

The Lions increased their advantage to 18-7 when Bryson Washington scored the first of his two touchdowns the next time the offense got the football. The senior halfback took a handoff around the right side of the line, made one cut, and scampered 26 yards to the endzone.

After the Franklin defense forced a 3-and-out on the Panthers next possession, Washington took a counter around the right end and outraced the Anahuac defense for a 45-yard touchdown to give the Lions a commanding 25-7 lead.

Collin Smitherman capped the scoring with a 1-yard touchdown to give Franklin a 32-7 advantage with 3:44 left in the game.

"I was really proud of the way the kids came out and controlled the game in the second half," said Fannin. "They controlled both sides of the football and did a great job of putting the game away,"

Washington and Jackson again led the rushing attack with 156 and 104 yards respectively and combined for four touchdowns. The Lion offense rushed for a 315 yards, averaging 6 yards per carry.

The Franklin defense was led by Colby Smith with 12 tackles. Washington finished with 11 stops



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

DEFENSE!!! JR Devyn Hidrogo (8) intercepts an Anahuac pass in the end zone to kill a drive and close out the first half of play. Hidrogo had a second momentum killing INT early in 4th QTR to help Franklin put this game away.

while Bryaden Youree and Major Kimbrough had 9 and 7 tackles respectively. Devyn Hidrogo had a pair of interceptions for the Lions.

The Franklin defense has now held 3 of its last 4 opponents to their lowest scoring total of the season.

The Lions will now face a Hitchcock team that is 11-1 on the season and are the champions of District 12. The Bulldogs have outscored their opponents 486 to 257 through the first twelve games of their schedule.

"Hitchcock has a really good football," said Fannin. "They won a district championship in one of the toughest 3A districts in the state and are very good on both sides of the ball."

Franklin will enter the game with one of the top scoring offenses in Class 3A Division I, averaging 46.7 points per game. The Lions defense is allowing 20 points per a game

The Franklin offense will enter the match-up averaging 435 yards per game rushing and 42 yards passing.

Individually for the Lions, Jackson leads the rushing attack with 1,668 yards. Washington has 1,577 yards rushing while Collin Smitherman has carried for 622 vards.

Ike Eaton has rushed for 470 yards on the season while Hidrogo and Fragiel Owens have carried for 356 and 207 yards respectively.

BACK 2 BACK, BABY!

(茶 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship 🔅

Hitchcock Eranklin

| | HITCHCOCK | Franklin |
|---------------|-----------|----------|
| First Downs | 17 | 27 |
| Rushing Yards | 72 | 344 |
| Passing Yards | 163 | 22 |
| Total Yards | 235 | 366 |
| Total Rushes | 27 | 51 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 17-28-1 | 1-2-0 |
| Fumbles Lost | 1 | 0 |
| Punts / Avg | | 1/51.0 |
| Pen / Yards | 9-65 | 3-25 |
| | | |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The Franklin Lions continued their incredible three-year run last Friday night when they ran past the Hitchcock Bulldogs 53-18 at Woodforest Bank Stadium in Shenandoah.

With the win, Franklin improved to 13-0 on the season and ĥas now won 29 straight games. The Lions have won 41 of their last 42 games dating back to the 2020 season and are seeking their third consecutive state championship game appearance.

Franklin will face the Columbus Cardinals in the Region 3 finals Friday night at Tomball ISD Stadium. Friday will be the Lions third straight trip to the regional finals and their sixth appearance since 2012. Kickoff is set for 7:00.

The Lions used their solid running game and another solid defensive effort to pull away from the in the second half.

Franklin held the Bulldogs to 235 total yards and their lowest point total of the season. The Lions have held their last five opponents to an average of 10.8 points per game.

At the same time, the Franklin offense averaged almost seven yards per carry and scored its most points since downing the Cameron Yoemen 63-7.

The Lions took just two plays to move 60 yards on their opening possession. Bryson Washington

WEEK 13 Franklin pulls away to beat the **Hitchcock Bulldogs 53-18**

took a handoff around the right end and outraced the Hitchcock defense for a 56-yard touchdown. Washington then carried in the 2-point conversion to give Franklin an 8-0 lead just 48 seconds into the game.

The Bulldogs put together a nice drive cut the lead to 8-6 on their first possession.

After ensuing Lion drive stalled at midfield, Cort Lowry boomed a punt that was downed by Devyn Hidrogo at the Hitchcock 1-yard line.

Two plays later, the Franklin defense came up with a huge play when Washington and Landen Lorenz combined to tackle the Bulldog running back in the endzone for a safety.

The Lion offense then drove 40 yards in six plays to take a 17-6 lead when Washington scored on a 7-yard run with 1:26 left in the first quarter.

Franklin got touchdown runs for Washington and Jayden Jackson in the second quarter to grab a 31-6 lead.

Hitchcock scored just before the half, and again on their opening drive of the third quarter to close with 31-18.

The Lion offense responded on their next possession when they drove 51 yards in 9 plays. Jackson capped the drive with a 6-yard run around the right end. Washington then gave Franklin a 39-18 cushion with a two-point run.

The Lions took complete control of the game when Jackson carried in a 1-yard touchdown to cap a 55 yard scoring drive and a 46-18 lumbus that is 12-1 on the season 70 respectively.



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Sr. (34) Ike Eaton hurdles both the blockers and defenders to pick up a Franklin first down and add yards to a prolific Lions running game.

advantage.

Franklin capped the scoring when freshman quarterback Walker Anderson rolled out and connected with Dean Rampy for a 22yard touchdown pass

Washington led the Lion offense with 167 yards rushing on 17 carries while Jackson finished with 93 yards on 16 tries. The Lion offense rushed for a 344 yards, averaging 6.75 yards per carry.

The Franklin defense was anchored by Colby Smith with 12 tackles. Brayden Youree finished with 11 stops while Major Kimbrough, Noah Tart and Lorenz each had 5 tackles.

The Franklin defense has now held 4 of its last 5 opponents to their lowest scoring total of the season.

and was ranked No.3 in the final regular season poll. The Cardinals have outscored their opponents 543 to 156 on the season.

Franklin will enter the game averaging 47.15 points per game while giving up 20 points per a game.

Jackson leads the rushing attack with 1,761 yards while Washington has 1,744 yards. Collin Smitherman has carried for 637 yards while Ike Eaton has rushed for 496 yards and Hidrogo and Fragiel Owens have combined for 597 yards.

The Lion defense is led by the middle linebacker duo of Smith has and Youree. Smith enters the game with a team-high 148 tackles and Youree comes in with 137. Kimbrough has 87 tackles while The Lions will now face a Co- Lorenz and Noah Tart have 79 and

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2022 Franklin Lions State Championship デジ

Columbus Franklin

| | | · · · · |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| First Downs | 10 | 20 |
| Rushing Yards | 52 | 329 |
| Passing Yards | 172 | 15 |
| Total Yards | 224 | 344 |
| Total Rushes | 19 | 66 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 11-22-1 | 2-3-0 |
| Fumbles Lost | 0 | 0 |
| Punts / Avg | | 2/31.0 |
| Pen / Yards | 3-20 | 8-70 |
| | | |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Staff Writer FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

Trailing 21-17 with only 4:56 remaining in the game, the Franklin offense put together the drive of the season, moving 78 yards in an incredible 16-play drive to defeat the Columbus Cardinals 24-21 in the 3A-Division I Region III Finals.

Senior Bryson Washington scored on a 7-yard reverse with 27 seconds left on the clock to advance the Lions to the UIL State Semi-Finals to face the Edna Cowboys.

"I couldn't be more proud of this group of kids and this coaching staff," said an elated Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin following the win. "These kids have played a lot of big football games over the last two years, and they seem to figure out a way to win every time they step on the field."

During the game-winning drive, the Lions had to convert on two big third downs and had a firstand-10 from the Columbus 12-yard line with under a minute to play.

From there, Jayden Jackson had a pair of carries to the Columbus 7-yard line and Washington was stopped for no gain to set up a heart-stopping fourth-and-4.

Following a timeout, Devyn Hidrogo took a pitch toward the right end and handed the ball to Washington on a reverse. Washington sprinted untouched to the endzone to cap the astonishing drive and send the Lions to the next round.

"What can you say about that drive," Fannin said. "We had our backs against the wall, and the kids just refused to quit. There was so much at stake, because we knew we probably wouldn't get the ball back if we didn't score on that drive."

Franklin improved to 14-0 on the season and extended its winning streak to 30 games in a row with the dramatic victory. The Lions have now won 42 out of their last 43 games.

Columbus opened the scoring on the game's first possession with a 35-yard touchdown pass to

WEEK 14 Lions win 24-21 thriller over **Columbus in Regional 3 final**

take a 7-0 lead.

The Lions answered early in the second quarter when they drove 63 yards in 9 plays. Jackson to capped the drive with a 1-yard touchdown and Cort Lowry added the PAT to tie the game 7-7.

Late in the second quarter, Hidrogo intercepted a Columbus pass to give Franklin the ball at the Cardinal 40-yard line.

The Lions moved the ball to the Columbus 15yard line where Lowry kicked a 32-yard field goal as time expired to give take a 10-7 lead into the locker room.

Franklin extended the lead to 17-7 to open the second half with a clock-eating 14-play touchdown drive that took over seven and a half minutes. During the drive, Jackson converted three key third downs before Washington carried the final 21 yards for the score.

Columbus responded with a quick six-play scoring drive to cut the Lion lead to 17-14 with 1:54 left in the third quarter.

The Cardinals took the lead when they connected on a touchdown pass with 5:03 remaining in the game, setting up Franklin's game-winning drive.

and that it would be a battle," said Fannin. "Our guys just found a way to make one more play to get the win."

The Lions will square off against Edna Thursday night at Legacy Stadium in Katy. Thursday will be the Lions third straight trip to the state semi-finals and their fourth appearance since 2015. Kickoff is set for 7:00.

The Franklin offense was once again led by the one-two punch of Washington and Jackson who combined for 53 carries and three touchdowns.

Jackson rushed for 174 yards on 27 carries while Washington finished with 116 yards on 26 tries. The Lion offense rushed for a 329 yards and controlled the time of possession, limiting Columbus to 41 total offensive plays.

Brayden Youree led the Franklin defense with a team-high 9 tackles while Colby Smith added 8 stops. Washington finished with 5 tackles from his safety position while Major Kimbrough and Fragiel Owens added 4 stops each.

