2002 ECAC Division III Northwest Football Championship
SUNY Cortland vs. Westfield State College
November 23, 2002; SUNY Cortland Stadium Complex; Cortland, N.Y.

FINAL SCORE: Cortland 30, Westfield State 7

CORTLAND, N.Y. – Junior quarterback and game MVP J.J. Tutwiler (Grand Island) completed 17-of-33 passes for 189 yards and two touchdowns and also ran for a score as Cortland defeated Westfield State 30-7 in the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Division III Northwest Championship game. The Red Dragons finish the season with a 9-2 record for their highest win total since 1990. Westfield State ends the year 8-3 after winning its first eight games.

Cortland scored on its second possession when sophomore tailback Steve Davis (Central Islip) took a pitch and ran left 30 yards for a touchdown. Senior wide receiver Rocco Colucci (East Northport/Northport) and junior tight end Tony Romano (Baldwinsville/C.W. Baker) made nice blocks up field to spring Davis for the score. On their next possession, the Red Dragons needed only four plays to drive 67 yards for a touchdown. Colucci made a nice one-handed catch for a 37-yard gain during the drive and two plays later Tutwiler ran 18 yards to paydirt on an option play to give Cortland a 14-0 lead.

The visiting Owls got on the board in the second quarter after recovering a Tutwiler fumble on the Cortland 15-yard line. Junior quarterback Chris Lapointe (Millers Falls, MA/Turners Falls) completed a 2-yard pass to senior Tom Walsh (Weymouth, MA/Boston College High) on the third play of the drive, with Walsh making a nice effort to extend the ball just over the goal line. The play drew Westfield within 14-7 with six minutes, 32 seconds left in the half. One possession earlier, Westfield turned the ball over on downs at the Cortland 8-yard line when a quarterback sneak by Lapointe on 4th-and-1 was stopped for no gain by Red Dragon senior defensive tackle John Longo (Massapequa).

Cortland put up nine points in the final two minutes of the half to take a 23-7 lead. A six-play, 44-yard drive was capped by a 36-yard shovel pass from Tutwiler to junior tailback Mike Stepnick (Marilla/Iroquois) for a touchdown with 1:35 left. The PAT kick, however, was blocked by senior Josue Zamora (Hartford, CT/Weaver). Cortland forced a punt after three plays on the next Owls’ possession and received the ball on the Westfield 47-yard line with 39 seconds left. On the seventh play of the drive, Stepnick threw a halfback option pass to Tutwiler for a 12-yard gain, setting up a 40-yard field goal by senior George Oostmeyer (Islip/Calhoun) into the wind that just cleared the crossbar on the final play of the half.

The cold and windy weather appeared to take its toll in the second half as numerous passes were dropped by both teams. The only score of the half came with 3:19 left in the third quarter when Tutwiler hit Romano for a 6-yard scoring pass to complete a six-play, 49-yard drive. Romano’s catch was his school record 16th career touchdown reception (starting this year, post-season games count toward NCAA season records, and Cortland’s record book will reflect that decision).

Prior to Romano’s touchdown, Cortland let a great scoring chance slip away when Zamora forced a fumble at the Westfield 1-yard line that the Owls recovered in the end zone. That opportunity was set up when senior Matt Gates (Cicero/Cicero-North Syracuse) ran 32 yards to the Westfield 10-yard line as the up-man on a fake punt on 4th-and-13.

Westfield best second-half scoring chance came early in the fourth quarter when the Owls moved the ball from their own 30-yard line to the Cortland 16-yard line. A 4th-and-6 pass from the 18, however, fell incomplete.

Westfield entered the game ranked first nationally in Division III in total defense (156.9 yards/game) and passing defense (66.41 efficiency rating against), second in scoring defense (7.9 points/game) and third in run defense (53.9 yards/game). Cortland finished the game with 363 yards of total offense – 162 on the ground and 201 through the air. Davis finished with 67 yards on nine carries, all in the first half. Colucci caught seven passes for 85 yards.
Westfield was led offensively by junior Matt Yvon's (East Longmeadow, MA/Cathedral) seven receptions for 90 yards. Lapointe finished 16-of-41 passing for 157 yards and one touchdown.

Defensively, Cortland senior defensive end Justin Gualtieri (Rome/Rome Free Academy) recorded three sacks as part of his four tackles for lost yardage. He made eight tackles total and also registered a pass breakup and two quarterback hurries. Senior linebacker Doug Luciano (Warwick/Warwick Valley) made a team-high 10 tackles and freshman linebacker Casey Lorenz (Wappingers Falls/Roy C. Ketcham) recorded eight tackles. Luciano also finished with a forced fumble and an interception. Westfield was led defensively by Zamora's 12 tackles and forced fumble and sophomore linebacker Matt Wooliver's (Lanesboro, MA/Mt. Greylock) nine tackles.

