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River Oaks News

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From the Sports Desk with John Loven

Football Playoffs: Lions Struggle to Catch Up to Porcupines

The first round of the UIL football playoffs began this past week. For the first time in five years the Castleberry Lions made the playoffs. As the fourth place team in District 6-4A they faced the Springtown Porcupines, the District 5-4A Champion.

The Lions finished the regular season 5-5/2-3 in district and the Porcupines finished their regular season with a 9-1 record (winners of 9 straight games after an opening season loss). They finished 6-0 in district, with five of those victories resulting in shut-outs. Only Decatur, in the last game of the regular season, scored on the Porcupines in district.

As is most often the case, the first round of playoffs is often a little mismatched. But for the first 7 minutes of the game, this was certainly not the case as the Lions gave the Porcupines all they could handle. The Lions actually led a little past the midway point of the first quarter. But after a couple of back-to-back drives which did not result in any points, the Lions fell behind and were never able to catch up. They eventually lost 52-16.

The game was played at Boswell's Pioneer Stadium (neutral site) on Thursday, Nov. 14. The Porcupines received the opening kickoff and after a 31-yard return, they began their first possession with great field position on the Lions 42-yard line. From there they drove down to the Lions 2-yard line. On fourth down, the Porcupines chose to go for the field goal. The kick was good and Springtown started out on top with a 3-0 lead with 8:39 left in the first quarter.

CHS began their first possession on their own 24-yard line after Springtown's kickoff. The Lions methodically drove the ball down to the Porcupines 30-yard line. There they

faced a fourth-and-8. The Lions snap count pulled the Porcupines off sides as the ball was snapped. Senior quarterback Demetrius Valadez, knowing he essentially had a free-play, wisely threw the ball deep. He connected with sophomore Bryan Cenicerros, sprinting down the right sideline. The result was a 30-yard touchdown. Senior kicker Chris Montoya made the point-after-touchdown and with 5:47 left in the first quarter Castleberry led Springtown 7-3.

Springtown took less than 2 minutes to answer the Lions score. Following the Lions

pooch kick, the Porcupines began on their own 40-yard line. They drove 60 yards in six plays. After gaining one first down, a long 44 yard run then set them up with a first-and-goal from the Lions' 4-yard line. Two plays later, they ran the ball in for a touchdown. The point-after-touchdown was good and with 3:55 left in the first quarter Springtown regained the lead 10-3.

The Lions responded with another good drive. Senior Daniel Ortiz returned the Porcupines kickoff 20 yards out to CHS's 29-yard line. After (continued on page 2)

From Castleberry ISD

Gifted and Talented Assessment and Identification Process

Parents may refer their child to the district's Gifted and Talented program through Dec. 18.

Gifted and Talented Referral Process

Castleberry ISD accepts referrals for services in the Gifted and Talented Program annually. Eligible students must be currently enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade at Castleberry ISD.

Referrals may come from parents, teachers, administrators, counselors, or other interested persons. The person referring a student must complete a Gifted and Talented Referral Form for a student to be assessed and considered for the program services.

After assessment, if gifted and talented

services are considered appropriate, the student will be placed in the Gifted and Talented Program during the spring semester.

Visit the [district's website](#) for more information about the referral process.

Test Administration

Students will be tested between Jan. 22 and Feb. 14, 2025, during regular school hours.

Notification & Participation

Notification of placement and permission to participate letters will be distributed on or before Feb. 24, 2025. Permission letters must be submitted to Counselors by Feb. 28, 2025, and permitted students will be placed and begin receiving services on March 1, 2025.

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Sports Desk

(continued from page 1)

some nice runs by junior Isaiah Ford and a big third down catch from Cenicerros that picked up 19 yards and a first down, the Lions had reached the Porcupines 32-yard line. Castleberry was threatening to take the lead back themselves. Unfortunately after consecutive incomplete passes on third and fourth down, the Lions turned the ball over on downs. Afterwards, the Porcupines took just four plays to score. On the first play of the second quarter, they faced a first-and-goal from the Lions 10-yard line. Springtown's quarterback evaded the rush and scrambled for a 10-yard touchdown. The point-after-touchdown put the Porcupines up 17-7 (11:51/second).