Hidrogo had two pass breakups to go along



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE "We knew Columbus was a great football team Sr. Bryson Washington (15) checks the pylon as he crosses the goal line to put Franklin ahead with 27 seconds remaining in the qame.

> with his interception while Owens also broke up a pair of Cardinal passes.

> The Franklin defense has now held 5 of its last 6 opponents to their lowest scoring total of the season.

> The Lions will now face an Edna team that is 13-1 on the season and winners of their last eleven games. The Cowboys have outscored their opponents 555 to 157 on the season.

> Franklin will enter the game averaging 45.50 points per game while giving up 20 points per a game.

> "I'm really pleased with the kids come out ready to battle every week," Fannin said. "There are only four teams left in our division and every one of them is still playing for a reason. These kids and coaches come out in August and work hard all season to have the opportunity to play in this kind of game.

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(茶 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship 🔅

Edna Franklin

| | Eana | Franklin |
|---------------|---------|----------|
| First Downs | 17 | 25 |
| Rushing Yards | 213 | 388 |
| Passing Yards | 165 | 122 |
| Total Yards | 378 | 510 |
| Total Rushes | 28 | 50 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 13-21-2 | 4-9-0 |
| Fumbles Lost | 1 | 0 |
| Punts / Avg | | 4/44.0 |
| Pen / Yards | 7-45 | 3-25 |
| | | |

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer

Franklin Advocate

The Franklin Lion football team continued its remarkable three-year run last Thursday night when they downed the Edna Cowboy's 41-13 at Legacy Stadium in Katy.

With the win, the Lions will make their third straight appearance in the UIL state championship game Thursday night at 7:00 where they will face the Brock Eagles. It will also mark Franklin's fourth appearance in the title game in the last eight years.

The Lions have now won 31 in a row and have now won 42 out of their last 43 games.

"The last three years have been so much fun to be a part of," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "This group of kids is special. They never back down from a challenge and they expect to win every time they step on the field. They have won a lot of football games."

Last season the Lions rallied around the phase "Finish" on their way to the first state championship in school history. This season the team's rally cry is "Defend."

Last Thursday night, the Lions (15-0) moved one step closer to defending their title when they outscored the Cowboys 41-7 after the first quarter.

Trailing 7-0, quarterback Cort Lowry rolled to his right and connected with Devyn Hidrogo who outraced the Cowboy defense down the sideline for a 45-yard touchdown to tie the game. The Lions took a 14-7 lead on their next possession when Jayden Jackson rumbled in for a 44-yard score right through the heart of the Edna defense.

Franklin stretched the lead to 21-7 just before the half with a little trickery when Jackson took a pitch from Lowry, looked downfield and found Dean Rampy for a 21-yard touchdown pass.

The Lions continued their success through the air to open the second half when Lowry found Bo Jimenez behind the Cowboy defense. Jimenez made a circus catch for a 29-yard touchdown to give Franklin a 28-7 advantage. Jimenez' catch was voted No. 3 on the ESPN Top 10 plays of the day.

"Their (Edna) defense was really stacking the box and we felt like we needed to do some things to loosen them up a little," Fannin said. "Cort did a good job of finding the open receiver and we have guys who can catch the ball. Jayden made an incredible play on his pass to give us some breathing room going into halftime."

Franklin got touchdown runs from Jackson and Bryson Washington to round out the scoring and send the Lions back to AT&T Stadium where they will face No. 2 ranked Brock.

Franklin will enter the game with one of the top scoring offenses in Class 3A Division I, averaging 45.2 points per game while the Eagles are averaging 37.74 points per game.

The Lion defense is allowing only 19.6 points per a game, while Brock is giving up 19.2 points per game.

The Franklin offense will enter the match-up averaging 419 yards per game rushing and 44 yards passing.

Jackson leads the rushing attack with 2,064 yards while Washington has 2,044 yards. Both backs have scored over 30 touchdowns on the



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

(THE THROW) (SR) QB Cort Lowry, under pressure, lofts one to Bo Jiminez for a spectacular 1 hand 29-yard TD catch against the Cowboys.

season.

Collin Smitherman has carried for 645 yards while Ike Eaton has rushed for 517 yards and Hidrogo and Fragiel Owens have combined for 636 yards.

Lowry thrown for 616 yards and 11 touchdowns, and has thrown only four interceptions on the season. Hidrogo comes into the title game as Lowry's favorite target. The junior has 11 catches for 282 yards.

The Lion defense is anchored by linebackers Colby Smith and Brayden Youree. Smith enters the game with a team-high 158 tackles and Youree comes in with 147. Kimbrough has 94 tackles while Lorenz and Noah Tart have 84 and 75 respectively.

The Eagles will counter with a running game led by Brett Tutter who has rushed for 1,456 on the season

while Reid Watkins has carried for 988.

Brock quarterback Tyler Moody will enter the game with 2,400 yards passing and 468 yards rushing. He has accounted for 34 touchdowns.

Moody's favorite target is Carson Finney who has hauled in 50 catches for 709 yards and nine touchdowns.

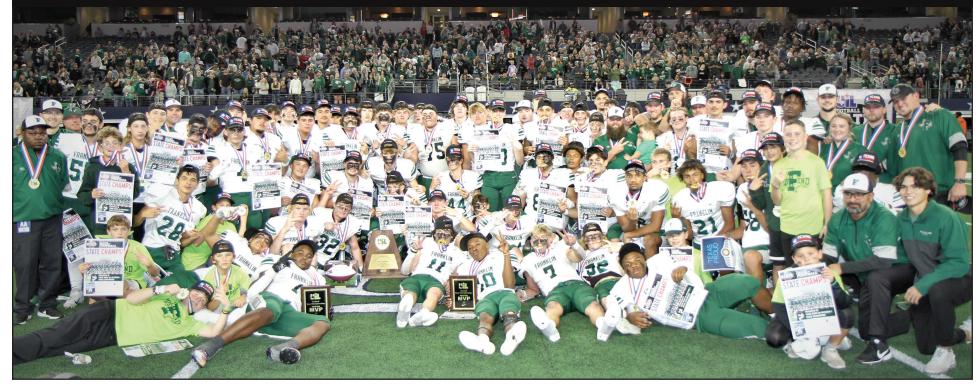
"Brock has an incredible football program and we know they will come out Thursday ready to battle," Fannin said. "We are going to have to continue to do what we have done all year. Be the most physical team, protect the football and stay ahead of the chains. If we can do those things, I think we will put ourselves in a good position to win."

He added, "It's time for us to go 'defend'."

 $\sqrt{2}$ 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship \approx



LIONS 17 - BROCK - 14 • 3A-1 REGION III • THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15. 2022 • AT&T STADIUM, DALLAS, TEXAS



Lions earn second state title in-a-row with thrilling 17-14 win over the Brock Eagles

MIKE "DUBA" BREWER Sports Writer FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The Franklin Lion football team defeated the Brock Eagles in a thriller last Thursday night inside AT&T Stadium to claim their second straight state championship.

Cort Lowry kicked a 30vard field goal on the game's last play to give the Lions a

heart-stopping 17-14 win and the UIL state championship in Class 3A Division I.

winning After the school's first state title last year, many believed that Franklin would have a difficult time repeating when the UIL bi-annual realignment moved the Lions up a division to Class 3A Division I.

"I've been talking to these kids all year long about we can compete at this level, tle game completed a per-

and we need to show people what we're about." Fannin said. "It's definitely different from Division II to Division I, but these players and this coaching staff worked hard all year to prove we can win at this level. To go out there and win a state championship in Division I, it means a lot to everybody in our program."

The win in the state ti-

fect 16-0 season for Franklin and gives the Lions longest winning streak in the state, in any division, with 32 consecutive wins.

Franklin has now won 44 out of their last 45 games, with the only loss coming in the state championship game against Canadian two vears ago.

For the second time in three weeks, the Lions used a dramatic late fourth-quarter drive to earn the win.

Following a Brock touchdown that tied the game at 14-14, the Franklin offense took over at its own 32-yard line with 5:54 left on the clock.

Senior running back Bryson Washington got the drive started with a 12-yard run. Javden Jackson followed with runs of 7 and 6 yards to give the Lions a first down at the Brock 43-

| | Brock | Franklin |
|---------------|--------|----------|
| First Downs | 15 | 13 |
| Rushing Yards | 165 | 235 |
| Passing Yards | 133 | 14 |
| Total Yards | 298 | 249 |
| Total Rushes | 31 | 53 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 9-17-2 | 1-1-0 |
| Fumbles Lost | 2 | 1 |
| Punts / Avg | | 4/34.0 |
| Pen / Yards | 4-20 | 1-5 |

vard line.

Franklin faced a fourth-and-2 with 3:14 left when Jackson powered his way for 3 yards to pick up a first down.

The Lions then converted a third-and-8 when Lowry connected with Devyn Hidrogo out of the backfield for 14 yards and a first down at the Brock 16.

Jackson carried for 3 yards followed by a pair of 6-yard runs from Washington to move the ball inside the Eagle 1-yard line.

After two more runs from Washington, the Lions had the ball at 3-yard line with three seconds left in the game.

Following a Franklin timeout, Josh Bush snapped the ball to Blake



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

Defensive standout Junior Major Kimbrough (7) takes aim on the Brock QB and makes a huge tackle for loss on 3rd and 8 in the first quarter.



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

Sr. Fragiel Owens (10) Defensive Player of the Game, and So. Jayden Jackson (1) Offensive Player of the Game.

Autrey who held for the Lowry 30yard field goal and another Lions next possession to tie the game, and state title.

"These kids don't have any quit in them," Fannin said. "When we got the ball after the Brock touchdown, the kids just refused to lose. That was an incredible drive, and everybody did their job on the field goal. It really is incredible."

Franklin got on the scoreboard first when Jackson scored on a 4-yard sweep with :17 left in the first half. The touchdown was set up by a long run by Jackson when the sophomore fullback delivered a devastating stiff-arm and raced down the sideline for 45 yards.

Brock tied the game late in the third quarter after recovering a Lion fumble at the Franklin 22.

The Eagles were driving again early in the fourth period when senior defensive back Fragiel Owens came up with the defensive play of the game.

After a Brock pass completion to the Lion 36-yard line, Owens and Hidrogo stripped the ball from the Eagle receiver, and Owens returned the fumble 64-yards to give Franklin a 14-7 lead.

Brock came right back on their set up the dramatic finish.

