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Burleson senior fullback Blake Smith (20) hurdles a Haltom defender in the Elks' 21-20 loss to the Buffalos in a District 3-5A game Friday at Birdville Stadium. Smith ran for a season-high 229 yards and two touchdowns.

Elks fall flat in 21-20 upset loss at Haltom (Posted Fri 11:05 pm)
MIKE ESKRIDGE

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Burleson was its own worst enemy in a 21-20 loss to Haltom in a District 3-5A game Friday at Birdville Stadium.

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The Elks [0-2 in district play, 4-2 overall] repeatedly shot themselves in the foot with untimely penalties. Burleson was cited for nine penalties for 85 yards, including four personal fouls for 60 yards.

The most glaring violation came on what proved to be the winning drive for the Buffalos [1-1 in district play, 2-4 overall]. Trailing 20-14, Haltom faced a fourth down and seven from the Elks' 32. Buffalos quarterback Arron Shockey rolled out to his left, but fired an incomplete pass that would have forced Haltom to turn the ball over on downs.

The Buffalos' drive was kept alive, however, when Burleson drew a roughing the passer foul that gave Haltom a first down at the BHS 17. Buffs running back Dexter Braziel carried the ball three straight times to cover the remaining distance to the end zone, finishing with a five-yard touchdown run that tied the score at 20-20 with 6:58 left in the third quarter.

Haltom kicker Cody Johnson added the extra point to put the Buffalos up 21-20.

Burleson had a chance to move ahead in the fourth quarter after forcing a Haltom punt to take over at its own 43 with 6:01 left to play. The Elks moved to the Haltom nine yard line in eight plays, including six carries for 37 yards by senior fullback Blake Smith.

Facing third down and six from the Buffs' nine yard line, Burleson called Smith's number for

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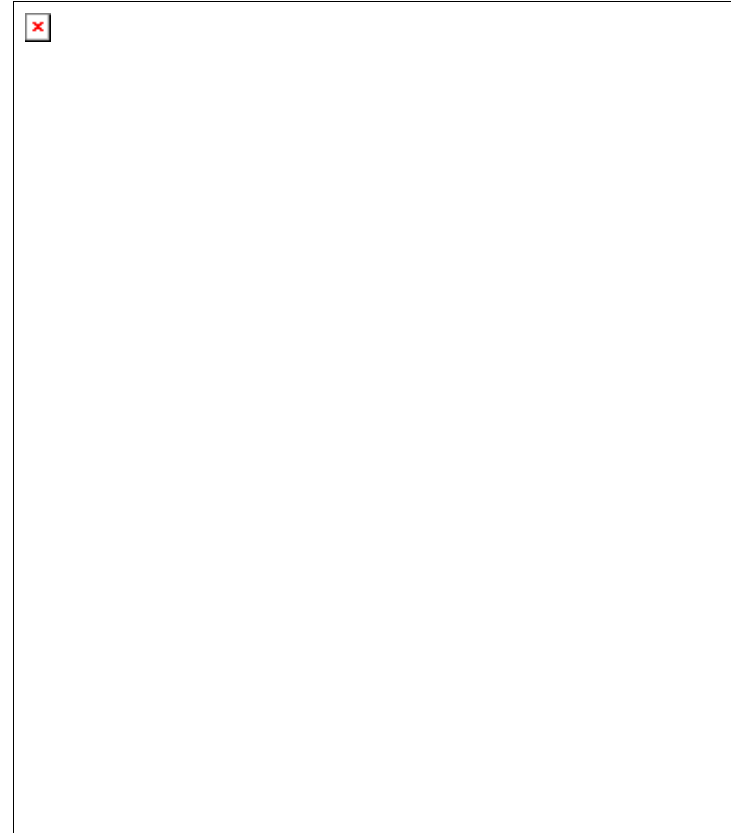
the seventh time on the drive, but the Elks' rushing leader was stopped after a four-yard gain to the five yard line. Burleson's 26-yard field goal attempt on fourth down sailed wide left to allow Haltom to escape with an improbable 21-20 win.

Smith led all rushers with a season-high 229 yards and two touchdowns on 32 attempts.

After Haltom drove 48 yards on the game's opening drive to take a 6-0 lead, Burleson scored on its next three possessions to move ahead 20-6. Smith scored on runs of one and six yards and junior tailback Amery Duncan added a two-yard touchdown run.

Haltom trimmed the lead to 20-14 with a nine-play, 70-yard scoring drive that consumed only 1:31 from the clock. Running back J.J. Gibbs' 15-yard run finished the march, then Braziel ran for the two-point conversion to lift the Buffalos within six points. Gibbs' touchdown was set up by a defensive holding call against Burleson on the previous play.

Burleson resumes district play with a home game at 7:30 p.m. Friday against Richland, which defeated North Crowley 52-0 Friday.



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