CORTLAND, N.Y. – Senior quarterback Bob Darnley (North Tonawanda/Niagara-Wheatfield) passed for 295 yards and two touchdowns and junior Jon Brown (Rochester/Greece Arcadia) rushed for 109 yards and a score as Brockport rallied from a 17-12 halftime deficit to defeat host Cortland, 42-26, in the season opener for both teams.

Brockport, ranked 22nd nationally in Division III by D3Football.com, dominated the third quarter, keeping possession for more than 13 minutes and scoring two touchdowns to take a 25-17 lead. Another score on the first play of the fourth quarter increased the Golden Eagles’ lead to 32-17. Brockport finished the game with 517 yards of total offense, including 189 in the third quarter and 278 total in the second half. Cortland gained 220 yards in the first half but was held to nine yards on seven plays in the third quarter and 134 total yards in the second half.

Cortland jumped out to a quick start, taking a 7-0 lead in the first 23 seconds of the contest. Sophomore Anthony Morat (Rome/Rome Free Academy) returned the opening kickoff 45 yards to the Brockport 47-yard line. On the Red Dragons' first play from scrimmage, freshman quarterback Alex Smith (Wheatfield/Niagara-Wheatfield) tossed a backwards pass that senior Steve Davis (Central Islip) short-hopped. Davis then threw downfield to wide open senior tight end Tony Romano (Baldwinsville/C.W. Baker) for a 47-yard touchdown.

Brockport was kept off the scoreboard in the first quarter and faced a 3rd-and-25 situation early in the second quarter when Darnley hit freshman Matt McCormick (Peru) on a 64-yard touchdown pass. The extra-point missed, leaving Cortland ahead 7-6. On Cortland's next possession, the Red Dragons drove from their own 14-yard line for a six-play, 86-yard touchdown drive. Smith completed four passes on the drive, including a 27-yard scoring strike to freshman tight end and former high school teammate Paul Caughell (Niagara Falls/Niagara-Wheatfield) to give Cortland a 14-6 lead. Smith completed his first 10 passes in his collegiate debut and finished 21-of-29 for 210 yards and two touchdowns.

Later in the quarter, Brockport moved the ball to the Cortland 4-yard line, but a bad snap on a field goal attempt left the Golden Eagles empty handed. Cortland, however, was unable to get a first down on its next series, and senior Tony Peters (Rochester/Greece Athena) blocked the ensuing punt and senior Anthony W. Mariani (Milton/Marlboro) recovered the ball in the end zone for the touchdown. The two-point conversion failed. Cortland ended the first half with an efficient “two-minute drill” that resulted in senior Ryan DeCamp's (Plattsburgh/Seton Catholic) 37-yard field goal with 10 seconds left.

Brockport opened the second half with an eight-play, 76-yard touchdown drive to take an 18-17 lead. On 3rd-and-10 at Cortland's 17-yard line, Darnley scrambled to avoid a sack and found junior Kevin Beaumont (Rochester/West Irondequoit) open across the field in the far right-hand side of the end zone for the score. The two-point run was stopped just short. With 5:01 left in the quarter, Brockport mounted an eight-play, 56-yard scoring drive, capped by Brown's 3-yard run to paydirt.

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On the first play of the next series, Smith was intercepted by sophomore linebacker Wes Alberts (Baldswinville/C.W. Baker) at the Cortland 36-yard line. Alberts returned the ball nine yards, and a personal foul penalty moved the ball to the 18-yard line. Three plays later, junior Brian Wise (Newfane) rushed five yards up the middle for a touchdown and a 32-17 Golden Eagles lead with 14:55 left in the game.

Cortland mounted a drive on its next possession that started on its own 38-yard line and got as far as the Brockport 4-yard line. After a third down pass failed, the Red Dragons settled for a DeCamp 21-yard field goal to close within 32-20.

The visitors, however, marched 61 yards on only seven plays to increase the lead to 39-20. Wise's 20-yard run around left end for his second touchdown of the contest closed the drive. Brockport added a 40-yard field goal by sophomore Collin Hoffman (Oneonta) with 3:10 left. Cortland's final score came on a 5-yard pass from Smith to sophomore Paul DeSantis (Tonawanda/Kenmore East) with 38 seconds left, capping a nine-play, 81-yard drive.

Darnley finished 16-of-26 passing, averaging more than 18 yards per completion. Beaumont caught five passes for 89 yards. Both Brown and Wise (59 yards on nine carries) averaged more than six yards per rush. Defensively, junior linebacker Jon Walther (Dansville) led the Golden Eagles with 10 tackles and a forced fumble. Senior defensive back Jimmy Robertson (Massapequa) made six stops.

For Cortland, sophomore Matt Rickert (Holbrook/Sachem) made five catches for 35 yards and rushed for 31 yards on only three carries. Sophomore linebacker Chuck Eich (Cheektowaga) made 10 tackles and also registered a pass breakup and fumble recovery. One of his two tackles for losses was a sack. Sophomore safety Stef Sair (Huntington) also finished with 10 tackles, while sophomore Josh Jablonski (West Seneca/W. Seneca West) and senior Chad Rowe (Cazenovia) each made nine tackles.

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