"I am so proud of these kids and this coaching staff," Fannin said. "It takes everybody. It takes the kids, the coaches, the administration and the entire community. Everyone has supported us and had our backs all season long."

Jackson paced the Franklin rushing attack with 148 yards and was named the offensive MVP. Washington finished with 89 yards on 26 tough carries as the Lions led in time of possession 26:23 to 21:37.

Colby Smith led the Franklin defense with 14 tackles while Brayden Youree, Washington a Jackson all finished with 5 stops. Youree had an interception and fumble recovery while Owens forced a fumble and had the big fumble return for a touchdown. Owens was named the game's defensive MVP.

"This feeling never gets old," said Fannin. "This is why the kids and coaches come in every day and put in the work. Only one team gets to hoist the trophy, and I am really happy that team was the Franklin Lions."



Clinic

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2021 State Title in Review Special Addition Reprinted from December 2021 by reader request



FRANKLIN LIONS 164 MILE RUN TO THE STATE TITLE GAME

Photos by Jan Roe & Hannah White • Written by Michael "Duba" Brewer







| | Franklin | Lorena |
|--------------|----------|---------|
| First Downs | 22 | 18 |
| Rushing Yds | 383 | 181 |
| Passing | 66 | 213 |
| Total Yards | 449 | 394 |
| Total Rushes | 44 | 35 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 4-11-1 | 16-27-1 |
| Fum Lost | 1 | 1 |
| Punts/Avg | 2/41.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 11-75 | 10-85 |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER Sports FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The top ranked Franklin Lions traveled to Lorena Friday night and opened the 2021 season with a thriller, defeating the Leopards 27-20.

Franklin entered the game as the No. 1 ranked team in Class 3A - Division 2 while the Leopards came in ranked No. 8 in Division 1, and as the defending District 11-3A champions.

"We knew going into the game how tough a match-up Lorena would be," Franklin head coach Mark Fannin said. "Coach (Ray) Biles has been over there for 30 years and they are always fundamentally solid on both sides of the ball."

He added, "We made a some mistakes and turned the ball over a couple of times, but it was good to see our kids battle and find a way to get out of there with a win."

Franklin opened the scoring on its second possession with a time consuming 13-play, 88-yard drive. Senior quarterback Marcus Wade capped the drive with an 11-yard touchdown pass to Bryson Washington with :16 left in the first quarter. Seth Shamblin added the PAT for a 7-0 Lion lead.

The Leopards responded late in the second quarter with a short touchdown run, cutting the score to 7-6 after a missed extra point kick.

The Lions quickly regained a

WEEK 1 **Franklin Lions beat** Lorena Leopards 27-20

14-6 lead heading into halftime when Wade connected with Malcom Murphy for a 26-yard scoring pass.

Franklin appeared to add to its lead when freshman fullback Jayden Jackson's long touchdown run was called back for a holding call. Three plays later, the Leopards intercepted a tipped Wade pass and returned it for a 56-yard touchdown.

Lorena then scored on its next possession when quarterback Ryan Abel found Khi Ritchie for a 15yard touchdown to take a 20-14 with 8:54 left in the game.

The Leopards first lead of the game didn't last long.

After a nice kickoff return, Franklin responded with a Bryson Washington 10-yard scoring run to retake the lead 21-20 with 6:50 left.

"It was really good to see how the kids battled back after Lorena grabbed the momentum," said Fannin. "They never backed down, regained the lead and put us in a position to win the game."

After a Shamblin interception stopped the Leopards' next possession, Bryson Washington broke loose for a 49-yard scoring romp to give the Lions a 27-20 advantage at the 4:54 mark.

Lorena had one last chance, driving inside the Lion 30-yard line, but Haze Tomascik and Parker Boyett combined to sack Abel and force a fumble that Bravden Youree recovered with only :15 left on the clock.

"That was a crazy finish," Fannin said. "The defense stepped up and forced a big turnover to put the game away. That was a really good way to get the season started."

down runs of 10 and 49 yards helped the juhalfback nior lead the Lions rushing attack with 200 yards on 14 carries.

Bobby Washington added 88 yards rushing on 14 carries while Jackson finished with 54 yards on six tries. The Frank-

lin offense outgained the Leopards 449 to 394 in total yardage for the game.

Colby Smith anchored the Lion defense with 14 tackles while Youree and Bryson Washington added 11 stops each. Shamblin and Murphy each had an interception to go along with Youree's fumble re-

covery. Next up for the Lions is the annual Highway 79 Show-

down with the Hearne Eagles.

The Eagles will enter the game with a 1-0 record after defeating the Trinity Tigers 36-6 in their season opener.

"We always look forward to our game with Hearne," Fannin Bryson Washington's touch- said. "The kids know each other



HANNAH WHITE | ROBERTSON COUNTY NEWS With Lorena driving and 35 seconds on the clock, Sr. Parker Boyett stripped the ball and Soph Brayden Youree (2) turned out the lights on the Leopards with this fumble recovery and celebration.

and it is a lot of fun for the fans."

He added, "Coach (Ricky) Sargent has done a great job with that program and they have improved every year since he's been there. Their defense is quick and physical and the offense is really explosive. It will be a good test for us and we know we will have our hands full."

(茶 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship 🔅

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| | Hearne | Lions |
|--------------|--------|---------|
| First Downs | 19 | 5 |
| Rushing Yds | 270 | 6 |
| Passing | 9 | 111 |
| Total Yards | 279 | 117 |
| Total Rushes | 43 | 28 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 1-5-0 | 16-27-3 |
| Fum Lost | 0 | 0 |
| Punts/Avg | 3/40.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 9-75 | 3-15 |
| | | |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER Sports FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The Franklin Lions squared off with the Hearne Eagles Friday night for the 69th edition of the Highway 79 Showdown.

Before the game, the Lions honored the 13 fallen service members who died during the evacuation of Afghanistan with flags on 13 chairs below the scoreboard.

"That was an idea that one of our seniors, Hayden Helton, and the student council asked me about leading up to the game," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "I thought it was a great idea, and I was proud of our students for wanting to honor those service members and their families."

He added, "I think it is important that we all recognize the sacrifices that are made for us and our country every day."

When the game started, the Lions forced three turnovers and returned a kickoff for a touchdown to cruise to a convincing 55-15 victory, their 12th consecutive win in the storied rivalry.

The Franklin defense set the tone for the game early when Luis Munoz forced a fumble, and linebacker Brayden Youree recovered at the Eagle 27-yard line on the opening possession of the game.

The Lions took just five plays to capitalize for a 7-0 lead when Bryson Washington plowed in for a

WEEK 2 Franklin football team honors fallen heroes during Highway 79 **Showdown win over Eagles**

4-yard touchdown.

Hearne evened the score on their next possession when Jecory McGrew hauled in a 31-yard tipped pass from quarterback Keyshawn Langham.

It didn't take long for the Lions to regain the lead when sophomore Devyn Hidrogo returned the ensuing kickoff down the sideline for 81 yards and a 14-7 advantage just 13 seconds later.

"That was a big kick return for us," said Fannin. "It was good to respond after they got the touchdown, and I thought it set the tone for the rest of the half. The return team did a good job of giving Devyn a crease to take it all the way back."

The kick return was just the beginning as Franklin exploded for 45 straight points to take complete control of the game.

On the Lions next possession, senior Malcom Murphy took a pitch from quarterback Marcus Wade and raced 22 yards to the endzone.

The Franklin defense set up the next touchdown when Major Kimbrough intercepted a pass and returned it to the Eagle 19-yard line.

Bobby Washington scored on the next play when he slipped through the line and outraced the Hearne defense to paydirt. Freshman Jayden Jackson added the 2-point run for a 28-7 advantage.

Less than two minutes later, safety Bryson Washington picked off an Eagle pass and returned it 61 yards for another score.

Wade then connected with Helton for a 9-yard touchdown on the Lions next possession to round out



HANNAH WHITE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The Franklin Lion's charge out of the gates, holding 13 flags for the 13 recent fallen soldiers in Afghanistan.

on top 42-7.

in all three phases of the game in the first half," said Fannin. "The offense did a good job when they had the ball, and the defense and special teams each put points on the board."

He added, "The defense played solid football and shut them out other than the tipped pass. The kids swarmed all over the field and forced some turnovers and really frustrated their (Hearne) offense."

Franklin sandwiched a third quarter touchdown run from Bryson Washington and a pair of 25-yard field goals from Seth Shamblin and Cort Lowry around a McGrew touchdown run for the Eagles to round out the scoring.

Youree led the way defensively the first half scoring with Franklin for the Lions with 7 tackles, a fum-

ble recovery and two tackles be-"The kids really played well hind the line of scrimmage, as the Franklin defense limited the Eagles to only 117 total yards and five first downs on the night.

Kimbrough added 6 tackles, an interception, a sack and a pass break-up while Haze Tomascik finished with 5 tackles, a sack and tackle for loss. Seth Shamblin had 5 tackles while Murphy added three tackles in the Eagle backfield.

Bobby Washington paced the Lion offense with 72 yards on seven carries.

Murphy had 56 yards on just four tries while Jackson added 40 yard and Fragiel Owens ran for 28 vards.

Franklin will take its No. 1 state ranking on the road to Cameron this week to face the Yoemen at 7:30 at Yoe Field.

ダネ 2022 FRANKLIN LIONS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP 学

| | Lions | Cameron |
|--------------|--------|---------|
| First Downs | 20 | 14 |
| Rushing Yds | 330 | 108 |
| Passing | 97 | 140 |
| Total Yards | 427 | 248 |
| Total Rushes | 42 | 32 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 4-6-0 | 11-23-1 |
| Fum Lost | 1 | 1 |
| Punts/Avg | 4/31.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 14-113 | 2-10 |
| | | |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER Sports

FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The top-ranked Franklin Lions continued their run through the non-district portion of the 2021 schedule Friday night with a convincing 41-21 win over Cameron in front of a packed house at Yoe Field.

The Lions were forced to overcome several self-inflicted miscues, including 14 penalties for 113 yards and a lost fumble, to come away with the victory.

"We made a lot of mistakes tonight, and we will have to clean up some things before we get into district play," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "But, I am really proud of the way the kids kept battling. At the end of the day, we are happy to get out of that game with a win,"

Franklin got on the scoreboard first when Bryson Washington bulled his way into the endzone for a 1-yard touchdown. The run capped an 8-play, 60 yard drive.