Cortland was making its ninth post-season appearance. The Red Dragons are now 4-1 in ECAC title games (their last ECAC game was in 1995) in addition to making NCAA showings in 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1997. Westfield State was making its first ECAC appearance after playing in the NCAA tournament last year.

Box Score (Final) – Westfield St. Coll. vs SUNY Cortland (Nov 23, 2002 at Cortland, NY)

Score by Quarters 1 2 3 4 Score
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Westfield St. Coll.. 0 7 0 0 - 7       Record: (8-3)
SUNY Cortland....... 14 9 7 0 - 30       Record: (9-2)

Scoring Summary:
1st 10:10 CORT - Steve Davis 30 yd run (George Oostmeyer kick), 3-55 0:48, WF 0 - CORT 7
06:37 CORT - J.J. Tutwiler 18 yd run (George Oostmeyer kick), 4-67 1:25, WF 0 - CORT 14
2nd 06:32 WESTFLD - Tom Walsh 2 yd pass from Chris Lapointe (Ryan Clifford kick), 4-15 1:16, WF 7 - CORT 14
01:35 CORT - Mike Stepnick 36 yd pass from J.J. Tutwiler (George Oostmeyer kick blkd), 6-44 1:50, WF 7 - CORT 20
00:00 CORT - George Oostmeyer 40 yd field goal, 8-24 0:39, WF 7 - CORT 23
3rd 03:19 CORT - Tony Romano 6 yd pass from J.J. Tutwiler (George Oostmeyer kick), 6-49 2:22, WF 7 - CORT 30

WESTFLD CORT
FIRST DOWNS............... 13 21
RUSHES-YARDS (NET).......... 36-47 37-162
PASSING YDS (NET).......... 157 201
Passes Att-Comp-Int........... 42-16-1 35-18-1
TOTAL OFFENSE PLAYS-YARDS... 78-204 72-363
Fumble Returns-Yards........ 0-0 0-0
Punt Returns-Yards.......... 2-19 4-29
Kickoff Returns-Yards....... 3-1 1-55
Interception Returns-Yards.. 1-0 1-17
Punts (Number-Avg)......... 9-25.0 5-29.8
Fumbles-Lost............... 4-1 5-3
Penalties-Yards........... 6-76 9-87
Possession Time............ 31:26 28:34
Third-Down Conversions...... 7 of 21 7 of 17
Fourth-Down Conversions..... 0 of 4 3 of 3
Red-Zone Scores-Chances..... 1-3 2-4
Sacks By: Number-Yards...... 0-0 4-30

RUSHING: Westfield St. Coll.-Don Jones 21-40; Jose Molina 5-34; Matt Wooliver 1-3; Tom Walsh 1-3; TEAM 1-minus 7; Chris Lapointe 7-minus 26. SUNY Cortland-Steve Davis 9-67; Chris Stalker 10-43; Matt Gates 1-32; J.J. Tutwiler 7-19; Ryan Tranchida 9-3; TEAM 1-minus 2.

PASSING: Westfield St. Coll.-Chris Lapointe 16-41-1-157; Marc Rogers 0-1-0-0. SUNY Cortland-J.J. Tutwiler 17-33-1-189; Mike Stepnick 1-1-0-0; TEAM 0-1-0-0.

RECEIVING: Westfield St. Coll.-Matt Yvon 7-90; Erik Consilvio 3-28; Joe Holleran 3-12; Kevin Vaughn 1-22; Brian Matuszko 1-3; Tom Walsh 1-2. SUNY Cortland-Rocco Colucci 7-85; Tony Romano 4-29; Neal Heaton Jr. 3-25; Mike Stepnick 1-36; Steve Davis 1-12; J.J. Tutwiler 1-12; Joe Marzullo 1-2.

INTERCEPTIONS: Westfield St. Coll.-Ryan Togneri 1-0. SUNY Cortland-Doug Luciano 1-17.

FUMBLES: Westfield St. Coll.-TEAM 1-0; Chris Lapointe 1-0; Matt Yvon 1-1; Tim Miranda 1-0. SUNY Cortland-J.J. Tutwiler 2-1; Chris Stalker 2-2; Ryan Tranchida 1-0.

Stadium: Cortland Stadium Attendance: 200 Kickoff time: 12 pm End of Game: 2:47 pm Total elapsed time: 2:47 pm Officials: Referee: Don Vicario; Umpire: Joe Dunlavey; Linesman: Peter Beratta; Line judge: Sandy Paxton; Field judge: Mike Piskor; Side judge: Tom Connolly; Scorer: Fran Elia; Temperature: low 30s Wind: WNW 20

Weather: Windy (snow pregame)