

Shamrocks from page 1C

"Every team has their big guy," Spolsky said. "But we're not just playing one guy. If you focus on one, the rest of the team will burn you."

The Titans whipped Detroit Martin Luther King 46-0, in the regional final, but Blye talks as if they don't have a chance.

CC was unimpressive in beating Livonia Stevenson 14-6 in the first round, before using last week's miserable conditions to its advantage in rallying for a 21-14 regional final win over Troy. Celts' quarterback Kyle Rance, who had plenty of time to throw a frozen ball, would have been better than three of 18 for 45 yards on a dry field.

Seldom-used CC tailback Greg Alcorta surprised the Celts with touchdown runs of 80 and 63 yards in the regional championship.

"I watch film of them, and I don't know if we can stop them," said Blye, who has a 155-50 career record. "The first thing that comes to mind is keeping them

out of four-down territory. And then you say, 'Well, I think the whole field is four-down territory for them.' The big problem is tackling Spolsky, but after you sellout on him, there are other guys who carry the ball. You have the (Kevin) Quay kid, Alcorta, but the key to the team is the option quarterback (Greg Call)."

Call completed only one pass to Quay for six yards last week, but is dangerous on a dry field with 6-7, 250-pound senior tight end Eric Gilbo (21 catches, 252 yards and two TDs).

The Shamrocks average 265 yards rushing per game (an average of 5.27 per attempt) and they allow an average of 79.5 rushing yards per game (2.99 per attempt). Spolsky leads CC with 1,165 yards in 192 carries (5.8 per carry) and 13 touchdowns. Quay has 641 on 118 carries (5.4 per attempt), but only 28 yards in 15 attempts in the playoffs.

"I think it will be a great battle, the team that wins the line of scrimmage will control the game," CC coach Tom Mach said. "Four

CATHOLIC CENTRAL

19	Tulalo Catholic	6
35	Ann Arbor Pioneer	18
31	Warren DeLaSalle	23
35	Detroit DePere	23
35	Blum Brother Rice	23
31	Orch. Lake St. Mary's	0
40	Univ. Detroit-Jesuit	0
23	Dearborn Divine Child	0
17	Blum Brother Rice	0
14	Livonia Stevenson	0
21	Troy	14
202	11-0-0	89

S.H. STEVENSON

21	Livonia Franklin	7
35	Grosse Pointe North	21
40	Roseville	16
19	Chippewa Valley	16
19	Utica Ford II	9
35	Sterling Heights	8
14	Port Huron Northern	13
19	Utica Eisenhower	12
33	Fraser	0
15	Chippewa Valley	18
46	Detroit King	0
296	11-0-0	110

teams are left and any four can win the state. It doesn't always come down to the best team, it comes down to who performs the best."

Common cold won't stop CC trio

BY STEVE KOWALSKI STAFF WRITER

After working up a sweat and scoring on two long touchdown runs in the cold, rain and wind during Saturday's Class AA regional final, guess how Redford Catholic Central's fill-in tailback Greg Alcorta was rewarded?

With a cold.

Alcorta, starting quarterback Greg Call and starting inside line-backer Milam Brooks all were under the weather Tuesday after school. Call also has a cold, which gets aggravated each week, but the trio expect to be ready for Saturday's semifinal game against Sterling Heights Stevenson at Mount Clemens Chippewa Valley.

At least they have four days to recover.

The Titans didn't have such a luxury when 5-foot-10, 165-pound sophomore tailback Joe Alls came down with the flu late last week. Alls went to the hospital Friday morning and was cleared to play in the regional final 24 hours later against Detroit Martin Luther King.

The Titans chose to have Alls taken to the game in a separate vehicle, which was heated, instead of riding with the team on a school bus to Utica High School. Alls stayed in the heated vehicle almost until game time before contributing on the Titans' first possession, a 79-yard scoring drive into the wind.

Alls caught a 28-yard pass from

quarterback Mark Morris and after the Titans went up 20-0, retreated to the heated vehicle for the remainder of the game.

The Titans won 46-0.

The only time CC played at Chippewa Valley was in 1991 when the Shamrocks outlasted Martin Luther King in overtime on a field goal. Chippewa Valley is on 19 Mile Road off Groesbeck. Take I-206 east to Groesbeck. Go north on Groesbeck to Cass Road, which is about a mile north of 17 Mile Road. Take Cass west until it curves into 19 Mile Road.