The Lions came back with their best and longest drive of the night. They drove 72 yards on 13 plays. But on fourth-and-3 from the Porcupines 7-yard line, Ford was stopped for no gain. This impressive drive, sadly, ended with no points. To compound this, Springtown took six plays to go 93 yards and score their third touchdown of the first half. With 4:43 left until half, the Porcupines now led 24-7.

In their following possession, the Lions could only muster one first down. They were forced to punt from their own 25-yard line. The 29-yard punt ended up only netting 14 yards, due to a 15-yard penalty against the Lions on the punt return.

Springtown took over the ball on the Lions 39-yard line. This gave the Porcupines a very short field to work with and they took advantage of it. Despite a nice sack of Springtown's quarterback by senior linebacker Adrian Barrera, the Porcupines scored in only four plays. This pushed their lead to 31-7 with just 1:55 until half.

On the Lions next possession, it looked like they just might score right before half-time, in spite of their being little time left. Valadez hit senior Corbett Brown for 12 yards and Ortiz for nine yards on consecutive plays. On third-and-3 from the Lions 43-yard line, he then found Brown again for seven yards and a first down. Following an incompleton, Valadez completed two more passes. The first was to Cenicerros for 14 yards and Brown for 13 more yards. (continued on page 4)

From the Texas Department of Public Safety

Vehicle Safety Inspection Program to Change Jan. 1

House Bill 3297 (88th Legislative Session, 2023), effective Jan. 1, 2025, abolishes the Vehicle Safety Inspection Program for non-commercial vehicles, eliminating most safety vehicle inspections statewide.

This means if you live in a non-emissions county and are currently not required to obtain an emissions inspection on your vehicle, you will not be required to have your vehicle inspected prior to registration beginning Jan. 1, 2025.

However, the \$7.50 fee remains intact under a new name: the inspection program replacement fee. This fee will be added to your vehicle registration fee.

For owners of new cars, either the current model or preceding model year that has not been previously registered in Texas or another state, there will instead be an initial fee of \$16.75 to cover two years.

The bill does not eliminate vehicle emissions inspections.

Emissions inspections will also still be required in the following Texas counties: Brazoria, Fort Bend, Galveston, Harris, Montgomery, Collin, Dallas, Denton, Ellis, Johnson, Kaufman, Parker, Rockwall, Tarrant, Travis, Williamson and El Paso.

The safety inspection fee will also be eliminated for vehicle owners in emissions counties; however, those in emissions counties will also be subject to the inspection program replacement fee.

All commercial vehicles, regardless of county, will still be required to have a safety inspection.

Commercial vehicles will be exempt from the inspection program replacement fee as they will still be required to pay for a safety inspection.

All vehicles will still be required to be registered; the registration process will continue to be managed by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles.

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(continued from page 2)

On first down from the Porcupines 23-yard line Valadez scrambled for nine yards before being tackled with a targeting penalty against Springtown. This put the ball on Springtown's 6-yard line with a first-and-goal, in the waning moments of the first half. Unfortunately, the targeting tackle on Valadez injured him and took him out of the next play. On the next play the Lions were intercepted and left the score 31-7 at half-time.

Castleberry received the second-half kickoff and began with another impressive drive. Sophomore Keaton English returned the kickoff 29 yards and helped give CHS great field position near midfield. Key play in this drive was a 14-yard quarterback scramble by Valadez on a fourth-and-5 from the Porcupines 29-yard line. After five consecutive runs by Ford, the Lions faced a fourth-and-goal from the 10-yard line. They chose to attempt a field goal. Montoya's 27-yard field goal was good and with 7:12 left in the third quarter the Lions trailed 31-10.

