

19. “No Hope Left”

In the chapter titled “No Hope Left,” the exhilarating football game between Faith Baptist and the Cubs is depicted, highlighting the Cubs' struggles against a formidable opponent. During the game, Parker Mills, a determined player from Faith Baptist, is vocal in his desire to run the ball, leading his team to success with a strong running game that consistently confounds the struggling Cubs' defense.

As the first half progresses, Faith Baptist capitalizes on the Cubs' weaknesses, scoring multiple touchdowns and solidly leading 50–22 at halftime. In the locker room, the mood is grim; players like Cody Metzner sense a pervasive loss of hope as injuries accumulate and the physical toll of the game becomes evident. Players are seen nursing their wounds, mentally worn down, reflecting a collective resignation to defeat.

The second half begins poorly for the Cubs, with Mills scoring an impressive twenty-five-yard touchdown, marking a significant display of strength against a once-determined defense. Christian Jimenez highlights the mental and physical exhaustion permeating his team, expressing disappointment in their inability to continue competing effectively. David Figueroa further reflects on the inadequacies faced throughout the season, attributing their performance against a stronger team to a lack of preparation.

As injuries pile up, including a concussion for Trevin Adams, the Cubs are left depleted, with Kaden Adams stepping in, only to unwittingly throw an interception that Mills converts into yet another touchdown. The Cubs fail to score again, suffering a harrowing loss with a final score of 74–22, marking a stark contrast to their previous successes.

Disheartened, the Cubs walk off the field as Felix Gonzales visibly struggles with the defeat, exemplifying the emotional toll of the game. Yet, despite the overwhelming loss, their fans remain supportive, applauding their efforts. Patrons like Patricia Davis express pride in the team's determination and hard work, underscoring a resilient sense of community amid their disappointment. The chapter effectively captures the heartache and lessons learned in the face of a crushing defeat.