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Nemaha Valley takes down Royal Valley in Big Seven Showdown

It was a different start to the season for both the Nemaha Valley Raiders and Royal Valley Panthers. The Raiders went on the road and struggled against Delaware Valley League favorite McLouth falling 32-6 to the Bulldogs. While, the Panthers hosted Big Seven foe Santa Fe Trail and ran wild against the Chargers for 450+ rush yards on their way to a 40-20 win.

Nemaha Valley found themselves on the road once more early into this football season, this time against a fellow Big Seven team in Royal Valley. The battle of the Valley's was a tight one last year with the Panthers sneaking away with a 14-13 win last season. This year the game started off looking like we were in store for something similar with only eight points scored in the first quarter, as the Panthers took the early lead with a five-yard touchdown run by quarterback, Austin Hodison. Hodison step up the run with a big 35-yard pass play earlier on the drive to tight end, Derek Tuck.

After that first score by the Panthers the Raiders would answer with their own to tie the game at 8-8 after 58-yard run by junior quarterback, Caleb Meyer. The Raiders wouldn't stop with that score in the second quarter coming up with 22 unanswered points with that tying touchdown to end the first half leading 22-8. Raiders scored their second touchdown after a Panther fumble and Raider recovery in Panther territory, runningback, Michael Rottinghaus punched it in for a three-yard TD. Meyer later added another rushing touchdown before the half (8-yards).

Coming out of the half with all the momentum in favor of the Raiders they took the first ball down the field again as Meyer connected on his third and fourth pass completions, both to Justice McKernan on a touchdown drive, with the second completion going for a 13-yard TD. Raiders controlling time of possession throughout the game controlled the ball almost the entire third quarter and scored another touchdown on top of the passing TD early in the quarter, as runningback, Tanner Ranieri who rushed for 60+ yards scored a one-yard TD.

Entering the fourth quarter Nemaha Valley led the game 34-8 and had the game firmly in their grasp. Royal Valley would not go away quietly, though scoring two rushing touchdowns by Zach Rottinghaus in the fourth for their first points since their 8-0 lead. Raiders added another Ranieri rushing TD (2-yards), themselves in the fourth to win the ball game 41-24.

Raiders quarterback, Meyer highlighted the game for Nemaha Valley rushing for 123 yards on 19 carries and two touchdowns, while throwing for 96 yards and a touchdown to McKernan (2 rec. 36 yards TD). Meyer's performance earned him the Community National Bank "Player to Bank On" award. Ranieri rushed the ball well for the Raiders, also with 60+ yards and two touchdowns. For the Panthers, Hodison rushed for 72 yards and TD and Z. Rottinghaus 57 yards and two TD's to highlight their performances.

Both teams now are 1-1 on the season, while Nemaha Valley improves to 1-0 in Big Seven league play, Royal Valley is 1-1 in league play with the loss.