Washington opened the drive with a 36-yard run and quarterback Marcus Wade connected with Braden Smith to convert a 4-and-16 to keep the drive alive. Seth Shamblin kicked the extra point for a 7-0 Franklin advantage.

Cameron quickly tied the game with a 60-yard touchdown pass less than a minute later.

Franklin regained the lead early in the second quarter when Wade found Hayden Helton be-

WEEK 3 Lions run through Cameron in 41-21 non-district win

hind the Cameron defense for a 49-yard touchdown.

Then following a Brayden Youree interception, the Lions took a 21-7 lead when Bobby Washington broke loose for a 76-yard scoring run and Jayden Jackson added the 2-point conversion.

The Yoemen threatened late in the first half following a Franklin fumble. Senior center Charlie Scarpinato prevented a touchdown on the play when he made a saving tackle at the Lion 5-yard line

The Lion defense then came up with a huge goal line stand to keep Cameron out of the endzone. On fourth down at the 1-yard line, Haze Tomascik darted into the Yoemen backfield along with Major Kimbrough to kill the threat.

"That was a great hustle play by Charlie to chase the Cameron kid down and keep him out of the endzone," said Fannin. "And the defense stepped up big to keep them from scoring. That was big for us because Cameron got the ball to start the second half."

The defense made another big play on Cameron's first possession of the third quarter when Helton made an interception inside the Franklin 30-yard line.

Senior tailback Malcolm Murphy quickly took advantage when he took a pitch and cut back against the defense, then sprinted 62 yards for the touchdown and a 28-7 Franklin lead.

Cameron scored twice in the quarter to cut the Lion advantage to 28-21, but that was as close as they would get.

The Washington brothers, Bryson and Bobby, each ran for a touchdown in the fourth quarter



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Sr. Bobby Washington (12) pounded out 135 yards rushing on 18 carries against Cameron including this 17 yd touchdown run in the 4th quarter.

to put the game away for the Lions.

The Lions ran for 330 yards on the night and averaged almost 8 yards per carry.

Bobby Washington lead the rushing attack with 135 yards on 18 carries and two scores. Murphy added 106 yards on just five tries while Bryson Washington finished with 81yards and a pair of touchdowns on 10 carries.

Wade had an efficient game throwing the ball as he completed 4-of-6 passes for 97 yards and a touchdown. Helton was the lead-

ing receiver with 2 catches for 63 yards and a score.

"We wanted to establish our running game and control the line of scrimmage," Fannin said. "I thought the guys did a good job of that and I was happy with the way we threw the ball."

Sophomore Colby Smith anchored the swarming Lion defense with 10 tackles while Youree added 9 stops and an interception. Seth Shamblin made 8 tackles while Kimbrough added 8 tackles, including a sack and four tackles in the Yoemen backfield.

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 $\sqrt{2}$ 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship \approx

| | Troy | Franklin |
|--------------|--------|----------|
| First Downs | 25 | 12 |
| Rushing Yds | 408 | 104 |
| Passing | 73 | 56 |
| Total Yards | 481 | 160 |
| Total Rushes | 32 | 41 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 5-8-0 | 2-4-0 |
| Fum Lost | 0 | 1 |
| Punts/Avg | 0/0.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 11-100 | 4-20 |

WEEK 4 Lions beat out Troy, going into District Undefeated

non-district tune up of the season. Franklin scored 19 points in the first three and a half minutes to take



HANNAH WHITE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Ethan Saxon rushes down the field, scoring the Franklin Lions another touchdown.

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER Sports FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The No. 1 ranked Lion football team scored early and often last Friday night when they dominated the Troy Trojans 65-10 in their final control of the game early.

"That was a really crazy start for us," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "It gave us a chance to work on some things and to play a lot of different kids."

He added, "We talk to the kids about how important it is to stay fo-

cused and play one snap at a time. I thought we did a good job of that tonight."

After forcing a three-and-out on the Trojans first possession, Major Kimbrough blocked the ensuing punt and Haze Tomascik returned it to the 2-yard line.

Bobby Washington scored on the next play and Seth Shamblin added the PAT for a quick 7-0 Franklin lead.

The Lions scored again less than a minute later. After recovering a fumble on the kickoff, Javden Jackson capped off a quick 23-yard drive with a short touchdown run.

Then after another misplayed kickoff, Malcolm Murphy sprinted around the left end for a beautiful 44-yard scoring run and a 19-0 Lion advantage.

The Lions dominated Troy on both sides of the ball, out gaining the Trojans 481-160 in total offense.

Franklin used fourteen different rushers on the night with nine of them running for at least 25 yards. The Lions also had an efficient game throwing the ball as quarterback Marcus Wade completed 5 of 7 his passes for 73 yards and a touchdown.

Linebacker Brayden Youree led a swarming Franklin defense with 9 tackles, six of them unassisted. Shamblin and Tomascik added 8 stops each including four in the Troian backfield.

Bryson Washington finished with 7 tackles and a fumble recovery while Parker Boyett had two tackles for loss and a quarterback sack.

Murphy paced the Lion rushing attack with 70 yards on just two carries. The senior playmaker also returned a kickoff 90 yards for a



HANNAH WHITE **F**RANKLIN **A**DVOCATE Fragiel Owens and Bobby Washington celebrate after the game, coming out against the Trojans 65-10.

touchdown.

Bobby Washington and Fragiel Owens each rushed for 50 yards on just three carries each.

Darren Daughtery, Kyle Medders and Ethan Saxon also got into the scoring act with touchdown runs as the Lions rushed for eight touchdowns on the night.

The Lions will travel to Lexington Friday night to open District 13-3A play at 7:30 at Eagle Stadium.

"Lexington has a really good football program," said Fannin. "They have had to work through some injuries early in the season, but we have a lot of respect for them and we know coach (Kirk) Muhl will have them ready to play."

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| | Lions | Lexington |
|--------------|-------|-----------|
| First Downs | 26 | 18 |
| Rushing Yds | 438 | 85 |
| Passing | 100 | 161 |
| Total Yards | 538 | 246 |
| Total Rushes | 38 | 33 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 4-5-0 | 14-27-1 |
| Fum Lost | 2 | 1 |
| Punts/Avg | 0/0.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 5-60 | 4-20 |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER Sports FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The Franklin Lions continued to run through the competition last Friday night when they opened District 13-3A play with a convincing 49-12 win over the Lexington Eagles.

The Lion offense had three different backs run for over 100 yards as they racked up 438 yards rushing on the Lexington defense.

"When we go into a game, we want to establish our running game and control the line of scrimmage," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "Any time you can have three different guys run for over 100 yards, you have to feel good about your chances."

He added, "One of our goals every season is to win a district championship. Lexington is always tough challenge, so it was big for us to go over there and open up district play with a win."

Franklin scored on its first five possessions of the game to take a 35-12 lead into halftime.

Quarterback Marcus Wade got the Lions on the scoreboard when he completed a pass out of the backfield to Bryson Washington who raced 59 yards for a touchdown.

Leading 7-6, the Lions scored on a 33-yard touchdown run by Bobby Washington to grab an eight point cushion.

Senior cornerback Darren Daugherty then stopped the ensu-

WEEK 5 **Lions defeat Lexington 49-12** to open district play



HANNAH WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Parker Boyett goes in for a tackle, keeping Lexington at bay during the football game.

ing Lexington drive with a diving interception at the Lions 3-yard line.

From there, the Franklin offense went work with an 11-play, 97-yard drive. Bryson Washington capped the drive with a 26-yard touchdown run through the middle of the Eagle defense.

Senior wingback Parker Boyett, who led the Lions with 108 yards on just four carries, scored on a nice 36-yard run on Franklin's next possession.

Then, after Lexington scored to cut the lead to 28-12, Wade passed to Malcolm Murphy who came down with a contested 25-yard touchdown catch.

good job on both sides of the ball," Fannin said. "The interception, and then to answer their (Lexington) touchdown was big heading into the half. The kids came out ready to play and I felt like we did a good job of controlling the game."

Freshman Jayden Jackson scored on a 16-yard run in the third quarter and Boyett broke loose on a 56-yard touchdown sprint to close out the scoring early in the fourth period. Senior Seth Shamblin added the PAT kicks to finish 7-for-7 on the night.

Shamblin, Brayden Youree, Bryson Washington and Colby Smith each had 10 tackles as the Lion defense limited Lexington to "The kids came out and did a 246 total yards. The Eagles only

managed 85 rushing yards on 33 carries.

Haze Tomascik had a forced fumble to go along with his six tackles while Daugherty had 3 pass break ups and a fumble recovery in addition to his interception.

On offense, Bobby and Bryson Washington joined Boyett with over 100 yards rushing. Jackson added 61 yards rushing and a touchdown.

Wade finished the night with 100 yards passing with Murphy and Bryson Washington combining for each of his 4 completions.

The Lions will return home to Hedrick Field Friday night to face the Riesel Indians (3-1, 1-0) in a District 13-3A contest.

| | Riesel | Franklin |
|--------------|--------|----------|
| First Downs | 32 | 8 |
| Rushing Yds | 536 | 150 |
| Passing | 167 | 88 |
| Total Yards | 703 | 238 |
| Total Rushes | 36 | 41 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 3-4-0 | 4-10-0 |
| Fum Lost | 3 | 0 |
| Punts/Avg | 0/0.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 8-70 | 6-35 |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER Sports Franklin Advocate

Top ranked Franklin continued its perfect football season last Friday night when they shredded the Riesel Indians 75-13 at Hedrick Field.

After forcing a three-and-out on Riesel's first possession, the Lion offense took over at the 10-yard line following a nice punt return by Malcolm Murphy.

However, Franklin lost a fumble on their first offensive play of the game to miss out on the scoring chance.

That would prove to be one of the few missed opportunities for the Lions as the offense racked up a gaudy 703 total yards on the way to the 75-point outburst.

"The offense came out and really played well tonight after the early fumble," said Franklin head coach Mark Fannin. "We have a bunch of kids who do their job and make the offense click."

He added, "We are very fortunate to have several different guys who can make plays for us. And they are a bunch of good kids who are just focused on the team winning."

Franklin used twelve different rushers on the night with five of them running for at least 50 yards. The Lions also had an impressive game throwing the ball as quarterback Marcus Wade completed 3 of 4 his passes for 167 yards and 3 touchdowns.

