

Cougars clinch share of IMC title



Mountain View's Austin Sears, right, powers the ball downfield as Crook County's Alex Greaves, front, closes in for a tackle during Friday night's football game at Mountain View High School in Bend. *Andy Tullis / The Bulletin*

Mountain View rolls past Crook County, 38-7, in its league finale

By [Mark Morical](#) / *The Bulletin*

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Austin Sears did not waste any time.

The junior running back returned the opening kickoff 78 yards for a touchdown, and Mountain View did not look back en route to a 38-7 dismantling of Crook County on Friday night at the Cougars' Jack Harris Stadium.

With the victory, Mountain View (5-1 Intermountain Conference, 7-1 overall) clinched at least a share of the IMC championship.

The Cougars are now half a game ahead of Bend atop the IMC standings.

If Bend High defeats Summit next week, the Lava Bears will earn the IMC's No. 1 seed to the state playoffs and Mountain View will be the No. 2 seed.

Bend defeated Mountain View earlier this season, so the Bears would get the top seed by virtue of a head-to-head tiebreaker.

The Cougars host Century of Hillsboro next week in a nonleague game and will have a bye before they host a Class 5A second-round state playoff game, likely against the No. 2 seed from the Portland Interscholastic League on Nov. 20 or Nov. 21.

“That’s an important accomplishment for this group of seniors,” Mountain View coach Steve Turner said of the Cougars clinching at least a share of the IMC championship. “That’s a goal that they’ve had all year. We had the setback against Bend, and we started off in a hole. But this is a great win for these guys.”

Sears added a 7-yard touchdown run, Joel Skotte contributed a 6-yard rushing score, and Jesse Zapata hauled in a 7-yard touchdown pass from Jacob Hollister as Mountain View took a 28-0 lead into the second quarter.

A 27-yard field goal by Skyler Laughlin gave the Cougars a 31-0 lead at halftime.

“We executed, and the blocking up front was great,” said Sears, who finished with 58 yards rushing and three touchdowns.

He added his third touchdown in the third quarter, finding the right corner on a 15-yard scamper to build the Mountain View lead to 38-0.

The Cowboys were able to move the ball on offense and had several opportunities in the red zone. Jordan Haines of Crook County scored on a 2-yard touchdown run with 4:30 left in the game.

Hollister, the Mountain View quarterback, completed five of six passes for 98 yards and one touchdown. Wide receiver Zapata had three receptions for 57 yards for the Cougars.

Solomon Helms, Mountain View’s standout running back, was on the sideline Friday night on crutches after suffering a high ankle sprain against The Dalles-Wahtonka last week. Turner said he did not know if Helms would be back in time for the playoffs.

“I have no idea,” Turner said. “We just have to see how things will be from day to day. But we’re pretty confident in the way Sears runs the football.”

Turner was not looking past Century to the Cougars’ first playoff game, which will be in three weeks.

“We still have one regular-season game to go, and that’ll be important for us,” Turner said. “We’ll focus on Century, and then start looking at the playoffs.”

Crook County (2-3 IMC, 2-7 overall) hosts The Dalles-Wahtonka next week in its final game of the regular season. A Cowboy win over the Eagle Indians would qualify Crook County for the state playoffs.

Mark Morical can be reached at 541-383-0318 or at mmorical@bendbulletin.com.