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SUNY Cortland Football
Cortland vs. Morrisville
September 9, 2006; Drake Field; Morrisville, N.Y.

FINAL SCORE: Cortland 52, Morrisville 14

MORRISVILLE, N.Y. – Senior tailback Matt Rickert (Holbrook/Sachem) rushed for 117 yards and two touchdowns on 16 carries and junior Alex Smith (Niagara Falls/Niagara-Wheatfield) completed 12-of-16 passes for 177 yards and a score as Cortland opened its season with a 52-14 victory at SUNY Morrisville. The teams were playing for the first time since 1930. Morrisville is a provisional NCAA Division III member for the first time this year after playing on the junior college level the previous nine seasons.

Cortland jumped out to a 31-0 lead at halftime and extended the score to 45-0 midway through the third quarter. The Red Dragons outgained the Mustangs 425-186 in total yardage, including a 228-82 advantage in the air.

Rickert’s 3-yard touchdown run with 9:13 left in the first quarter opened the scoring, and his 44-yard run on the first play of Cortland’s next drive helped set up a 24-yard field goal by junior Matthew Mintz (Lawrence). Mintz made all six of his point-after kicks in the game in addition to the field goal. The lead grew to 17-0 on the first play of the second quarter when Smith connected with senior tight end Dave Fregelette (Hamburg) on an 8-yard scoring pass. On the ensuing kickoff, junior Matt Berman (Scarsdale) forced a fumble and recovered the ball on the Morrisville 17-yard line. Three plays later, Rickert found the end zone from three yards out to give the Red Dragons a 24-0 lead.

Cortland drove 75 yards for a touchdown on its next possession. Smith found senior Drew Lascari (Pequannock, NJ/Pequannock Township) on a 43-yard reception for the key play in the series, then capped the drive four plays later with a 7-yard touchdown run. The Red Dragons continued their offensive success on the first possession of the second half. After a 32-yard kickoff return by junior Jeff Beck (Middlehope/Marlboro) put the ball on the Cortland 47-yard line, Rickert carried three times for a combined 20 yards and junior Dustin Bowser (Jamestown/Southwestern) ran the next five times for 33 yards, including a 1-yard touchdown run.

Morrisville (0-2) was forced to punt near its own end zone on its next possession. Lascari blocked the punt and fell on the ball for a touchdown and a 45-0 lead. The hosts then mounted their best drive of the game, covering 75 yards on 11 plays. Quarterback Bill Poling completed the drive with an 18-yard pass to Prince Mack, who made the catch for the touchdown despite a defensive pass interference call on the play. Derek Mulson added the point-after kick.

The Mustangs then forced Cortland’s first punt of the afternoon, which Derrick Woodard returned 36 yards to the Red Dragon 27-yard line. Poling completed a 19-yard pass to Jacob Lew on 3rd-and-10 and, following a defensive pass interference penalty, Dante Bryant ran one yard for a touchdown to draw the Mustangs within 45-14.

Cortland posted the only points of the fourth quarter when sophomore Andrew Giuliano (Thornwood/Westlake) ran three yards for a touchdown with 4:34 remaining. The big plays in the drive were a 21-yard pass to junior Keith Greene (Brentwood) and a 24-yard connection to junior Ryan Hondorf (Clyde/Clyde-Savannah) by sophomore quarterback Ray Miles (Port Byron/Dana L. West). Sophomore Jeffrey Lang (Dryden) added the extra point. Miles finished 4-of-8 passing for 51 yards.

Bowser rushed for 47 yards on 12 carries and senior Anthony Morat (Rome/Rome Free Academy) caught five passes for 77 yards. Junior Chris Gagstetter (Valley Stream) made a team-high seven tackles. Berman and senior Matt Montpetit (Westhampton/Westhampton Beach) recorded five tackles apiece and senior Bill Hauser (Lancaster) recorded an interception. Morrisville finished with 104 yards net rushing - only one of Cortland’s 10 opponents last season reached the 100-yard rushing mark. Bryant carried 11 times for 50 yards and Poling was 6-of-18 passing for 81 yards. Josh Wells, Clyde Murphy and Ryan Campbell each made six tackles.

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