Unfortunately, after this, the Porcupines scored on their next three possessions to take a 52-10 lead. The Lions got one more score when Valadez sprinted 58 yards for a touchdown. The 2-point attempt failed and left CHS trailing 52-16 with 9:12 left to play. Springtown showed good sportsmanship at the end of the game. They had driven down to the Lions 2-yard line with about a minute to play. But instead of attempting to score another touchdown, they chose to line up in victory formation and kneel down on consecutive plays.

Despite the score, several Lions had a pretty good night. Ford rushed 31 times for 113 yards, Valadez had eight rushes for 96 yards and a touchdown, and Cenicerros had three receptions for 63 yards and a touchdown.

Congratulations to Head Coach Juan Silva, the CHS staff, and of course to the Lion football players for a good season and making the playoffs for the first time in five years.

Go Lions!

From Texas Parks and Wildlife

Urban Coyotes: Tips to Discourage Proximity



Have you seen a coyote lately? Sightings increase this time of year as pups are leaving their dens.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department provides expertise and advice on urban wildlife issues, but does not implement nuisance coyote control.

Urban and suburban coyotes, like urban deer, are symptoms of a broader issue. People continue to expand housing subdivisions and other human development into what used to be open range wildlife habitat, especially on the expanding fringes of large metropolitan areas. This is increasing the potential for encounters and conflicts between people and wildlife.

Trapping and similar nuisance control actions cannot eliminate urban coyote problems, although this can be part of the solution in some situations.

The real solution and the greater need facing Texans right now is public education. We need to inform and empower people to take steps to coexist with coyotes and other urban wildlife.

There are some common sense precautions people can take to manage coyotes:

- Do not feed coyotes! Keep pet food and water inside.
- Keep garbage securely stored, especially if it has to be put on the curb for collection. Homeowners can use tight-locking

or bungee-cord-wrapped trashcans that are not easily opened.

- Keep compost piles securely covered; correct composting never includes animal matter like bones or fat, which can draw coyotes even more quickly than decomposing vegetable matter.

- Keep pets inside, confined securely in a kennel or covered exercise yard, or within the close presence of an adult.

- Walk pets on a leash and accompany them outside, especially at night.

- Do not feed wildlife on the ground; keep wild bird seed in feeders designed for birds elevated or hanging above ground, and clean up spilled seed from the ground; coyotes can either be drawn directly to the seed, or to the rodents drawn to the seed.


- Keep fruit trees fenced or pick up fruit that falls to the ground.

- Do not feed feral cats (domestics gone wild); this can encourage coyotes to prey on cats, as well as feed on cat food left out for them.

- Minimize clusters of shrubs, trees and other cover and food plants near buildings and children's play areas to avoid attracting rodents and small mammals that will in turn attract coyotes

- Use noise making and other scaring devices when coyotes are seen. Check with local authorities regarding noise ordinances. Portable air horns, motor vehicle horns, propane cannons, low-powered pellet guns, and thrown rocks can be effective.

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From Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Take Care of Texas Video Contest

Contest



The Take Care of Texas Video Contest is a fun way for young people to learn about protecting the environment and come up with creative ways to share this knowledge with others!

Students are invited to create a 30-second video that shows positive ways to Take Care of Texas. All entries must include the slogan "Take Care of Texas. It's the only one we've got." and portray positive ways Texans can help keep our air and water clean, conserve water and energy, and reduce waste.

Ninth through 12th grade students can win scholarships: first place prize is \$2,500, second place is \$1,500 and third place is \$500.

Sixth through eighth grade students can win gift cards for camera equipment: first place is a \$800 gift card, second place is \$600 and third place is \$400.

Contest sponsor Waste Management of Texas, Inc. will award prizes to the creators of the best videos. The contest closes on Dec. 6, 2024 and winners will be announced March 3, 2025.

Participants must [submit their video online](#).

From Texas Coalition for Animal Protection

Free Feline Fix Day Nov. 27



TCAP will host a Free Fix Day on Wednesday, Nov. 27. During Free Fix days, TCAP offers free sterilization and rabies vaccines for feral and community cats. This event will take place at six TCAP clinics located in Arlington, Burleson, Denton, Garland, Hurst, and Weatherford! Seventy-five cats will be seen at each location on a first-come, first-served basis.

