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SUNY Cortland Football
Cortland vs. Utica College
November 1, 2003; Charles A. Gaetano Stadium; Utica, N.Y.

FINAL SCORE: Cortland 43, Utica 7

UTICA, N.Y. – Cortland's defense scored two touchdowns and set up another in the first half as the Red Dragons (4-4) defeated host Utica College, 43-7, in a non-conference game. Freshman Chuck Eich (Cheektowaga) scored two defensive touchdowns and sophomore tailback Tim Hammer (Williamsville/Clarence) rushed for 147 yards and two touchdowns, all in the second half.

Utica (1-8) was initially stopped on three plays on its opening drive, but a punt deflected off a Cortland player and was recovered by the Pioneers at the Utica 32-yard line. Two plays later, however, the Red Dragons forced a fumble that was recovered on the 13-yard line. On Cortland's first offensive play, junior tailback Steve Davis (Central Islip) ran 13 yards for a touchdown and a 7-0 lead just 1 minute, 22 seconds into the game.

On Utica's next possession, a 3rd-and-8 pass by backup quarterback Nick Martin was intercepted by Red Dragon freshman free safety Stef Sair (Huntington) at the Utica 33-yard line. Sair returned the ball inside the 10-yard line and just as he was being tackled pitched the ball to Eich, who ran 11 yards for a touchdown. The second of five extra points by junior Ryan DeCamp (Plattsburgh/Seton Catholic) gave Cortland a 14-0 lead with 12:12 left in the quarter. Sair leads Cortland this fall with five interceptions and has picked off a pass in three straight games, one shy of matching the school record.

The hosts drove to the Cortland's 37-yard line on their next possession before punting. Cortland proceeded to drive 80 yards on 13 plays, capped by a 17-yard touchdown pass from senior J.J. Tutwiler (Grand Island) to senior Dan Bryant (Parish/A-P-W). The catch was Bryant's first of the season and his first career touchdown as a Red Dragon. Bryant had apparently scored four plays earlier when Tutwiler avoided a rush, stiff-armed a tackler and threw a pass into the end zone that Bryant caught on a nice leaping grab, but the play was called back due to offsetting penalties. Cortland led 22-0 after sophomore Matt Rickert (Holbrook/Sachem) ran for a two-point conversion with the Red Dragons aligned in the “swinging gate” PAT formation.

Utica started its best drive of the afternoon late in the first quarter, moving 80 yards on 15 plays. The Pioneers scored with 9:20 left in the second quarter when senior quarterback Adam Luciano connected with Paul Hart on a 5-yard play-action touchdown pass. The throw was Utica's first passing touchdown of the season and cut the Red Dragons' lead to 22-7. Cortland's final points of the first half came when Eich picked off a pass at the 16-yard line and ran in untouched for a score with 2:49 remaining. Eich has scored three touchdowns in the last two weeks. He returned an interception 20 yards for a touchdown in a win at William Paterson last weekend.

The second half belonged to Hammer, who entered the game with just one carry – a three-yard loss in the season-opener at Brockport. Hammer rushed 25 times, including a 2-yard touchdown run with 10:22 left in the third quarter and a 1-yard run with 2:39 remaining in the quarter. Tutwiler played just the first half and completed 7-of-11 passes for 67 yards and a touchdown. He needs 25 completions to tie the school career record. Freshman Drew Lascari (Pequannock, NJ/Pequannock Township) took one snap in the first half and played the entire second half. He connected on 4-of-6 passes for 37 yards. Chad Clark led Utica with 66 yards rushing on 19 carries and Luciano completed 10-of-24 passes for 90 yards and a touchdown. Jason Colunio made a game-high nine tackles for the Pioneers. Eich led Cortland with nine tackles.

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Utica ran 46 plays and held the ball for more than 20 minutes in the first half. In the second half, however, the Pioneers ran just 13 plays and had the offense on the field for only 7:53 over four possessions. Cortland finished with 326 yards in total offense to Utica's 134.