

# The Bandera PROPHECY

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Bulldogs season recap

*Bandera's season ends with first round playoff loss to Lago Vista*

By Brady Keane

BHS Coaching staff

After finishing the regular season 8-2 as the number two seed in District 14-4A Division II, Bandera was matched up with 2021 state 3AD1 semifinalist Lago Vista in the bi-district round of the playoffs Thursday night at Comal Pieper High School.

The Vikings got off to a fast start and forced the Bulldogs into a tough spot early in the first quarter before rolling to a 67-6 win that pushed Lago Vista on to the area round, where they will meet Sinton.

The loss ended the season for the Bulldogs and left the team with an 8-3 record, marking the program's third winning record in the last four years. The 2022 season is just the third time since the 2002 state championship season that the Bulldogs have won eight or more games (2009, 2019, 2022).

"Our goal this season was to not only maintain the standard of expectations we have created here over the previous three seasons but to raise the bar of expectations for future Bulldog teams," Head Football Coach Joel Fontenot-Amedee said. "While we fell short of our overall team goals of winning a district championship and a playoff game, I am so proud of what this team was able to achieve."

The year got off to a slow start as Bandera struggled to a 38-13 loss to Poteet in Week 1 while rolling out a starting lineup that featured a majority of first-time varsity players. It didn't take long for the team to right the ship, as the Bulldogs defeated Cotulla 39-18 in Week 2 and knocked off San Antonio Kennedy 24-14 in Week 3. Bandera returned home to beat Cole 42-20 on Military Appreciation Night in Week 4, and

then recorded a huge 25- 24 win over Hondo for Homecoming.

The victory over the Owls marked Bandera's first win over Hondo since 2009, and the Bulldogs did so in come-from-behind fashion in front of a packed crowd at Bulldog Stadium.

Bandera went on to stun Robstown 28-21 in another come-from-behind effort that featured a go-ahead touchdown in the final minute to secure the win. The Bulldogs defeated Pearsall 29-22 in the district opener, setting up a meeting with Devine with the district championship on the line.

Bandera came up short in a 42-14 finish that was much closer than the score indicated, but the Bulldogs responded well and finished the regular season with wins over San Antonio YMLA (42-14) and Carrizo Springs (28-10) before falling to Lago Vista.

Bandera defeated four playoff teams in the regular season, and six of the Bulldogs' regular season opponents advanced to the postseason.

Bandera is well represented on the District 14-4A DII All-District teams, which will be released this week. The Bulldogs had several players step up in a big way on both sides of the ball without having a ton of varsity experience entering the season.

Jesse Cardenas was one of the team's few returning starters on both sides of the ball, and the junior stepped up in a big way all season.

Cardenas tallied 259 carries for 1,455 yards and 14 touchdowns while adding nine catches for 141 yards and one touchdown. On defense, Cardenas finished with 84 tackles (57 solo), 13 tackles for loss, five sacks, six pass break ups, three fumble recoveries and an interception return for a touchdown. He also returned two kickoffs for a touchdown this season.

Senior quarterback Riley Haley finished with 85 completions for 1,607 yards and 19 touchdowns in his lone season as the Bulldogs' starter.

Junior Solomon Alexander tallied 23 catches for 425 yards and six touchdowns in just five full games of action before going down with an injury, and junior Alex Dirck had 26 catches for 512 yards and five touchdowns. Junior Corben Gonzales (nine catches, 263 yards, three TDs), senior Scott Perry (seven catches, 165 yards, two TDs) and junior

Isaac Segura (five catches, 79 yards, two TDs) all shined in their first varsity season as well.

Defensively, junior Dylan Gherman had a team-high 114 tackles (55 solo), an interception and five PBUs. Junior Jorge Cabasos had 100 tackles, 3.5 sacks and two forced fumbles. Junior Eric Straeter had 91 tackles, one forced fumble, one fumble recovery and one interception. Senior Isaac Martinez had 59 tackles (24 solo), four tackles for loss, three sacks, one forced fumble and one fumble recovery. Junior Daniel Freeman had 61 tackles (27 solo), 10 TFL, four sacks, two forced fumbles and two fumble recoveries. Junior Carson Powers had 57 tackles (24 solo), five TFL and five sacks. Senior Kevin Rodriguez had 53 tackles (29 solo), five PBUs and one forced fumble. Sophomore Gavin Spruell finished with 30 tackles, three TFL and five sacks.

The Bulldogs will lose a key class of seniors but do have several starters returning as they prepare for the 2023 season. Bandera will also have an influx of talent from a 7-3 JV team full of players looking to secure a spot at the varsity level next season.

“Our players and coaches stuck together this season, especially when things got tough. As much as any other team we've had here, this team cared about each other and took pride in putting the Bandera “B” on their chest day in and day out.

We will graduate 12 seniors who really set a great example for our younger guys by dedicating extra time in the weight room and on the field in preparation for each season.

They leave a legacy to be proud of. In their four years at BHS, the varsity football team's overall record is a winning one for the first time in over a decade. These seniors' overall record was 22-20. We have a strong group of returners coming back next season who will continue to raise the bar for our football program.

Thank you to all of the parents, administration and staff who supported our team this year.

Our community is what makes Bandera such a special place,” Fontenot-Amedee said.

## Bandera vs. Lago Vista

### Bandera stats:

Passing: R. Haley, 7-21-141-1-3, C. Gonzalez, 1-1-22-0-0

Rushing: Cardenas, 15-37, J. Cabrera, 6-16, Haley, 1- -2

Receiving: Cardenas, 3-41, C. Gonzalez, 2-78, A. Dirck, 2-39, Z.

Quesnot, 1-5

Tackles: D. Gherman, 11, J. Cabasos, 8, D. Freeman, 7, S. Perry, 7, E.

Straeter, 6, Cardenas, 5, I. Martinez, 5, G. Spruell, 5