There's no limit on the number of cats per caregiver, and no appointment is required. Cats must arrive in individual live traps or pet carriers, and all cats will receive an ear tip.

Each cat accepted will receive a voucher for a free spay/neuter for another cat at a future date. Participants will be able to make an appointment for a free feral spay or neuter at a future date using the voucher. This voucher also includes a rabies vaccine.

Participants are requested to stay in line if they are outside of the first 75! The TCAP team will provide one voucher per cat present for sterilization vaccine for the next 75 cats.

Only those already in line with cats will receive the voucher. The line cuts off no later than 9 a.m. The total impact per location is 225 cats. Caretakers will be responsible for any additional elective services such as vaccines, pain medication, or viral testing at the time of service.

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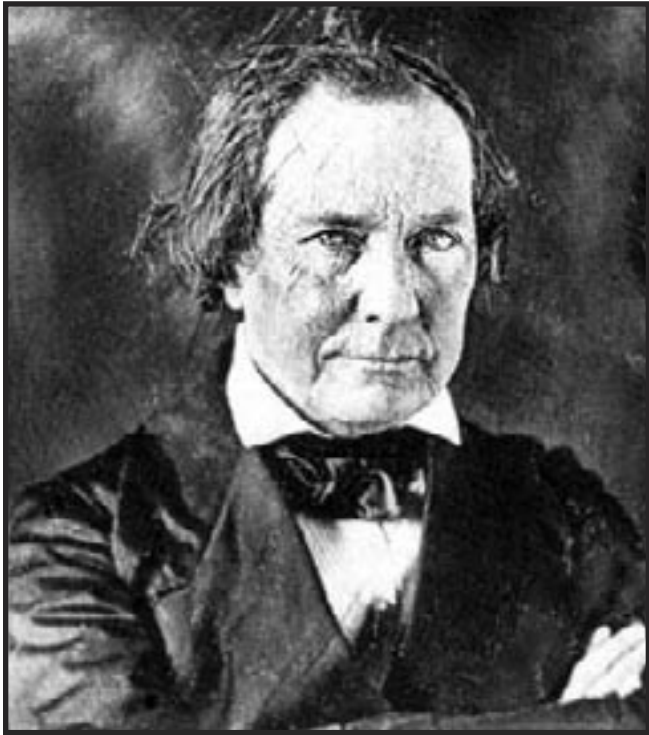
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Second President of the Republic of Texas, Mirabeau B. Lamar



Mirabeau B. Lamar was a man of talent and imagination but also one with a complicated legacy. He was the third president of the Republic of Texas, just a few years after arriving in Texas from Georgia. He has been called the “Father of Texas Education” but also faced criticism for disastrous policies that led to bloodshed and debt. Even with a mixed record, Lamar remains a subject of fascination for many.

He was born on his father’s cotton plantation in eastern Georgia in 1798. He was the second oldest of nine children. Lamar was intensely curious and read voraciously as a child. In his early adult years, he enthusiastically pursued a number of projects but had mixed success. He spent time as a merchant and as a newspaper editor. His well-connected family got him a job as personal secretary to the governor in 1823, which allowed him to travel the state and meet with many people. In 1826, he married; and the couple soon had a daughter.

In 1828, he moved to the western Georgia community of Columbus and started a successful newspaper, the *Columbus Enquirer*, a publication that still operates as the *Ledger-Enquirer*. Lamar was soon elected to the state senate. After his wife died in 1830, he fell into a period of deep mourning and declined to seek re-election. But he soon found a new purpose and began studying law. He was admitted to the bar in 1833 and mounted a failing bid for Congress that year.

When his older brother died in 1834, a depressed Lamar traveled to Texas and stayed

with his old friend James Fannin. He soon returned to Georgia to settle his affairs before returning to Texas to stay. By this point, the Texas Revolution had erupted. Lamar volunteered for the Texas army immediately, initially serving as a private. As the Mexican Army approached San Jacinto in April 1836, Lamar led a daring raid to rescue fellow Texas soldiers surrounded by Mexican troops. He was given command of a cavalry troop for the Battle of San Jacinto.

