

# Nobody would expect it, but forward pass was CC's big play



PAUL BEAUDRY

At the beginning of the year, the very first practice in fact, Catholic Central quarterback Tom Jakacki and his coach, Tom Mach, were joking about the upcoming season.

"Coach Mach and I have been talking," said Jakacki. "He's going to let me throw 30 times a game."

Now, anyone who knows CC football knows that Tom Mach would rather shave his head and paint it orange and black before he'd have his quarterback throw 30 times a game, every game, all season.

But in an ironic twist, the forward pass became the defining

play for CC's state-title victory. It was just a simple little pass that floated to Ryan Wroblecki for a 2-yard gain. It should have been batted down — and in fact was tipped at the end. But that simple little pass defined CC's season because it produced the touchdown that gave the Shamrocks a 24-21 victory over Utica Eisenhower and the Division I state title.

It wasn't crisp. It wasn't sharp. It got the job done.

"Right after the University of Detroit loss, when we fell to 3-3, it would have been easy for us to give up," said Jakacki. "We were struggling and nothing was going right. Coach Mach was watching that film and said 'It's time.'"

"And we threw out everything we learned up to that point and went back to CC football."

For Farmington-resident Jakacki especially, the win was vindication from last year's semi-final loss to Eisenhower. Like this year, the Eagles shut down CC's running game — holding the Shamrocks to less than four yards a carry. And while Jakacki had a better day passing this year than last — at least in terms of numbers — the quality of the plays and the maturity of the player made a difference.

"We were close to the seniors last year and I think we wanted it for them," said "We wanted to win the title, and I think we wanted to beat Eisenhower in the finals especially. We always thought we'd get here."

The last statement was met with understandable skepticism. After all, there haven't been a lot of 3-3 teams that have gone on to win the state title — especially

when the three losses were because of play on the field and not forfeits.

"Honestly? I really did believe — all season, even when we were 3-3, that we'd be here," said Jakacki. "You can ask my parents, ask anybody. The four captains (Jakacki, Ryan Rogowski, Brad Jazembowski, Jeff Globish) kept stressing that we had to believe we could do it. We knew we had the talent. It's a matter of putting it all together."

Even Mach knew it could be done. But even if the Shamrocks fell short, he knew what the strong point of the team was — the team itself.

"Before the Walled Lake Western game, I wrote down the greatest achievement of the season," said Mach. "It wasn't winning. It was the way players never gave up, the way they

stayed focused. And that's a credit to our seniors and our captains."

Players like Jakacki, Rogowski, Wroblecki, Globish and Mike Banaszak are going to be the ones that people notice. Hey, they're the starters and the attention when they win.

But just as important are the players who don't start and are never in the spotlight — players like senior Hekmat Dahabi, all 5-foot-8, 165-pounds of him.

Players who practice just as hard as everyone else, but rarely if ever get in the game; players who are hopeful to play in games like a 46-6 first-round win over Cody, but aren't going to get a sniff in a state title game; players who make the starters better because they are out there every day trying their best.

It's not about which team has the best players.

If that was the case, Eisenhower should have won the game because quarterback/safety/kick returner Joe DiGiorgio was probably the best player on either side of the ball.

It's about which players can become the best team.

"When people look back on this game," said Mach. "They'll say it was the greatest comeback in CC history."

The same could be said of the Shamrocks' Lazarus-like recovery from a 3-3 start.

The reason? The best comeback in CC history might have come from one of the best teams. (Beaudry is the Redford-Garden City sports editor for the Observer and can be reached at (734) 963-2106 or by e-mail at pbeaudry@oe.homecom.net.)

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goals just 37 seconds later off a feed from Frayne.

"Farmington is an excellent hockey team," Jobbitt said. "They outplayed us. I told them after the game I give them a lot of credit."

"It was a great comeback. If they do that, they're going to win a lot of hockey games."

"But you've got to come out and play three periods like that, not 1 1/2."

CULVER (IND.) 3, REDFORD CC 1: Culver (Ind.) Military Academy scored a shorthanded goal with 4:30 to play Friday night to break a 1-1 tie and gain their win over Detroit Catholic Central.

CC's Ryan O'Dea scored an unassisted goal with 8:30 left in the contest to tie the score at 1-1, before Culver took the lead and added an empty-net goal with five seconds left. CC (1-2) outshot Culver, 20-19, while Shamrocks' goalie Jimmy Blanchard made 17 saves.

SALEM 8, FARMINGTON 7: Goals by John Shultz and Dave Gill in the final four minutes allowed Plymouth Salem to stave off a three-period Farmington Unified comeback Wednesday.

Shultz and Mark Nagel scored two goals each and assisted on two others for the Rocks.

The Rocks led 6-3 advantage before the Flyers, led by Keith Hoy and Brad Heraghty (each with three goals in the game), mounted their comeback. Matt Leo also scored for the Flyers.

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