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Provincial champs!

nathan anderson

airdrie city view

Outsized, but never outgunned, the Storm got the job done with machine gun speed and sniper rifle precision.

Airdrie's peewee football club won the first ever tier III provincial championship over the Sherwood Park Cougars, 20-0, Nov. 11.

The offence, led by quarterback Casey Long and runningback Landon Bayda, struck for three touchdowns.

"Our offence was outsized big time, but we got the blocks on certain plays when we needed it, and we broke some big plays," said head coach Thomas Rohl.

Meanwhile the defence, led by Dalton Davis, Josh Mugford and Cory Robinson, proved unbeatable.

"They just stuffed 'em. They had a big offence, but with the speed that we had, those big guys slowed right down. Our defence just played solid," said Rohl, "We beat them physically, and we're a smaller team. They figured they were going to steam roll us, and they got a surprise - a big surprise."

SETTING THE TONE

The Cougars found some early momentum, but the Storm's defence

quickly adjusted. After receiving the opening kick, Sherwood Park quarterback Kyle Leigh succeeded in moving the sticks twice, thanks to a 28 yard run to the outside by Rees Paterson, and a several strong runs up the gut by Aaron Tripodi. However, after battling to Airdrie's 26 yard line, the drive fizzled. The Storm's Michael Clifford killed a reverse attempt by Cougar Christopher Jenson, resulting in a six yard loss, and Airdrie's Shjon French came up big on third down, stopping Tripodi well short of the first down.

The Storm offence met with similar results on its first series, as runs by Davis, Bayda and Long failed to move the sticks.

The teams swapped possession again over the next two series, with Airdrie's Arye Kaitsas providing a big stop and Sherwood Park's Luke Zenke recovering a fumble.

Airdrie's defence came up big at the start of the second quarter. Mugford hammered Cougar Morgan "Shifty" Styles for a five yard loss, knocking Sherwood Park's number one runningback out of the contest. This set up a key blocked punt by the Storm's Brandon Holmes.



- Nathan Anderson Photo

(Left to right) Airdrie captains Michael Clifford, Casey Long, Dalton Davis and Landon Bayda accept the 2006 Tier III provincial trophy.