Lamar was soon appointed the interim secretary of war for the newly independent Republic of Texas. In the elections held in the fall of 1836, Lamar was elected vice-president, running on a separate ticket from the winner, Sam Houston.

Texas as an independent republic did not have political parties, but the clearest political lines were whether Texans supported or opposed Sam Houston. Under the Texas Constitution of 1836, a president could not serve successive terms. The 1838 election quickly became a contest between Lamar, who often clashed with Houston, and a little-known senator, “Honest Bob” Wilson, who always claimed he would be just as honest as the circumstances permitted. Lamar won in a landslide.

Lamar savored the victory and prepared an extensive agenda. His ambitions were larger than the resources Texas had. Unlike Houston, Lamar had an antagonistic attitude toward Native Americans and declared in his inaugural address that the tribes should either be “expelled or exterminated.” He also called for a national bank, a school system, and a national university. After Houston’s effort to secure annexation to the United States failed, Lamar announced he would oppose such efforts as president.

In 1839, he decided to move the capital from Houston, the namesake city of his chief rival, to the small settlement of Waterloo on the Colorado River. The city was renamed Austin, and Lamar founded what became the Texas State Library as the official archives. Lamar laid the groundwork for public schools in Texas, but a statewide system would not be established until after the Civil War. Thousands of acres of land were set aside as a trust for a university, but the University of Texas would not be established from this land until

1883.

Peace efforts with Mexico failed, and few governments were willing to recognize Texas. In 1840, he defied Congress and sent an expedition to Santa Fe to try to consolidate the Texas claim on the Rio Grande as a border. Lamar sent dozens of men with tens of thousands of dollars in goods to try to initiate trade with the distant city. Upon their arrival, they were immediately arrested by Mexican troops in a diplomatic disaster for Texas. He sent the Texas Army to raid Native American settlements, but this resulted in a fierce response from the Comanches, who launched a fierce series of raids on settlements across Central Texas in 1841, leaving many casualties in their wake.

Government spending doubled, and inflation soared as the Texas dollar collapsed. When he left office in 1841, succeeded by Houston, the national debt had quadrupled into millions of dollars.

After Texas was annexed and became a state in 1845, he was elected to the new state legislature representing Eagle Pass. When war erupted with Mexico in 1846, the now 48-year-old Lamar was determined to serve. He volunteered and was noted for his service at the Battle of Monterrey in September. Afterward, he was assigned to command a small post in Laredo.

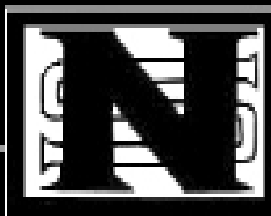
He continued to manage his plantation in Richmond after the Mexican War. A book of his poems, *Verse Memorials*, was published in 1857. Politics, however, was never far from his mind. In 1857, President James Buchanan appointed Lamar to serve as US Ambassador to Nicaragua. Shortly afterward, Buchanan named him to serve as ambassador to both Nicaragua and Costa Rica.

Lamar was proud of his work as ambassador. His tenure became an impressive capstone to his career, but health problems increasingly made it difficult to serve. He returned to his plantation in Richmond in October 1859 to recuperate but died of a heart attack two months later in December at age 61.

In later years, Lamar was widely praised for his efforts on behalf of education, though it took decades for those efforts to be realized.

In 1932, the new Lamar University in Beaumont was named for him. Schools and streets across the state are also named for him.

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Weekend Forecast



Friday, Nov. 22:

AM - Sunny, with a high near 64. Calm wind becoming north northeast around 5 mph.

PM - Mostly clear, with a low around 43. East wind around 5 mph becoming south after midnight.



Saturday, Nov. 23:

AM - Sunny, with a high near 71. South wind 5 to 10 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

PM - Mostly clear, with a low around 55.



Sunday, Nov. 24:

AM - Sunny, with a high near 79.

PM - Mostly clear, with a low around 53.

Extended Forecast [Click Here](#)