FINAL SCORE: Ithaca 47, Cortland 22

CORTLAND, N.Y. – Sophomore running back Jamie Donovan (Washington, DC/Sidwell Friends) ran for 203 yards and a touchdown on 34 carries and junior quarterback Josh Felicetti (Doylestown, PA/Central Bucks East) completed 21-of-37 passes for 302 yards and four touchdowns and rushed for a score as Ithaca reclaimed the Cortaca Jug with a 47-22 win at Cortland in front of an estimated 9,000 fans. The win is the first for the Bombers in the series since 2001. Ithaca is 8-2 and is hoping to receive an at-large berth into the NCAA Division III playoffs. Cortland finishes the season with a 5-4 record.

Ithaca led 23-22 late in the third quarter before scoring the final 24 points. The Bombers finished with 529 yards of total offense to 217 for Cortland. Junior linebacker Jose Colon (Utica/Proctor) led Ithaca with 10 tackles, 2.5 for lost yardage.

Ithaca took a 7-0 lead on its first possession on a 13-yard pass from Felicetti to senior tight end Vince Dargush (Amsterdam). The lead grew to 10 points 11 seconds into the second quarter when sophomore Brett Kittenplon (Seminole, FL/Admiral Farragut) hit a 39-yard field goal into the wind.

Cortland got on the board with 12:06 left in the half. Freshman Dustin Bowser (Jamestown/Southwestern) blocked a punt – his first of two blocked punts in the game – and sophomore Matt Berman (Scarsdale) scooped up the ball and ran 32 yards for a touchdown. On the ensuing kickoff, Ithaca’s Kelly Gordon (Ausable Forks/Ausable Valley) returned the ball 71 yards, with only a diving tackle by Bowser saving a touchdown. The Bombers still capitalized four plays later when Felicetti again hooked up with Dargush, this time from five yards out, to put the Bombers up 17-7.

On its next possession, Ithaca drove 78 yards on six plays for a touchdown to take a 23-7 lead. Felicetti completed a 38-yard pass to Justin Esposito (Manlius/Fayetteville-Manlius) to the Cortland 25-yard line. Esposito had five catches for 93 yards in the contest. On the next play, senior fullback Jamie Free (Brookfield, CT/The Gunnery School) caught a short pass, spun away from a tackler and raced in for the touchdown. The extra point failed after a mishandled snap. Free finished with seven catches for 95 yards.

Cortland scored the next 15 points to pull within a point. Freshman Derek Ziders (Lancaster) made a career-best 39-yard field goal with 3:36 left in the half. Midway through the third quarter, Bowser blocked a punt and Cortland took over at the Ithaca 12-yard line. On the second play of the series, freshman quarterback Alex Smith (Wheatfield/Niagara-Wheatfield) tossed a 12-yard touchdown pass to sophomore Anthony Morat (Rome/Rome Free Academy). The PAT kick by Ziders, however, missed wide left.

The Red Dragons held on their next defensive series and regained the ball on their own 43-yard line. Smith’s 15-yard timing pass to sophomore Paul DeSantis (Tonawanda/Kenmore East) in the left corner of the end zone moved Cortland within 23-22 with 3:58 left in the third quarter. A bobbled snap on the PAT led to a failed two-point conversion pass.
Ithaca proceeded to go on touchdown drives of 74, 72 and 52 yards on its next three possessions to put the game out of reach. Felicetti hit Free on a 31-yard pass to the Cortland 3-yard line, then ran the ball in on the next play to give the Bombers a 30-22 lead with 1:08 left in the third. Freshman Ryan Terlecki's first career interception on the first play of the next series gave Ithaca the ball back on its own 28-yard line. On 2nd-and-20, Donovan raced 56 yards on a draw play to the Cortland 16-yard line. Two plays later, his 13-yard run to paydirt put Ithaca ahead 37-22.

On Ithaca’s next possession, Felicetti threw a 29-yard touchdown pass to senior Jeff Welch (Ithaca) to complete a six-play scoring drive. Cortland was stopped on a 4th-and-2 run from its own 26-yard line, and Ithaca finished the scoring when Kitenplon made a 28-yard field goal with 4:51 remaining.

Donovan finishes the regular season with 1,054 yards in his first collegiate campaign. He’s the fastest Bomber to reach 1,000 career yards. Felicetti, in three seasons, now holds the school record with 418 pass completions. Brian Young held the mark with 417. Ithaca has reached the eight-win mark in the regular season for the sixth time in head coach Mike Welch’s 11 seasons. Dargush’s 41 receptions this fall are a school single-season record for tight ends.

Sophomore Matt Rickert (Holbrook/Sachem) led Cortland with 46 yards rushing on five carries and four catches for 35 yards. Smith completed 14-of-32 passes for 137 yards and two touchdowns. Sophomore linebacker Matt Montpetit (Westhampton Beach) made nine tackles.

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