SUNY Cortland Football
Cortland vs. Buffalo State
September 25, 2004; Coyer Field; Buffalo, N.Y.

FINAL SCORE: Cortland 28, Buffalo St. 14

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senior tailback Steve Davis (Central Islip) rushed 31 times for 109 yards, including the tiebreaking touchdown with three minutes, 55 seconds remaining as Cortland defeated Buffalo State, 28-14, in a non-league matchup. Davis surpassed the 100-yard mark on the ground for the third straight week and is now third in career rushing at Cortland with 2,333 yards.

Cortland (2-2) sealed the victory 32 seconds after Davis’ touchdown when freshman safety Dave D’Aurelio (Rochester/Aquinas Institute) intercepted a pass and returned it 43 yards down the left sideline for a touchdown.

The Red Dragons took a 7-0 lead with 4:11 left in the first quarter when freshman quarterback Alex Smith (Wheatfield/Niagara-Wheatfield) tossed a 33-yard touchdown pass to senior tight end Tony Romano (Baldwinsville/C.W. Baker) in the far right side of the end zone. Smith finished the game 16-of-22 passing for 215 yards and two touchdowns with no interceptions and rushed for 39 yards on eight carries. Romano caught a team-high five passes for 97 yards.

The Bengals (0-4), who had been shut out in their previous two contests, tied the game with 3:46 left in the second quarter. Former Cortland quarterback Mike Mikolaichik completed a 10-play, 66-yard drive with a 7-yard touchdown pass to Jonathan Allen. Cortland started the third quarter with a 39-yard kickoff return by sophomore Mark Bly (Buffalo/Kenmore East) to the Buffalo State 48-yard line. An 11-yard pass to Romano on 3rd-and-9 kept the drive alive, and two plays later Smith threw a short pass to sophomore running back Matt Rickert (Holbrook/Sachem). Rickert turned the ball upfield, plowed through a potential tackler near the 10-yard line and went in for the touchdown and a 14-7 Red Dragon lead.

Buffalo State tied the game on a 10-play, 62-yard drive that started with 1:04 left in the third quarter. A running into the kicker call against Cortland on a Bengals punt extended the drive near midfield. Mikolaichik finished the drive with a 10-yard pass to Allen to knot the game at 14-14. Cortland's winning drive started on the Buffalo State 45-yard line with 5:49 remaining after an 8-yard punt. Davis ran for two yards and Smith hit Romano on a 15-yard reception to move the ball to the 28-yard line. Smith then rushed for 20 yards around the left corner on the next play, and Davis carried seven yards to the 1-yard line to set up his short touchdown run off right tackle.

Sophomore linebacker Matt Montpetit (Westhampton Beach) led the Red Dragons with 12 tackles. Two were for lost yardage, including one sack. Sophomore safety Josh Jablonski (West Seneca/West Seneca West) made 10 tackles, including a sack, and freshman linebacker Bill Hauser (Lancaster) recorded eight stops. Sophomore safety Stef Sair (Huntington) finished with seven tackles, an interception and a pass breakup, while sophomore safety Chuck Eich (Cheektowaga) and sophomore defensive lineman Bryan Murphy (Bethpage) made seven tackles apiece.

Mikolaichik finished 15-of-40 passing for 151 yards and two scores and rushed for 30 yards on 18 carries. Allen caught nine passes for 113 yards and two touchdowns and James Perkins rushed 29 times for 121 yards. The contest was marred by a combined 22 penalties. Cortland was flagged 13 times for 125 yards and the Bengals nine times for 68 yards.

Cortland continually won the battle of field position during the contest. The Red Dragons’ average drive starting position was their own 45-yard line, while Buffalo State’s was its own 22-yard line. Cortland sophomore Matt Librock (East Aurora) pinned the Bengals inside the 20-yard line on five of his seven punts. Cortland finished with 371 yards of total offense to 302 for Buffalo State.

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