

Hornets bounce back with dominant win over Eden

BY MASON HINES
DISPATCH RECORD

After three straight losses, Lometa bounced back in a big way Friday night, defeating the Eden Bulldogs 64-21 on the strength of an improved run game.

"I'm just happy for our kids, man," Lometa head coach D.T. Torres said after the victory. "It feels great to get a win, and it feels even better for our kids."

Senior Tim Juarez led the way for Lometa, with 134 yards on the ground leading to four scores.

The Hornet defense found its footing early in the game. Senior Leonel Caso returned an interception 77 yards for an early touchdown.

Lometa forced a stop on Eden's next drive, and Lucas Smailus Cruz found the endzone to make the score 16-0, which remained at the end of the first quarter.

Lometa's efficient offense continued to roll in the second quarter, with two more touchdowns on the ground.

Eden finally broke through on the scoreboard midway through the period but lacked any sustained success on ensuing drives.

Juarez rumbled into the

endzone for a second time and pushed Lometa's lead to 34 points, with the halftime score at 40-6.

After the break, the teams traded scores on long drives. The scoreboard read 56-14 heading into the final quarter of play.

Both teams scored in the final period, but Lometa closed the game on offense and took the 64-21 victory.

The Hornets, whose youth has been a concern all season, had the chance to play more underclassmen in the second half, utilizing most of their roster in the later parts of the game.

Looking ahead, Lometa's schedule gets no easier, with district play pitting the Hornets against back-to-back Top 10 foes Jonesboro and May.

"You know, we set our schedule to prepare us for these games and our district," Torres said about the matchup. "We're going to play our football, and just get out and compete."

Lometa has played Jonesboro each of the past six seasons, but the Hornets are winless in those contests. Lometa enters Friday's game as a 45-point underdog, according to sixmanfootball.com.



Jordan Livesay (3) wrangles an Eden ball carrier, while Elijah Gonzales (5) and Colton Whitehead (14) pursue.

Lometa Lions Club event raises money for scholarships and more

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Lometa had a night to remember Saturday when the Harlem Legends came to town. The event served as a fundraiser for the Lometa Lions Club, which gives scholarships to students and does community service work.

The Legends are led by Michael Douglas, who was a top pick for the Harlem Globetrotters and played from 1986-1993.

Douglas' Youth Foundation utilizes the Harlem Legends to carry out the mission and activities of the foundation.

"At the end of the day, it's all about the community," Douglas said. "We get to be a part of this fundraiser, help the town, and the best part is seeing all the smiles. That's what it's about."

Through the course of the basketball game – which featured antics akin to a traditional Harlem Globetrotters game – those in attendance had opportunities to participate. Some got to spin a basketball on one finger, and fans got splashed by water. One lucky fan got to hear the entire gym sing "Happy Birthday."

Lometa's team, the Rattlers, included School Superintendent Rob Moore and Police Chief Melissa Cantu, among others. The Rattlers held their own early in the contest, even going up 12-11 early in the first quarter. Lometa was no match for the Legends in the end, however.

Lometa players Kolby Hesbrook and Austin Martin shined for the Rattlers, with the three-point shot being a favorite of both.

"I had a really great time. It was a lot of fun to get to play against those guys, especially with how talented they are," Hesbrook said.

Lions Club member Terri Harris voiced her appreciation for the community making this a successful event.

"I think we did well," she said. "Our community supports us in lots of ways. We use this money for scholarships for the kids and our community service projects."

The Lions Club has held similar fundraisers in recent years, with a "donkey basketball" game in 2019. Harris said the club intends to host events like this in the future.

"Both times we've hosted things like this, the community has enjoyed it, and we hope to be able to continue this in the years to come," Harris said.



Lometa fifth-grader Kyla Kepler (white shirt) was excited to be a part of the show with Legend Michael Douglas.



Rattlers players look in awe as Harlem Legend Trey Moore takes flight for a slam dunk in Saturday's fundraiser.

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