The Shamrocks, who won Class AA crowns in 1990 and '92 and a Class A title in '79, are 13-1 in playoff games this decade. They have reached the finals five times since 1987, winning two.

The last time a CC team lost a playoff game that wasn't for the state championship was '83 when Troy beat the Shamrocks in a regional final, 10-0.

Stevenson has some recent history on its side. The Titans defeated last year's No. 1 ranked team in Class AA, Warren DeLaSalle, 14-10, in the regional final. CC has been the No. 1 ranked team in Class AA since late in the season.

How does Stevenson work with 74 players on its roster? CC's is considered large and the Shamrocks generally have around 55.

Stevenson coach Rick Blye said he uses a platoon system, meaning everyone plays only one side of the ball. He thinks that, plus a winning tradition, draws a big turnout.

"We'll try to develop a kid at his position who might be a backup at another and play him one way," Blye said.

Stevenson's linemen are as big or bigger than CC's, but the Titans' 6-11, 160-pound placekicker Ed Speck is a midsize compared to CC's 6-7, 250-pound Eron Kosnowski.

Kosnowski has made eight of 14 field goal attempts, including a long of

46, and has a 32.9 yard average on 23 punts. He's a big target for a snapper and that's an edge in winter-like conditions.

"It's got a long lever, and it's hard to snap the ball over his head," Blye said. "Our kicking game is adequate, but we aren't going to kick a 48-yarder. Teams that play CC even can lose on the kicking game. They always seem to have a good kicker."

He obviously remembers CC knocking Utica Eisenhower (a Stevenson rival) out of the state playoffs in '88 with a last-second field goal, and in '92 with a field goal in overtime.

Sterling Heights Stevenson and CC have never met in football.

Sterling Heights High School, however, lost to the Shamrocks in the '97 Class A playoffs after handing Stevenson its only loss that year. Blye said that team, featuring all-state lineman Rob Doherty and quarterback Bill Love, may have been his best in 20 years as coach despite not qualifying for the playoffs.

Love, 24, took some time off after high school before attending Ferris State University, where he is a record-setting quarterback for the nationally-ranked NCAA Division II Bulldogs.

CC fullback John Spolsky told a television reporter prior to Tuesday's pre-game that the Shamrocks have used the '92 team for inspiration. That team won three straight close games in the playoffs en route to the AA championship over Saginaw Arthur Hill in the Silverdome.

"We're all fighting for the ultimate goal — the ring," Spolsky said. "That '92 team is like a pedestal for us. At any night we'd watch films of them. We want to be just like them."

Brooks leads the Shamrocks in tackles with 84, including 22 unassisted and one sack. Senior linebacker Tom Smiley has 62 tackles, 13 unassisted. Defensive end Mike Smiley leads with four sacks and has 60 tackles.

Frankenmuth stands between DCD, Dome

BY DAVID SAUNDERS STAFF WRITER

Can Detroit Country Day's third straight trip to the Class B state football semifinals be more memorable than last Saturday's 20-7 quarterfinal win?

It will be hard to exceed the Yellow Jackets' come-from-behind "Snow Bowl" victory over Jackson Lumen Christi.

One thing for sure is the stakes are bigger in a 1:30 p.m. Saturday clash with Frankenmuth (11-0) at Saginaw Valley State University. The winner will have a date in the state championship game at the Silverdome on Friday, Nov. 24. Perhaps the biggest moment last week was DCD's goal-line stand. Lumen Christi had four

cracks from the 1 but couldn't budge it.

To stop Frankenmuth, DCD coach Joe D'Angelo said the Yellow Jackets have to stop the big play and the option for short gains.

"Eventually, they will turn the ball over. The option is vulnerable to the turnover."

Running the option for Frankenmuth will be 6-foot-1, 160-pound senior Joe Jacobs, who operates the veer option offense that is similar to what Ann Arbor Pioneer ran against DCD this year.

"We have to stop their option, but what makes that difficult is they can throw the ball and the quarterback has excellent speed, so we just can't watch the half-

backs. And they give you lots of different looks."

In contrast, Frankenmuth is much bigger than the small-but-quick Lumen Christi squad.

"They outman us in terms of size, and they have the quickness," D'Angelo said. "This team you are not going to outkick. You are going to have to play good sound position football."

As it has been for the Yellow Jackets all year in its quest to get back to the 'Dome, defense will be the key.

"Both teams have the potential to score, but all year long it's been our defense. It's the defense that has set up our offense," D'Angelo said, pointing to 35-0 wins over Orchard Lake St. Mary and Monroe Jefferson.

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