Bryson Washington paced the offense with 130 yards rushing on 6 carries. Bobby Washington added 118 yards on eight carries and a pair of

WEEK 6

Franklin football team stays perfect with 75-13 win over Riesel



#70 Russell Stegall going for a field goal kick during the Franklin vs. Riesel game.

touchdowns.

Senior Malcolm Murphy had a 61-yard touchdown catch while Hayden Helton and Braden Smith added touchdown grabs of 60 and 49 respectively.

Leading 21-13, Franklin scored 28 unanswered points in the second quarter to take complete control of the game. Defensively, the Lions were anchored by linebacker Bryden Youree and safety Bryson Washington with 10 tackles each. Seth Shamblin and Colby Smith added 6 stops apiece.

The Lions will meet the only other undefeated team in District 13-3A Friday night when they travel to Rogers to face the Eagles.

Rogers enters the game with a 4-2

overall record and are 2-0 in league play after defeating the Clifton Cubs 41-28 last week.

HANNAH WHITE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

"Rogers and Franklin have been rivals for a long time," Fannin said. "Their only two losses were close games against really good football teams. We know coach (Charlie) Roten will have his team prepared and ready to play."

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| | Franklin | Rogers |
|--------------|----------|--------|
| First Downs | 29 | 9 |
| Rushing Yds | 569 | 113 |
| Passing | 74 | 14 |
| Total Yards | 643 | 127 |
| Total Rushes | 42 | 46 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 1-5-0 | 2-8-1 |
| Fum Lost | 0 | 0 |
| Punts/Avg | 0/0.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 13-105 | 5-65 |

Lions down Rogers 56-7 in District 13-3A action

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER Sports

Franklin Advocate

The Franklin Lions carried their No. 1 ranking on the road last Friday to face District 13-3A co-leader Rogers in a first place showdown.

Franklin left no doubt who the league favorite is moving forward as they dominated the Eagles 56-7 in front of a packed Merk Field.

"This is the kind of game you look forward to when you a going through practices in August," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "One of our goals going into the season is to win a district championship. The kids and the coaching staff have done a great job to get into a position to win it if we can take care of business down the stretch."

Franklin actually trailed 7-0 after the first quarter after Rogers took the opening kickoff and used over nine minutes to drive 75 yards in nineteen plays for the their only touchdown of the night.

The Lions responded quickly when Bobby Washington capped a 13-play, 74-yard drive with a short touchdown plunge.

Then, following a failed fake punt by the Eagles on their next possession, Washington went back to work with a 51-yard touchdown and a 13-7 Lion advantage.

The Franklin defense completely shut down the Eagle offense the rest of the way, limiting Rogers to less than 60 yards over the final

two and a half quarters.

"The defense was flying all over the field tonight," said Fannin. "After their (Rogers) first drive, the kids really did a nice job of shutting them down and getting the ball back for the offense."

Sophomore linebackers Colby Smith and Brayden Youree anchored the stingy Lion defense with 18 and 15 tackles respectively as Franklin outgained the Eagles 643-127 in total yards on the night.

Haze Tomascik finished the game with 11 tackles and Bryson Washington added 10 stops while Devyn Hidrogo and Luis Munoz made 9 tackles each.

Bobby Washington paced the Franklin offense with 177 yards on 12 carries and three touchdowns as six different players found the endzone for the Lions.

Freshman Jayden Jackson and senior Malcolm Murphy both rushed for over 100 yards finishing with 115 and 113 yards respectively.

Quarterback Marcus Wade and quick end Hayden Helton also got into the scoring act when they connected for a 74-yard touchdown pass.

"That was our most complete game that we have put together this year," Fannin said. "The kids did a really good job on both sides of the ball against a solid football team. I think Rogers will do well when the playoffs roll around and we could see them again."

The Lions will continue league play Friday night when they host an improved Florence Buffaloes



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

Freshman Jayden Jackson (1) blasted out of the Lions backfield, broke a tackle, lost a shoe and still scored from 84 yards out late in the contest against Rogers.

team for the 2021 Franklin Home-coming.

Florence will enter the game with a 4-2 overall record and a 1-1 district slate. The Buffaloes only blemish in district play was a three point loss at Buffalo two weeks ago.

The Buffaloes are led by senior quarterback Victor Bonilla who has passed for 600 yards and rushed for another 500 yards and has scored 10 touchdowns on the season.

Levi Martin has rushed for 563 yards and 11 touchdowns in the Florence offense. The junior running back is averaging an eye popping 9.4 yards per carry.

The Buffaloes have outscored their opponents by an average of 32-20 on the season.

| Florence | Franklin | |
|----------|--|---|
| 22 | 3 | |
| 325 | 42 | |
| 77 | 6 | |
| 402 | 48 | |
| 28 | 31 | |
| 4-10-1 | 6-9-1 | |
| 1 | 1 | |
| 0/0.0 | | |
| 3-15 | 3-15 | |
| | 22 325 77 402 28 4-10-1 1 0/0.0 | 325 42 77 6 402 48 28 31 4-10-1 6-9-1 1 1 0/0.0 |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER Sports FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The Franklin Lions continued their dominance over District 13-3A last Friday night when they destroyed the Florence Buffaloes 73-6 in front of a packed 2021 homecoming crowd.

The Lions wasted no time getting on the scoreboard when Bobby Washington returned the opening kickoff 81 yards for a 6-0 lead just 16 seconds into the game.

After the Franklin defense forced a three-and-out on the Buffaloes first possession, Malcolm Murphy added to the lead with a 73-yard punt return for a touchdown. Bobby Washington ran in the 2-point conversion for a 14-0 advantage with 9:15 still left in the first quarter.

"It would be hard to have a better start than we had tonight," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "We were up 14-0 without running an offensive play."

He added, "We work hard on our special teams, and the touchdown returns show how important big plays in the kicking game can be. They can change the momentum of a game in a hurry."

Following another defensive stop, the Lions fumbled on their first offensive play of the game and Florence recovered at the Franklin 6-yard line. The Buffaloes scored three plays

later to cut the lead to 14-6.

That was as close as Florence would get as the Lions rattled off the next 59 points to complete the rout.

WEEK 8 **Lions celebrate Homecoming** with a 73-6 win over Florence



HANNAH WHITE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE When the center gets to be a part of the touchdown celebration, IT'S GAME DAY!!

downs from eight different players on the night and 31-yard field goal from Seth Shamblin as the Lion offense averaged a whopping 10.57 yards per

play. The defense was just as dominant, limiting the Buffaloes to just three first downs and only 48 yards of total offense. The defense also got into the scoring act when Fragiel Owens returned a fumble 25 yards for a touchdown.

"I felt like this was our most Franklin got offensive touch- complete game of the season," Fan- fensive attack with 87 yards rush-

nin said. "The offense, defense and special teams all took care of business tonight. We hope to have a lot of football left to play, so it is going to be important to be clicking in all phases of the game if we want to accomplish our goals as we move forward."

Šophomore linebacker Brayden Youree anchored the Franklin defense with 11 tackles while Colby Smith had 9 stops and Haze Tomascik added seven.

ing and another 12 yards receiving while Murphy added 62 yards on the ground and caught a pass for 13 vards.

Jayden Jackson had 81 yards on three carries and Hayden Helton hauled in a pair of catches for 52 vards and a touchdown.

The Lions will head to Buffalo this Friday in a rematch of the Region 4 final from last season.

The Bison will enter this year's Bobby Washington led the of- match-up 2-5 on the season and with a 1-2 district record.

(茶 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship 🌮

| Franklin | Buffalo |
|----------|--|
| 19 | 5 |
| 325 | 39 |
| 139 | 78 |
| 464 | 117 |
| 28 | 30 |
| 2-3-0 | 7-17-2 |
| 3 | 0 |
| 0/0.0 | |
| 3-45 | 2-10 |
| | 19 325 139 464 28 2-3-0 3 0/0.0 |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER Sports Franklin Advocate

The No.1 ranked Lions remained undefeated (9-0, 5-0) Friday night when they manhandled Buffalo 77-3 at Bison Stadium.

The Franklin defense set the tone on the Bison's first possession of the game when it stopped Buffalo on a fourth-and-two at their own 37-yard line.

The Lions quickly took advantage of the short field when senior fullback Bobby Washington scored from 14 yards out. Bryson Washington carried in the 2-point conversion for an early 8-0 lead

Following another quick 3-andout by the Buffalo offense, Bryson Washington returned the ensuing punt 69 yards for a Lion touchdown.

Franklin continued to shut down the Bison offense throughout the first half, not allowing a first down until late in the second quarter.

During that stretch, the Lion offense got touchdown runs for Malcolm Murphy, Bobby and Bryson Washington, and a touchdown pass from Marcus Wade to Hayden Helton.

Wade threw another touchdown pass when he connected with tight end Braden Smith for a short pass into the flat on the Lions next possession. Smith then outraced the Buffalo defense down the sideline for a 75-yard score.

When Seth Shamblin connected 57-0 advantage.

WEEK 9 Lions crush Buffalo 77-3 to remain undefeated



HANNAH WHITE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE The Franklin Defense put up an impressive display against the Buffalo Bison's, keeping their score at a maior low.

on his sixth straight PAT, the Lions led 50-0 heading into the half.

"That was about as dominant of a first half as we could have asked for," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "The defense has continued to get better every week and is flying all over the field to make plays. The offense has continued to control the ball and the special teams are making big plays for us."

The special teams scored another touchdown for the Lions when Murphy returned the opening kickoff of the second half 64 yards for a 57-0 advantage. After Fragiel Owens scored on a 3-yard run late in the third quarter to give the Lions a 64-0 lead, the Bison got their only points of the night on a 23-yard field goal.

Owens scored again in the fourth quarter on a 52-yard run and quarterback Cort Lowry wrapped up the scoring when he kept around the right end from 4 yards out.

The Lion defense only allowed 117 total yards in the game and limited the Bison to a paltry 1.3 yards per carry.

Darren Daugherty and Landen Lorenz each had an interception for the defense while Brayden Youree and Haze Tomascik combined for 13 tackles. Shamblin finished with two quarterback sacks for the Lions.

"Ît would be hard to find something to complain about after this game," Fannin said. "The kids have done a great job of staying focused and being prepared every week. We just have to continue to keep working hard a get ready for one game at a time."

