

Cold weather no problem for CC's Jonna in playoffs

BY STEVE KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

A hard hat and working boots aren't Joe Jonna's style as winter approaches, but a football helmet and cleats fit nicely. Jonna, who works summers for the family business, Jonna Construction, wasn't bothered by the cold and snow during Class AA regional final Saturday.

Jonna caught two passes, including a 38-yard bomb for a touchdown, and had an interception in Detroit Catholic Central's 21-3 victory over host Troy. "It was the most fun I ever had in a football game," said Jonna, a 6-foot, 180-pound senior wide receiver/defensive back. Keep this up and his father, Frank Jonna, and uncle, Jim

Jonna, might ask for his services outdoors during the holidays. Jonna, the second of four children, prefers working at the holidays for his mother Judy's birthdays, Wicks 'N Sticks. Stocking shelves there beats sweeping and digging outdoors. Of course, that's when he has time away from his schoolwork and the CC basketball team, for which he's a starting guard. "In the summer, he likes construction," his mother said. "The money's better and he gets a car (to travel between sites)."

The extended stay in the state playoffs is keeping Jonna and football teammates Don Slankster, Dave Lusky, Adam

Tubaro and Nick Brzezinski away from the first week of pre-season basketball workouts. Jonna shoots a few baskets prior to football practice, then conveniently leaves in time to miss the team's two-mile run. Jonna's no dummy - all the hard conditioning by the football team was done in the pre-season. He is second on the team in receptions with 20 for 307 yards and three touchdowns and has five interceptions on defense. His TD with about two minutes remaining against Troy gave the Shamrocks a 21-3 lead and came only three plays after he intercepted a Troy pass. "Joe thought he could beat him

deep and asked to go for it and we did." Mach said of the long pass on third down to Jonna. "Joe has certainly made some key catches; he's a smart receiver and defensive back." Jonna played football, basketball and baseball at Our Lady of Sorrows in Farmington, but it took some convincing to keep him on the football team. "I kept trying to talk him into soccer because I was scared of injuries," Judy Jonna said. "A woman whose kids played at the school said 'Let him play football.' The coach teaches the basics and has them praying a lot, telling them to be nice to their moms."

Joe's responsibilities at home extend to his younger brother, Jeffrey, who is handicapped from a brain injury at age 3. "Jeffrey needs around the clock care, and Joe takes care of him I think more than most boys would at his age," Judy Jonna said. "I think that's where he draws some of his strength. I get on him about grades and stuff, but my husband and I are proud of him off the field more than on." A warm seat is waiting for Jeffrey if the Shamrock can beat Sterling Heights Stevenson at 1 p.m. Saturday in a Class AA semifinal game at Port Huron. "He likes the games in the Silverdome," Joe said.



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BY CHRIS MAYER
STAFF WRITER

Over the past few seasons Walled Lake Western football has been synonymous with the big play.

The Warriors ventured to snowy Ann Arbor Saturday night, hoping their quick-strike capabilities would lead them one

step closer to a second straight Class AA state championship.

Instead it was Ann Arbor Huron that made the big plays in a 21-0 regional final win.

The playing conditions were less than ideal. Snow fell during much of the game, leaving the field snow-covered and slippery. "Both of us played in this and

I've never used that for an excuse," Western coach Chuck Apap said. "People will say we're a quick team and this (weather) didn't help, but it's a football game. It's snapping the ball, it's trying to block, run and tackle. They have to do the same thing." The tone for the game was set early. Western took the opening kickoff and drove from its 38 to Huron's 41, but quarterback Frank Stanford was trapped for a loss on fourth-and-1.

Huron marched 68 yards in nine plays, culminating in full-back Michael Porter's 12-yard run. Cody Cargill blocked the point-after to keep the score 6-0. The Warriors would lose two of three fumbles and miss a 34-yard field goal attempt in the first half. The second fumble proved the most costly. Western drove deep inside

Huron territory in the second quarter, but the River Rats (11-0) recovered a fumble at the 14 and quickly capitalized.

Joel Przygodski connected with Thebiti Williamson for a 76-yard TD pass. Przygodski found Williamson on the two-point conversion for a 14-0 lead 2:26 before halftime.

"When we called the play, I said it was going to be six points," Huron coach Paul Verska said. "I just knew it was there if we didn't drop it or overthrow it. It was there because (Western) was coming up with their corners and rushing nine or 10 guys, and they weren't even looking for a pass."

Przygodski added a 16-yard touchdown pass to Mike Kelleher with 1:35 left in the game.

Western (9-2) mustered only 136 rushing yards and 160 total offense. The Warriors came in averaging 315 rushing yards. Dave Johnson returned from a leg injury to gain 71 yards on 18 carries. Stanford ran for 41.

"What bothered us was that we drove the field and then didn't score," Apap said. "We got within the 18 or 19 a few times and didn't put it in."

"If we put a couple of those in the end zone, that long touchdown pass doesn't look like very much. But I've got to say the better team won tonight. Huron did an exceptional job."

"I'm proud of our kids. The seniors had a two-year run that is phenomenal; they've set a standard for the Warriors of the future."

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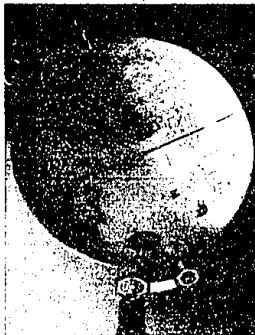
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Maples from C5

"Chris makes plays from side-line-to-side-line," said Fraser. "He's a third-year starter, and he really has his reads down. He gets to where he's supposed to be and waits for the ball."

Stefanes leads Seaholm with 88 solo tackles and a state-record eight fumble recoveries. He also has forced five fumbles and has three interceptions.

"Harrison has some huge tackles, and I'm concerned they're going to be knocking our defensive linemen into our linebackers," Fraser said.

Defensive backs Adam and Todd Ritter have combined for 60 solo tackles, seven interceptions and a dozen pass break-ups. Gabe Hemmingway, a transfer this year from Southgate Aquinas, has been a rushing threat at defensive end.

Seaholm's offense has been surprisingly inconsistent at times. Even though the explosive Maples have averaged 31.7 points, there have been times when it took them a while to get going. In the final regular-season game, the score was 7-7 at half-time, but Seaholm erupted for 27 second-half points.

Fraser hopes Seaholm can control the ball more against the Hawks and keep the Harrison offense off the field.

Tailback Ann Sherwood has rushed for 1,466 yards and 16 touchdowns. He also has 14 pass receptions for 261 yards and three TDs. Sherwood has 2,395 yards and 21 TDs in his career.

Quarterback Bill Schuterman is 81-of-180 passing for 1,208 yards and 16 TDs for a 45-percent completion rate. The leading receiver is tight end James Connolly with 20 receptions for 229 yards and three TDs.

"I think our offense is really going to have to show up," Fraser said. "Our defense has done some amazing things while our offense has sputtered. There's no room for sputtering now."

"We have to line up against them with discipline and courage, the way we played everyone else. We're excited to be playing. We've been practicing in the cold, but our players are fired up."