

Shamrocks have another big game this week

BY DAN O'MEARA
STAFF WRITER

If you were at Winer Stadium, you saw another Boys Bowl classic Sunday afternoon.

Emotions on both sides did a 180-degree reversal in the final minute as Catholic Central pulled out a 14-12 victory over Brother Rice.

After the Warriors passed for the go-ahead touchdown with 1:07 remaining, Aaron Rock's 41-yard field goal on the last play of the game won it for the Shamrocks.

The winning kick was reminiscent of the 1995 contest that CC won in overtime, 26-23. In that one, Eron Kosmowski's 48-yard field goal on the final play of the fourth quarter sent the game into OT.

Both kicks made it over the crossbar, but that's where the similarity ends.

At last check, Kosmo's kick was still circling the globe and gaining on Halley's Comet. Rock's effort wobbled and went sideways instead of end over end, but it had the distance and the aim was true.

The last-second win preserved CC's unbeaten record, but the Shamrocks didn't have long to relish the victory. They began preparing the next day for another monumental clash Saturday.

In another battle of unbeaten teams, the Shamrocks play Orchard Lake St. Mary's in a game that will decide the Catholic League Central Division title.

On the grid prediction front, Dan O'Meara and Brad Emmons were 11-3 last week. O'Meara continues to hold a four-game

GRID PICKS

lead after five weeks, 62-12 as opposed to 58-16 for Emmons.

FRIDAY GAMES

(All times 7:30 p.m. unless noted)

Lt. Churchill at Farm. Harrison, 2:30: The Hawks (5-0, 3-0) did nothing to harm their standing as the No. 1 team in Class A Friday with a 41-0 win at Plymouth Canton, though it was a slow start for Harrison, which led 14-0 at half-time. It was also the 24th career victory for coach John Harrington. The Chargers (1-4, 0-3) haven't won since the first week, and it doesn't get any easier. A year ago, however, Churchill was the only team to score more than a touchdown against Harrison through eight games in a 27-14 loss. **PICKS:** It's a long afternoon for the Chargers.

John Glenn at Ft. Meigs, 3:30: The Raiders (2-2, 1-2) have given the Rockets some good battles over the years and could do it again. North has lost its last two, including a 33-0 defeat Saturday at Walled Lake Central, since winning its first title in the division. 4 in Class AA, appears headed for a showdown with WLC for the Lakes Division title next week. **PICKS:** The Raiders fail to derail the Chuck Gordon Express.

Redford Union at Highland Park, 4: The Panthers (0-5, 0-4) are still looking for that elusive first victory, but they've been close the last two weeks in Mega-Blue losses to Thurston (27-26) and Crestwood (22-18). The Polar Bears (1-4, 1-3) haven't fared much better, with their only win coming against Crestwood (28-7). **PICKS:** The Panthers keep Redford Union waiting another week.

Melvindale at Red. Thurston, 7: The Cardinals (3-2, 2-1) had a three-game winning streak snapped Friday when they lost to Mega-Blue leader Ypsilanti.

W.L. Central at Ltr. Stevenson: The Spartans (1-4, 0-3) are struggling to get something started, too, and have dropped three straight since beating Franklin in the WLLA career game. Central has emerged as the man to anger to Lakes Division favorite Glenn. The Vikings (4-1, 3-0) have won three in a row after losing to Harrison. Central whipped North Farmington, a team that beat Stevenson (14-7). **PICKS:** The Vikings sack another opponent.

Farmington at Ply. Salem: The Fal-

cons (2-3, 1-2) snuffed a three-game losing streak and looked impressive Saturday against Stevenson, controlling the line of scrimmage and the game for a 16-7 victory. Farmington starts six sophomores and could be an up-and-coming team. The young players are starting to improve as the coaches thought they would. Salem (2-3, 1-2) will be a good test for the Falcons at this stage of the season. The Rocks will be eager to rebound and reach .500 following a 40-14 loss to Glenn. **PICKS:** We need a coin-toss hero! Salem has the edge.

Lt. N'west at Clarendonville: The Trojans (1-4) have been a hard-luck team, dropping three games by a touchdown or less, including a 19-12 decision Saturday at Lutheran Westland. With Walter Flagdon running the ball and Justin Villanueva catching passes from Craig Rose, the Trojans are primed for a big game. And who should appear on the schedule this week but the Crusaders (1-4) — perennial Metro Conference dormats. Lutheran Northwest's only victory was a 7-6 win last week at Light & Life. The Crusaders haven't scored a point in four Metro Conference games. **PICKS:** A unanimous choice: Clarendonville.