Franklin will finish up the regular season when they host the Clifton Cubs Friday night at 7:30. The Lions will have a bye the following week as they prepare for the playoffs.

| | Clifton | Franklin |
|--------------|---------|----------|
| First Downs | 23 | 5 |
| Rushing Yds | 435 | 94 |
| Passing | 102 | 24 |
| Total Yards | 537 | 118 |
| Total Rushes | 35 | 28 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 2-5-0 | 3-11-0 |
| Fum Lost | 1 | 1 |
| Punts/Avg | 0/0.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 7-56 | 1-5 |

WEEK 10 Lions finish district play undefeated with a 57-0 shutout of the Clifton cubs



MIKE"DUBA" BREWER Sports FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The Franklin Lions wrapped up the District 13-3A portion of their schedule last Friday night when they dominated the Clifton Cubs 57-0 at Hedrick Field.

With the win, the Lions moved to 10-0 on the season. including a perfect 6-0 slate in league play where they outscored their district foes 387-41.

"I know it sounds like coach speak, but our message all season has been to take the schedule one game at a time," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "The kids have done a great job of buying into the message, and the results show that they have come out ready to battle and compete everv week."

He added, "Now the new season begins and we have to focus even more. Now, it becomes a win and advance mentality, and I believe this team is up to the challenge."

Franklin took an early 6-0 lead on its first possession when Malcolm Murphy scored on a 37-yard touchdown run.

Clifton snapped the ball over the punter's head and the ball rolled out of the endzone for a safety.

Murphy continued to dazzle when he sored on touchdown runs of 34 and 53 yards later in Cubs 537 yards to 118 on the

the first quarter to give the Li- night. ons a 22-0 advantage.

The senior tailback finished The Lion made it 8-0 when the game with an unbelievable 140 yards on just four carries, scoring touchdowns on all of them.

> As a team, the Lions rushed for 435 yards and passed for 102 more. Franklin out-gained the

Bobby Washington finished with 96 yards on 9 tries. The senior fullback went over the 1,000-yard mark on the season with just 88 carries, an average of touchdowns. of 11.4 yards per carry.

Malcom Murphy and Hayden Helton celebrate after one of the consecutive touchdowns against Clifton.

passed for 102 yards to give the Russell Stegall added 11 stops. senior signal caller 904 yards for Ike Eaton finished with 7 tackles the year.

Braden Smith caught an 80yard touchdown pass from Wade and freshman fullback Jayden Jackson ran for a 68-yard score, while Washington scored a pair

HANNAH WHITE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

Colby Smith led the Franklin Quarterback Marcus Wade defense with 12 tackles while and Devyn Hidrogo added six.

> BACK 2 BACK, BABY!

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| | Franklin | Danbury |
|--------------|----------|---------|
| First Downs | 29 | 9 |
| Rushing Yds | 492 | 82 |
| Passing | 68 | 86 |
| Total Yards | 560 | 168 |
| Total Rushes | 36 | 36 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 3-3-0 | 7-13-0 |
| Fum Lost | 0 | 1 |
| Punts/Avg | 0/0.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 4-35 | 7-63 |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER

Sports

FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The Franklin Lions opened the 2021 UIL football playoffs Thursday night when they dismantled the Danbury Panthers 63-7 at Waller ISD Stadium.

The top-ranked Lions, coming off a bye week, scored on all nine of their offensive possessions before kneeling on the final three plays of the game.

"Any time you have an open week, you worry about getting out of your normal routine," said Franklin head coach Mark Fannin. "But, this group of kids and coaches did a great job of keeping their focus and came out ready to play from the opening kick."

The Lions opened the scoring in the first quarter when Bryson Washington broke loose on touchdown runs of 64 and 7 yards.

Franklin pushed the lead to 28-0 lead when Bobby Washington and Javden Jackson each scored on touchdown runs in the second quarter.

After the Panthers got on the scoreboard with a 32-yard touchdown pass late in first half, the Lions responded with a 5-play, 64-yard drive in the final minute of the half.

Malcolm Murphy hauled in a beautiful 23-yard strike from Marcus Wade in the corner of the endzone to give Franklin a 35-7 lead heading into the locker room.

"I was really happy with the way the team came out and controlled the game from the start," Fannin said. "I thought we played well up front, and

WEEK 11 Lions open playoffs with 63-7 win over Danbury

did a good job of controlling the line of scrimmage on both sides of the ball."

The Franklin defense shut out the Panthers in the second half while the Lions got touchdown runs from Bryson Washington, Jackson and Landen Lorenz. Wade also connected with Hayden Helton for a 27-yard scoring strike. Seth Shamblin finished the game 9-for-9 on PAT's.

"The defense has continued to get better all season, and did a great job of shutting down their running game tonight," said Fannin. "Danbury was able to complete some passes on us, but the defense did a good job of keeping them out of the endzone."

Inside linebacker Colby Smith led the Lion defense with 10 tackles while Brayden Youree, Bryson Washington and Shamblin finished with 8 tackles each.

Andrew Elmore had 7 tackles on the night while Luis Munoz finished with 6 stops, including 3 tackles for loss.

Bryson Washington had a big night running the ball with 177 yards and three touchdowns on just six carries. Bobby Washington carried for 88 yards while Jackson rushed for 86 yards. Murphy finished with 64 yards on the ground to go with his 23-yards touchdown reception.

Wade completed all three of his passes for 68 yards and two touchdowns. Helton was his leading target with 27 yards receiving.

The Lions will face the Stockdale Brahmas in the second round Friday night at Gupton Stadium in Cedar Park. Kickoff is set for 7:30.

Stockdale earned a playoff spot as the third place team in District 15-3A behind Poth and Natalia. The Brahmas are coming off of a 23-6 win over Hebbronville in the first round of the



HANNAH WHITE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE The Franklin Lions show their support for Veterans as they take the field on November 11 against the Danbury Panthers.

playoffs last week.

The Stockdale offense is led by quarterback Camden Derricoatte. The sophomore passed for a pair of touchdowns and ran for another score in the Brahmas win over Hebbronville.

Stockdale has won its last four games since losing to Poth. During the four-game win streak, the Brahmas have outscored their opponents 133-46.

"Stockdale is very balanced offensively" Fannin said. "The quarterback does a good job of running their offense, and they are capable of moving the ball with the pass or the run. It will be important for us to take care of the ball offensively and carry out our assignments on defense."

The Lions offense will enter the match-up averaging 410 yards per game rushing and another 88 yards Franklin with 3 interceptions.

passing. Wade has thrown for 16 touchdowns while only throwing two interceptions on the season.

Bobby Washington leads the Franklin rushing attack with 1,089 vards on the ground. Bryson Washington has 911 yards rushing while Murphy has carried for 732 yards. Jackson has rushed for 601 yards on the season while Parker Bovett and Fragiel Owens have carried for 276 and 207 yards respectively.

Defensively for the Lions, Smith has 101 tackles while Youree has 91 stops, including 5 for losses and 2 sacks.

Bryson Washington has 76 tackles while Haze Tomascik and Shamblin have 74 and 68 stops respectively.

Munoz has added 61 tackles, including a team-leading 10 tackles for loss while Darren Daugherty leads

Franklin Stockdale

| | Franklin | Stockdale |
|--------------|----------|-----------|
| First Downs | 23 | 10 |
| Rushing Yds | 544 | 127 |
| Passing | 78 | 21 |
| Total Yards | 622 | 148 |
| Total Rushes | 32 | 41 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 3-4-0 | 2-14-0 |
| Fum Lost | 1 | 1 |
| Punts/Avg | 1/47.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 4-18 | 0-00 |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER

Sports

Franklin Advocate

The No. 1 ranked Franklin Lions took another step in the UIL football playoffs last Thursday with a dominant 70-6 win over the Stockdale Brahmas at Cedar Park's Gupton Stadium.

The Franklin offense had their way with the Brahma defense, scoring on its first eight possessions to take a 56-0 lead early in the third quarter.

Meanwhile, the Lion defense forced six 3-and-outs and only allowed a short touchdown after a fumble inside the Franklin 10-yard line.

"I was really happy that we were able to come out and get on them from the start," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "The defense did a great job of getting themselves off the field and offense was able to capitalize."

Franklin opened the scoring when Bryson Washington carried in for a 7-yard touchdown. Bobby Washington set up the score when he broke loose on a beautiful 66-yard run.

The Lions scored again on their next possession when Malcolm Murphy took a pitch, cut up field, and raced 84 yards untouched into the endzone.

Franklin showed off their passing game the next time they got the ball. After a 26-yard run by Bobby Washington, quarterback Marcus Wade found Hayden Helton behind the Brahma defense for a 31-yard touch-

NO. 1 ranked Lions run past Stockdale 70-6 in area round

down.

Bobby Washington sandwiched scoring runs of 12 and 62 yards around a pair of long touchdown runs (42 and 69) by freshman Jayden Jackson to close out the first half with a commanding 49-0 Franklin advantage.

The Lions extended their lead to 56-0 on the first possession of the third quarter when Bryson Washington scampered in for a 35-yard score.

After Stockdale capitalized on the Lion fumble to get on the scoreboard, Franklin closed out the scoring with a Fragiel Owens 30-yard touchdown and a Cole Brantner 5-yard scoring run.

"I was very happy with the way the guys came out focused from the start and never let up," Fannin said. "We know that there is still a lot of football to be played, but only if you take care of the business in front of you. This group of kids is very good at taking one game at a time."

The Franklin offense averaged an eye-popping 17 yards per carry to finish with 544 yards on just 32 rushing attempts. Wade completed 3-of-4 passes for 78 yards as the Lions racked up over 600 yards of total offense for the third time this season.

The Lion defense held the Brahmas to 148 totals yards as sophomore linebacker finished with 12 tackles, including three for loss.

Bryson Washington had 9 tackles while Seth Shamblin, Owens and Haze Tomascik finished with 7 tackles each.

Bobby Washington paced the Franklin offense with 184 yards on nine carries. Jackson had 115 yards on just four attempts while Murphy added 105 yards on four carries.

The Lions will meet a familiar



HANNAH WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY | ROBERTSON COUNTY News The Lions kick off their game against Stockdale, eventually beating them 70-6.

opponent in the Regional semi-finals when they face the Riesel Indians Friday night at Tiger Stadium in Belton. Kickoff is set for 7:30.

Riesel finished fourth in District 13-3A play with a 3-3 record, but the Indians have won four straight games and held their first two playoff opponents to 10 points per game.

"It's a credit to coach (Tyler) Crow and his football team that they have won four straight games to get themselves to the third round of the playoffs," said Fannin. "We are familiar with Riesel and we know how much they have improved as the season went along."

