SUNY Cortland Sports Information

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SUNY Cortland Football
Cortland vs. St. John Fisher College
ECAC Division III Northwest Bowl Game
November 22, 2003; Growney Stadium; Pittsford, N.Y.

FINAL SCORE: St. John Fisher 47, Cortland 37

PITTSFORD, N.Y. – Senior quarterback Greg Roland completed 20-of-26 passes for 300 yards and three touchdowns to earn game Most Valuable Player honors as St. John Fisher defeated visiting SUNY Cortland, 47-37, in the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) Division III Northwest Bowl Game at Growney Stadium.

The Cardinals, making their first post-season appearance in their 17-year history as a Division III program, finish the season with an 8-3 record. The Red Dragons, who were making their 10th post-season showing, end the year with a 5-5 mark.

St. John Fisher senior running back Jason Meyers rushed for 169 yards and a touchdown on 39 carries and surpassed 4,000 career rushing yards. Sophomore wide receiver Noah Fehrenbach made nine catches for 110 yards and a touchdown. Cortland senior quarterback J.J. Tutwiler (Grand Island) completed 13-of-22 passes for 233 yards and rushed 15 times for 48 yards and a score. Junior tailback Steve Davis (Central Islip) led the Red Dragons with 99 yards rushing on 18 carries.

The host Cardinals outgained Cortland 533-451 in total offensive yardage. The game also featured a combined 213 penalty yards. Cortland was assessed 18 penalties for 144 yards, while Fisher had eight penalties for 69 yards.

Fisher took a 6-0 lead on the game’s first series, driving 81 yards on 10 plays. Roland completed the drive with an 11-yard touchdown pass to Fehrenbach. Cortland freshman Michael Dunn (Kenmore/Kenmore West) blocked the extra point, however, and returned the ball for a two-point defensive PAT. On their ensuing offensive series, the Red Dragons drove 71 yards on four plays, keyed by a 71-yard pass from Tutwiler to Neal Heaton Jr. (Bellport), and took a 9-6 lead on senior Chris Stalker’s (Medina) 1-yard touchdown run.

Cortland appeared to be heading for another score on its next drive. The Red Dragons started on their own 20-yard line and moved the ball to the Fisher 13-yard line on 14 plays. On 3rd-and-7, Tutwiler completed a pass to freshman Anthony Morat (Rome/Rome Free Academy) near the goal line. Morat was hit by junior Brandon Banks and fumbled. The ball was recovered by Fisher inside the 1-yard line with 1:04 left in the first quarter. The Cardinals proceeded to drive 99 yards on 12 plays, with Meyers picking up the final 19 yards on a touchdown run with 11:00 left in the half.

Fisher forced Cortland to punt on each of its final four possessions of the half. The Cardinals scored 17 points on their final four possessions, starting with a 27-yard pass from Roland to Craig Fitzpatrick with 7:17 left. Mark Robinson scored the first of his two touchdowns on a 5-yard run with 3:39 left and, two possessions later, Fisher drove from the Cortland 48-yard line to the 18 in just 26 seconds. Scott VanAlst missed a 35-yard field goal, but Cortland was ruled offsides on the play. VanAlst then connected on a 30-yard field goal with three seconds remaining and the Cardinals led 30-9 at halftime.

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VanAlst made a 27-yard field goal – the Cardinals' 27th unanswered point – with 5:54 left in the third quarter to extend the lead to 33-9. On the ensuing kickoff, Cortland freshman Will Groff (Queensbury) fielded the ball in the front of the end zone and raced down the right sideline for a 100-yard touchdown. The play, which cut the deficit to 33-16, was the longest kickoff return in ECAC Division III playoff history and only the second 100-yard kickoff return in Cortland history. Jeff Austin returned a kickoff 100 yards for a touchdown for Cortland versus The University of Buffalo in 1985.

Cortland's defense held on the next possession, but a fumble on the Red Dragons' first play gave the ball back to the Cardinals at Cortland's 28-yard line. On the next play, James Simboli made a nice one-handed catch in the end zone to give Fisher a 40-16 lead.

Cortland scored twice in the first five minutes of the fourth quarter to draw within 40-30. Senior Mike Stepnick's (Marilla/Iroquois) 3-yard touchdown run capped a nine-play, 64-yard drive with 13:58 left. The Red Dragons recovered a fumble on their own 37-yard line on Fisher's next series, and a 49-yard pass from Tutwiler to senior Jon Frechette (Oswego) moved the ball to the Fisher 14-yard line. Three plays later, Stalker ran in from three yards out for his second touchdown with 10:02 left.

On their next drive, Fisher faced three third-down plays needing at least five yards and converted on all three. Roland threw a 7-yard pass to Fehrenbach on 3rd-and-5 from the Fisher 32, a 10-yard pass to Nick Weatherbee on 3rd-and-7 from the Fisher 42 and 21-yard pass to Fehrenbach on 3rd-and-10 from the Cortland 48. The Cardinals finished the game 10-of-16 on third-down conversions. Two plays later, Robinson ran 26 yards for a touchdown and Fisher led 47-30.

Cortland's final score came on a 12-play, 69-yard drive that culminated in a 3-yard touchdown run by Tutwiler on 3rd-and-goal. Trailing 47-30 with 2:18 left, the Red Dragons attempted an onside kick but the ball went out of bounds at the Fisher 45. Cortland stopped the Cardinals on downs and regained possession with 37 seconds left. Tutwiler threw three incomplete passes, rushed 13 yards on fourth down, and had a final “Hail Mary” miss the mark. Tutwiler finished his career with 447 completions, four short of matching Dick Puccio’s career record.

Mike Fox led Fisher's defense with 15 tackles. Three Red Dragons recorded double-figure tackles. Freshman lineman Adam Haas (East Aurora/St. Francis) made a team-high 12 stops. Freshman linebacker Matt Montpetit (Westhampton Beach/Westhampton) registered 11 tackles and freshman safety Stef Sair (Huntington) made 10 tackles. Junior defensive end Joe Pritchard (Lindenhurst) finished with eight tackles and a forced fumbles. Two of his 3.5 tackles for losses were sacks.