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work in a Mega crossover game but fell apart in a 35-10 loss. **PICKS:** The Panthers get back to winning at the expense of the Zebras.

Bishop Borgosa vs. Benedictine, 2 p.m. at Garden City Jr. High: The Spartans (3-2, 1-1) have a good chance to win again this week against the winners of a Catholic 14-Section game. Borgosa needs a little pick-me-up after being beaten by Riverside Richard, 45-14. Benedictine (0-5, 0-2) was close two weeks ago in a 44-38 loss to Aquinas but has been outscored 109-2 in one common opponent. **PICKS:** The Ravens should stick to studying Poe and poetry.

Redford CC vs. O.L. St. Mary's, 7:30 p.m. at Clarendonville: The Shamrocks (5-0, 1-0) have outscored their opponents 143-51. Their one common opponent is Bishop Gallagher. CC beat the Lancans 28-6 two weeks ago, and St. Mary's (5-0, 2-0) won 28-13 last week. The Shamrocks will need the booming punts of Jason Hamilton as they did Sunday, and they just might have to call on Aaron Rock (as in air-fueled with nerves of steel) once again. **PICKS:** It's do or die for CC High. The Shamrocks need another win, and O'Meara says they get it. But Emmons has an upset special — the Eagles soar to a major victory!

SATURDAY GAMES

(all times 1 p.m. unless noted)

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Rock's field goal lifts CC over Rice

BY MARY BUDNER
STAFF WRITER

Brother Rice was literally caught between a Rock and a hard place in Sunday's annual Boys Bowl clash. That's Rock, as in Aaron Rock.

Rock booted a dramatic 41-yard field goal as time expired to lift Catholic Central to a 14-12 triumph over rival Brother Rice. A standing-room only crowd of more than 7,000 watched as, for the third straight year, the outcome was decided on the game's final play.

Rice scored with just over a minute remaining in the final quarter to take a 12-11 lead.

The Shamrocks promptly marched 68 yards in seven plays to set up Rock's game-winner. Spotted at the 31-yard line with five seconds remaining and against a strong wind, Rock boomed a knuckler through the uprights that sent the CC fans into a wild celebration.

"This was awesome. The wind was gusting, but I knew the ball was going through once I kicked it," said Rock, whose fourth field goal of the season kept the state-ranked Shamrocks a perfect 5-0.

"I just knew it would come down to a field goal, because I knew our team wasn't going to give up. Once (Rice) scored, I knew we'd still have a chance to win," said Tom Mach, who coached with Rock's pose under such

pressure.

"He just did a tremendous job of overcoming so much adversity in this game," he said. "He had missed an extra point and a field goal (in the first half). For a young man in high school to come back and kick the ball like that with so many people watching, that was a great sign of mental toughness on his part."

"We told (Rock) at halftime that he was going to win the game for us. We know this game is always close and tough, and we wanted to keep his spirits up. If we were going to give out a game ball like they do at ABC, we'd give it to him."

CC opened the scoring late in the first quarter on a 30-yard touchdown pass from Adam Tubaro to Don Blankner. Rock missed the extra point.

The Warriors went 80 yards on their next possession to tie the score. The six-play drive ended with a finely-executed 32-yard touchdown pass from Pat Craddock to Mark Campbell. Kevin Gerbeck missed the extra point, and the teams were tied at halftime.

CC tallied five points in less than a minute midway through the third quarter. Rock kicked a 31-yard field goal to cap CC's first drive of the second half.

Two plays later, CC nosedrug John Abshire tackled Rice's Justin Turk in the end zone for a safety and an 11-6 lead.

It stayed that way until, with 1:07 remaining in the game, Craddock hit Ron Jackson in the right corner of the end zone with a 31-yard scoring pass. Rice went for two points, but Craddock was tackled shy of the goal.

CC began its game-winning drive from its own 19-yard line. Tubaro completed three passes that sent the Shamrocks to the Warriors' 36. CC lost three yards when Tubaro was sacked. On the next play, the Warriors were called for pass interference that put the ball on the Rice 24 with five seconds left. Rock provided the heroics.

"It's great to win those kinds of games and it's tough to lose them," said Brother Rice coach AJ Fracassa, whose team fell to 8-2 overall and will be hard-pressed to make the playoffs.

"We almost pulled through and beat them. That little bump there on an uncatchable ball was the turning point." CC had 274 total yards, Rice 254. The Shamrocks rushed for 158 yards, and Rice had the better passing total with 234 yards. CC workhorse Chris Duellewek finished with 87 yards on 22 carries, and Tubaro completed 13 of 28 passes. Craddock, who completed 8-2 overall and will be hard-pressed to make the playoffs.

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