He added, "We know that it is never easy to beat a team twice in one season, and that we will have to play our best football to get past them."

The Riesel offense is led by senior quarterback Dakota Davis. The signal-caller has passed for 912 yards on the season and rushed for another 580. Kyson Dieterrich is the Indians leading rusher with almost 700 yards, while averaging over seven yards per carry.

The Lions offense will enter the match-up averaging 421 yards per game rushing and almost 90 yards passing. Wade has thrown for 17 touchdowns while only throwing two interceptions on the season.

Bobby Washington leads the Franklin rushing attack with 1,273 yards. Bryson Washington has 967 yards rushing while Murphy has carried for 837 yards. Jackson has rushed for 716 yards on the season while Parker Boyett and Fragiel Owens have carried for 276 and 243 yards respectively.

Defensively for the Lions, Colby Smith has 106 tackles while Youree has 103 stops, including 7 for losses and 2 sacks.

Bryson Washington has 85 tackles while Haze Tomascik and Shamblin have 81 and 75 stops respectively.

Luis Munoz ĥas added 63 tackles, including 10 tackles for loss while Darren Daugherty leads Franklin with 3 interceptions.

র্হুর 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship 🏹

| | Franklin | Riesel |
|--------------|----------|--------|
| First Downs | 21 | 5 |
| Rushing Yds | 527 | 56 |
| Passing | 52 | 33 |
| Total Yards | 579 | 89 |
| Total Rushes | 45 | 36 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 2-5-0 | 3-13-1 |
| Fum Lost | 1 | 0 |
| Punts/Avg | 0/0.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 3-35 | 1-1 |
| | | |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER

Sports

FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The old saying that it is hard to beat the same team twice in one season was not the case last Friday night when the top-ranked Franklin Lions shut out the Riesel Indians 60-0 in the UIL state playoffs.

It marked the third time in the last two seasons that Franklin has faced a district opponent in the playoffs with the Lions defeating Lexington and Buffalo last year after beating both teams in league play.

With the win over Riesel, the Lions improved to 13-0 on the season, and more importantly, advance to the Region 4 finals where they will square off against the Poth Pirates.

"We were familiar with Riesel going into the game, but knew that they improved a lot as the season went along," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "Our guys did a good job of staying focused and they played really well on both sides of the ball."

The Lions took control of the game on the first play from scrimmage when junior Bryson Washington cut back against the grain and raced 52 yards to the end zone. Washington then carried in the 2-point conversion for a quick 8-0 Franklin lead.

After the Lion defense forced a 3-and-out on Riesel's first possession, Malcolm Murphy broke a pair of tackles on the next play and out ran the Indian defense for a 60-yard

WEEK 13 Riesel falls a second time as Lions advance undefeated

touchdown just two and a half minutes into the game.

The stingy Franklin defense allowed only 89 yards of total offense to the Indians and earned their second shutout of the season. The Lions have given up only 13 points in three playoff games.

During that same 3-game stretch, Lion offense has put up a gaudy 193 points and has averaged over 520 on the ground per game.

Against Riesel, Murphy led the rushing attack with 149 yards and three touchdowns on just four carries. Freshman Jayden Jackson finished with 92 vards and a pair of scores while brothers Bryson and Bobby Washington added 87 and 77 yards and two rushing touchdowns.

Bryson also hauled in a 52-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Marcus Wade and Seth Shamblin added a 24-yard field goal to go along with his perfect 7-for-7 night on PAT's.

The inside linebacker duo of Colby Smith and Brayden Youree anchored the Franklin defense with 9 and 7 tackles respectively.

Bryson Washington also finished with 7 tackles from his safety position while sophomore defensive end Major Kimbrough added six tackles, including one behind the line of scrimmage.

cornerback Darren Senior Daugherty made his fourth interception of the season and batted down two other Indian pass attempts.

"I'm really pleased with the way we re playing at this point in the season," Fannin said. "We will have to continue to execute and play our best football, because it is only going to get tougher from here



causing the Lions to move on in District competition.

on out."

He added, "There are only eight teams left in our division and every one of them is still playing for a reason. One of the reasons you come out in August and work hard is to have a chance to play in December. Now we have to take advantage of the opportunity ahead of us."

Next up for the Lions will be the No. 10 ranked Poth Pirates who are 11-1 on the season, including wins in their last nine straight. This will be the first meeting between the two schools.

The Pirates strength is a feisty defense that has only allowed 121 points on the season. Poth has outscored its opponents by an average of 37-9.

The Lions offense will enter the match-up averaging 429 yards per game rushing and almost 90 yards

HANNAH WHITE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE The Lions played a dominating game against the Riesel Indians,

> passing. Wade has thrown for 18 touchdowns while only throwing two interceptions on the season.

> Bobby Washington leads the Franklin rushing attack with 1,350 yards. Bryson Washington has 1,054 yards rushing while Murphy has carried for 986 yards. Jackson has rushed for 808 yards on the season while Parker Boyett and Fragiel Owens have carried for 306 and 256 vards respectively.

> Defensively for the Lions, Smith has 115 tackles while Youree has 110 stops, including 7 for losses and 3 sacks.

> Bryson Washington has 92 tackles while Haze Tomascik and Shamblin have 85 and 79 stops respectively.

> Luis Munoz has added 66 tackles, including 10 tackles for loss while Daugherty leads Franklin with 4 interceptions.

| | Franklin | Poth |
|--------------|----------|-------|
| First Downs | 29 | 4 |
| Rushing Yds | 566 | 60 |
| Passing | 87 | 54 |
| Total Yards | 653 | 114 |
| Total Rushes | 46 | 34 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 3-4-0 | 3-8-1 |
| Fum Lost | 0 | 1 |
| Punts/Avg | 0/0.0 | |
| Pen / Yards | 4-20 | 2-20 |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER

Sports

Franklin Advocate

When Franklin entered its Class 3A Division II quarterfinal game with Poth, most football observers believed the Pirates would be the best defense the Lions had faced all season.

The Franklin offense proved the experts wrong, scoring nine touchdowns and a field goal on its ten possessions en route to a 66-0 thrashing of the Pirates.

The win improved the Lions to 14-0 and ended Poth's season with an 11-2 record, with both losses coming to top-ranked teams that are still in the playoffs.

In addition to the offensive explosion, it was the Lion defense that proved to be dominant in limiting the Poth offense to just 11 yards and one first down in the first half.

"That might have been the best all-around game we have played this year," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "The kids knew what was on the line and came out ready to play from the opening kickoff. They got after them (Poth) on both sides of the ball and never let up."

The win sets up a rematch with the Waskom Wildcats in the state semifinals Friday with a berth in the state championship game on the line. The game will be played at Memorial Stadium in Mesquite with the kickoff scheduled for 7:00.

The Lions began to assert their dominance against Poth from the

WEEK 14 Top ranked Franklin dominates Poth 66-0 to advance to State semi-finals

start, with a methodical 8-play, 74yard scoring drive to grab an early 7-0 lead. Freshman fullback Jayden Jackson capped the drive with a 3-yard plunge into the end zone.

After the Franklin defense forced a quick 3-and-out, the offense went back to work when quarterback Marcus Wade found Hayden Helton behind the Pirate defense for a 25-yard touchdown pass.

The Lions took complete control of the game with another defensive stop, followed by a Bobby Washington 17-yard scoring run to cap a 47-yard drive. The run gave Franklin a commanding 21-0 lead late in the first quarter.

Franklin finished the game with 653 yards of offense, including an incredible 566 yards on the ground.

Bobby Washington led the barrage with 160 yards and three touchdowns. Malcolm Murphy finished with 135 yards on 9 carries, while Bryson Washington added 114 yards rushing to go with his 58 receiving yards.

The Lions just missed having four 100-yard rushers as Jackson finished with 88 yards.

Wade had another efficient night throwing the ball, completing 3-of-4 passes for 87 yards and a pair of touchdowns.

"Our offense stepped up from the very first drive," Fannin said. "We knew how good their defense was, and knew we needed to play mistake-free football. The guys answered the challenge and really controlled the game tonight."

The Lions continued their offensive onslaught in the second quarter, sandwiching a 58-yard touchdown catch-and-run by Bryson Washington around a pair of scoring runs from his brother, Bobby, and a 53-yard touchdown by Jackson.

Bryson Washington and Murphy scored on runs of 55 and 77 yards in the third quarter, and Seth Shamblin added a late 32-yard field goal to round out the 66-point outburst. Shamblin also converted all nine of his extra point attempts.

Franklin was just as dominant on defense, limiting the Pirates to just 1.76 yards per carry and only four first downs. The shutout was the third in the last five games for Franklin, as the Lions have only surrendered 13 points in the playoffs.

Inside linebackers Colby Smith and Brayden Youree again anchored the Franklin defense with 10 and 8 tackles respectively while Haze Tomascik also tallied eight stops.

Major Kimbrough, Luis Munoz, Bryson Washington and Shamblin all had five tackle apiece hile Devyn Hidrogo grabbed his second interception of the season.

The Lions will be making their second straight appearance in the state semifinals against Waskom after downing the Wildcats in a 14-13 thriller last year. The game will also mark the third semifinal appearance in the last seven seasons.

Since starting the 2020 season 0-2, the Lions have won 26 of their last 27 games, with the only loss coming in the state championship game against Canadian, 35-34.

The Lions will face a 13-1 Waskom team that has run off 12-straight wins since losing in

week number two to Timpson, the No.3 ranked team in Class 2A Division I.

The Wildcats enter the game on the heels of their 34-8 win over the Dangerfield Tigers in the state quarterfinals.

The Waskom defense shut down the Dangerfield running game, allowing only 58 yards on 19 attempts. Meanwhile, the Wildcats averaged over seven yards per carry as they rushed for 400 yards against the Tiger defense.

Quarterback Cole Watson triggers the Waskom offense while fullback Tesean Hamilton is the workhorse of the attack. Hamilton carried 18 times for 81 yards against Dangerfield while tailback DJ Feaster rushed for 137 yards on nine attempts.

The Lions offense will enter the match-up averaging 440 yards per game rushing and 85 yards passing. Franklin has three players who have cracked the 1,000 plateau this year.

Bobby Washington leads the Franklin rushing attack with 1,510 yards. Bryson Washington has 1,168 yards rushing while Murphy has carried for 1,121 yards. Jackson is just under the 1,000 mark with 896 while Parker Boyett and Fragiel Owens have carried for 310 and 261 yards respectively.

