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High School Beat Writer

In a game where both teams call home, the Benedictine Bengals beat the turnover-prone Bedford Bearcats 14-12 at Bearcat Stadium, last Friday.

The Bearcats (2-1), who came into the game scoring 108 consecutive points, had five turnovers in five consecutive series. With that, the Bearcats still had a chance. However, the Bengals (1-2) and defensive back, Daniel Piascik had other plans as they were trying to get into the win column for the first time this year.

“Piascik is the reason that we win this game,” said Bengals’ head coach Ben Malbasa. “That is

why he is the best player on the team."

Piascik, who probably has the best knowledge on the field when it comes to balls in the air, had two big interceptions. The center-fielder and the captain of the Bengals' baseball team caught those interceptions like he was shagging fly balls with his glove.

"The ball hung up there for a while and I just went and got it," said Piascik.

The Bearcats would score first on the games very first drive. Senior Deandre Norris hooked up with senior Deon Carter for a 55-yard catch-and-run touchdown. But the extra-point was missed.

The Bearcats' defense would keep the Bengals' offense from scoring in the first quarter. The Bengals second drive ended as sophomore linebacker/running back London Cloud would intercept freshman quarterback Brian Schoeffler's pass in the end zone. The Bengals were at the Bearcats' nine-yard line.

As the Bearcats next series of drives would end quickly, the Bengals managed to keep their offense on the field, but they could not score. Bearcat miscues, however, would help them. The Bearcats coughed up the ball on a fumble deep in Bengals' territory. Six plays later, the Bengals cashed in on a six-yard touchdown pass to senior Marshall Howell. Howell beat the Bearcats' defensive back on a corner-in pattern. Nick Judy's extra-point gave the Bengals a 7-6 lead.

"I told the coach to get me the ball because in know that their defensive backs can't check me," said Howell, who finished with four catches for 37 yards.

In the Bearcats' next drive, they had the opportunity to the lead at the half. However, a bad read by Carter foiled that chance. With under a minute to go, Carter, on a fourth-and-five at the Bengals' 40, decided to fire a pass in the end zone instead of a short pass to a wide open receiver who was passed the first-down marker. His pass was picked off by Piascik.

With that missed opportunity, the Bearcats were still in the game, trailing 7-6 with 54 second left, but a missed tackle allowed a 70 yard run that ended on the Bearcats' two, with 45 left. Uh, Oh!

Junior fullback Antonio Robinson's two-yard touchdown run and Judy's extra-point gave the Bengals a 14-6 lead with 38 seconds left.

Trying to get something before halftime, Carter was picked off again. He would get picked off the next two drives in the third quarter. But the Bearcats defense, led by Cloud, stopped them from scoring.

The Bearcats had the ball one time in the fourth. At the nine minute mark on three plays, the Bearcats scored on a 38-yard touchdown screen-play to senior running back Javaun Washington.

However, with 7:35 left, the Bearcats could not get the ball back. The Bengals had the ball the entire time on a 16-play, 51-yard, game-ending drive. On that drive, the Bengals converted three fourth down conversions.

"That is what I wanted to focus on today. I wanted to control the tempo and eat clock," said Malbasa.

Baker finished with 22 carries for 128 yards. Senior running back Terrell Clark had 11 carries for 44 yards.

The Bearcats, who dropped to #15 in the Kizer/Call and Post Top 15, know have to forget about that game and focus on their next opponent: #3 Cleveland Heights Tigers on Friday. The Tigers, who beat hosting Youngstown East 28-13, have won 13 consecutive regular season games. This is the Lake Erie League opener.

The Bengals will open up North Coast League play against visiting Holy Name this Saturday at Bearcat Stadium.