Defensively for the Lions, Smith has 125 tackles while Youree has 117 stops. Bryson Washington has 97 tackles while Haze Tomascik and Shamblin have 93 and 84 stops respectively. Munoz has added 71 tackles while Kimbrough has 66 stops, including a team-high 12 tackles for loss.

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র্থির 2022 Franklin Lions State Championship β ্র

Franklin Waskom

| First Downs | 22 | 15 |
|--------------|--------|-------|
| Rushing Yds | 349 | 318 |
| Passing | 40 | -5 |
| Total Yards | 389 | 313 |
| Total Rushes | 48 | 48 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 2-2-0 | 1-7-0 |
| Fum Lost | 1 | 1 |
| Punts/Avg | 3/32.1 | |
| Pen / Yards | 4-20 | 2-20 |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER

Sports

FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

Last season the Franklin Lion football team rallied around the phase "164". That is the mileage between Hedrick Field and AT&T Stadium, the site of the UIL State Championships. The Lions made it to the 2020 title game where they lost a one-point thriller to Canadian.

This season the team's rally cry is simply "Finish".

"We felt like we ended the season last year with some unfinished business," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "I was so proud of the kids and the coaching staff for everything we accomplished last year. But, this year we have told the team since two-a-days to stay the course and finish."

Last Friday night, the Lions (15-0) moved one step closer to that goal when they defeated the Waskom Wildcats 28-14. The win marked the second straight year Franklin eliminated the Wildcats in the state semifinals.

With the win, Franklin will make its second straight appearance in the state championship game Thursday night at 7:00 where they will face the Gunter Tigers. It will also mark the Lions third appearance in the title game in the last seven years.

It was Waskom that got on the scoreboard first on Friday to grab a 7-0 lead midway through the first quarter.

Facing a 3-and-16 from inside their own 20-yard line, Waskom quarterback Cole Watson optioned to D.J. Feaster who raced untouched for an 84-yard

WEEK 15 Franklin defeats Waskom 28-14

touchdown.

The 7-0 deficit was the first time Franklin has trailed in a game since falling behind Rogers by the same 7-0 score way back in early October.

"We knew going into the game that Waskom would be one of the best teams we have played all year," Fannin said. "They are a big, physical team that is well coached, so it wasn't a surprise when they came out and hit us in the mouth early."

He added, "But, I was very proud of the way our kids responded and didn't back down at all. They saw the challenge in front of them and did what they needed to do to get the win."

After a fumble cost Franklin a scoring chance late in the first quarter, the Lions tied the game with 5:23 left in the first half. Bryson Washington capped a beautiful 11-play, 78-yard drive when he scored from six yards out.

The Lions drove 72 yards to take a 14-7 lead on their next possession. Franklin got a 14-yard run from Washington, followed by runs of 12 and 10 yards by Malcolm Murphy to find the end zone.

Waskom tied the score at 14 apiece on their first possession of the second half when Watson faked a pitch and outraced the Lion defense for a 60-yard touchdown.

Washington gave the Lions back the lead for good, 20-14, when he juked a defender and scored on a 45-yard run. The junior halfback finished the game with 145 yards on 17 carries and two touchdowns.

Bobby Washington then iced the game when he popped loose down the Franklin sideline for a 63-yard touch-down. Murphy carried in the two-point conversion for the 28-14 final score.

The Lions will face the No. 2 ranked team in 15-0 Gunter Thursday night at AT&T Stadium.

Franklin will enter the game with the No. 1 scoring offense in Class 3A Division II, averaging a whopping 57.4 points per game. The Tigers have the third ranked scoring offense at 51.7 points per game.

The Lions also have the No. 1 scoring defense, allowing only 8.9 points per a game, while Gunter allows 10.2 points per game, good for No. 2 in Class 3A Division II.

The Franklin offense will enter the match-up averaging 429 yards per game rushing and almost 90 yards passing.

Individually for the Lions, Bobby Washington leads the rushing attack with 1,638 yards. Bryson Washington has 1,313 yards rushing while Murphy has carried for 1,176 yards and hauled in 12 receptions for 232 yards.

Freshman Jayden Jackson has rushed for 907 yards on the season while Parker Boyett and Fragiel Owens have carried for 327 and 261 yards respectively.

Wade has thrown for 1,186 yards and 20 touchdowns while only throwing two interceptions on the season. Hayden Helton comes in as Wade's favorite target. The senior has 15 catches for 468 yards and 10 touchdowns.

Sophomore tight end Braden Smith and Bryson Washington also enter the championship game with over 200 yards receiving.

The Lion defense is anchored by the linebacker duo of Colby Smith has and Brayden Youree who each have over 100 tackles on the season. Smith will enter the game with a team-high 136 tackles and Youree comes in with 126.

Bryson Washington and Haze Tomascik have also broken the century mark in tackles with 107 and 101 respectively. Seth Shamblin has 90 stops for the season.

Defensive linemen Luis Munoz, Andrew Elmore, Major Kimbrough and Parker Boyett have combined for 276 tackles, including 36 tackles behind the line of scrimmage.

The defensive backfield of Washington, Murphy, Devyn Hidrogo and Darren Daugherty have helped limit opposing offenses to 176 yards per game. They have intercepted 14 passes while allowing only 69 yards per game through the air.

"This group of guys understand that they have a chance to do something that has never been done by a Franklin football team, and that is to go win a state championship," said Fannin. "We have had some really good football players and teams over the past several years that laid the foundation for this program. Now it is time for us to go 'finish'."



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE #8 Devin Hidrogo steals a Pirate pass in the end zone for a touchback and Franklin possession.

| | Franklin | Gunter |
|--------------|----------|--------|
| First Downs | 19 | 17 |
| Rushing Yds | 523 | 237 |
| Passing | 0 | 149 |
| Total Yards | 523 | 386 |
| Total Rushes | 56 | 51 |
| Comp-Att-Int | 0-3-0 | 8-16-3 |
| Fum Lost | 2 | 0 |
| Punts/Avg | 3/46.0 | 3/39.7 |
| Pen / Yards | 7-55 | 3-15 |

MIKE"DUBA" BREWER

Sports

FRANKLIN ADVOCATE

The Lions made program history last Thursday night inside AT&T Stadium when they ran past the Gunter Tigers 49-35 to capture their first UIL state championship in Class 3A Division II.

Franklin began playing football in 1915 and spent 100 years in search of its first trip to the state championship game.

The Lions finally reached the title game in 2015, falling to Waskom 33-21, and again last year when they dropped a 35-34 instant classic to the Canadian Wildcats.

The third time proved to be the charm for Franklin as the Lions rushed for a championship game record 523 vards behind the three-headed monster of Malcolm Murphy, Bryson Washington and Bobby Washington.

Murphy led the onslaught with 280 yards and 4 touchdowns on a season-high 15 carries. The senior tailback missed the championship game rushing record by just 12 yards, earning offensive MVP honors.

The brother duo of Bobby and Bryson Washington also had big games as the Lions averaged an incredible 9.3 yards per carry against one of the top defenses in Class 3A.

Bryson ran for 165 yards and three touchdowns on 17 carries while older brother Bobby pounded the Tiger defense for 96 yards on 18 tries.

Tied 35-35 heading into the fourth quarter, the Lions outscored Gunter 14-0 over the final 12:00 minutes to pull away and secure the school's first big stop early in the third quarter after a

WEEK 16 2021 STATE CHAMPION LIONS 49 - Gunter 35

championship.

"This town (Franklin) and these fans have waited a long time for this, and I couldn't be more proud that we were able to get it done for them," said Franklin head football coach Mark Fannin. "We got really close last year and we have had this date circled all year to get back and 'finish'."

"We lost in the state championship game last year on a Thursday," Fannin added. "I had kids showing up at the field house the next morning at 6:30 ready to go to work and get back for a chance to win a state title. They have stayed focused all year and did everything they needed to do to have a chance to hoist that trophy."

Franklin opened the game on defense and forced a 3-and-out on Gunter's first possession. The Lions offense followed the stop with a 59-yard touchdown run by Murphy to get on the scoreboard first.

Gunter responded quickly on its next possession when Cole Lemons hauled in a 25-yard touchdown pass from Hudson Graham to tie the game 7-7

That would prove to be a trend as the two teams traded punches like heavyweight fighters throughout the contest. The Lions never trailed in the game, but Gunter stayed within a touchdown until the fourth quarter.

Franklin took a 14-7 lead late in the first quarter when Bryson Washington capped a 10-play drive with a 15-yard scoring run around the right end.

Tied 14-14, the Lions got a break when Graham bobbled the snap on a Tiger punt and was tackled by Haze Tomascik at the 13-yard line. Bryson Washington again did the honors when he powered in for a short touchdown with 6:20 left in the half.

The Franklin defense made another



JAN ROE | FRANKLIN ADVOCATE Franklin sophomore linebacker Colby Smith with the Defense MVP, Malcoln Murphy, a senior earn the Offense MVP Award.

Lion fumble gave Gunter the ball at the Franklin 36-yard line.

On fourth down, following the fumble, sophomore linebacker Colby Smith stepped in front of a Graham pass to kill the Tiger threat. Smith also led Franklin with a team-high 11 tackles and was named the defensive MVP of the game.

The Lions quickly capitalized on the interception when Bryson Washington took a pitch, hopped over a Gunter defender, and raced down the left sideline for a 66-yard score.

After the Tigers scored to tie the game at 28-28, the Franklin ground attack went back to work with a 34-yard touchdown run by Murphy. Seth Shamblin added the extra point to give the Lions a 35-28 lead. The senior finished the game a perfect 7-for-7 on PAT's.

Gunter scored on a short run by Brayden Hinton to knot the game 35-35. It would be the Tigers last score of the game as the Franklin defense pitched a shutout in the final quarter.

"The defense battled all night and made some really big stops," said Fannin. "We knew going into the game that Gunter was really good offensively."

Franklin scored on the first play of the fourth quarter when Murphy popped loose for a 66-yard touchdown run. The senior tailback would score again to give the Lions their biggest lead of the night when he outraced the Gunter defense for an 86-yard score.

The Lions offense played keep away down the stretch, controlling the ball for seven of the final 9 and-a-half minutes. During that stretch, Murphy pulled down a pair of interceptions to seal the win.

"This is an unbelievable feeling," Fannin said. "I am so proud of these kids and this coaching staff for everything they have done this year. They came in every day and put in the work."

