SUNY Cortland Football
Cortland vs. Rowan University
October 16, 2004; John Page Field; Glassboro, N.J.

FINAL SCORE: Rowan 34, Cortland 33

GLASSBORO, N.J. – Sophomore quarterback Mike Orihel (Trenton, NJ/Central Bucks West (PA)) threw four touchdown passes, including a game-winning 41-yard connection to Joe D'Imperio (Belvidere, NJ) with two minutes, 15 seconds remaining as nationally 16th-ranked Rowan (4-2, 3-0) rallied to defeat Cortland, 34-33, in a New Jersey Athletic Conference (NJAC) matchup.

Cortland (3-3, 2-2) trailed 20-7 at halftime, but rallied to take the lead twice in the second half. A 2-yard touchdown run by senior tailback Steve Davis (Central Islip) with 3:52 remaining broke a 27-27 tie. The point-after kick by senior Ryan DeCamp (Plattsburgh/Seton Catholic), however, was blocked by Chinedu Njoku (West Orange, NJ) to keep Cortland's lead at 33-27. On the ensuing drive, Orihel tossed a 29-yard pass to Phil Silva (Vineland, NJ) on third down to keep the drive alive, with an illegal block penalty moving the ball back to the Cortland 41-yard line. On the next play, Orihel completed a pass to D'Imperio, who slipped through two Cortland defenders and raced into the end zone untouched. Damian Shaddow's (Trenton, NJ/Hamilton North) extra point kick gave the Profs the lead.

Cortland mounted one final drive from its own 26-yard line. Six plays, including a 17-yard pass from freshman Alex Smith (Wheatfield/Niagara-Wheatfield) to sophomore Paul DeSantis (Tonawanda/Kenmore East) and an 18-yard Smith run, moved the ball to the Rowan 27-yard line with about a minute remaining. On the next play, though, a shotgun snap went over Smith's head. He raced back and almost regained possession after the ball bounced off the turf, but the ball squirted away and was fallen on by Rowan's Mike Seidenberg (Williamstown, NJ) at the Cortland 48-yard line. The Profs were able to take a knee four times, the final time as the clock ran out.

Orihel completed 22-of-43 passes for 310 yards and the four touchdowns. Silva made eight catches for 112 yards and a score, D'Imperio finished with seven receptions for 81 yards and a touchdown and senior Tyree Jackson (Camden, NJ) had two touchdown catches among his three grabs. Senior Pat Thompson (Lawnside, NJ/Camden) rushed for 92 yards, 87 in the first half. Sophomore defensive back Tim Harrison (Plainfield, NJ) led the Profs' defense with 13 tackles, 12 solo, an interception and a pass breakup. Seidenberg made 11 tackles, nine solo, and broke up a pass in addition to his fumble recovery.

Davis led the Cortland offense with a season-high 153 yards rushing and three touchdowns on 33 carries. He is now second on Cortland's career rushing list with 2,565 yards (Dave Cook is the leader with 3,455 from 1981-84). Smith completed 17-of-35 passes for 237 yards and one touchdown, including five completions to DeSantis for 77 yards. Sophomore safety Josh Jablonski (West Seneca/West Seneca West) led the Red Dragons with 12 tackles, an interception and a blocked punt. Sophomore linebacker Matt Montpetit (Westhampton Beach) added eight tackles, a sack, a forced fumble and a pass breakup.

Rowan drove 86 yards on only six plays, capped by a 10-yard touchdown pass to Jackson, and led 7-0 just 1:31 into the contest. Cortland responded late in the first quarter with an eight-play, 72-yard scoring drive. Davis ran in from 17 yards out to tie the game at 7-7 with 2:46 left.
Cortland had 12 penalties for 110 yards in the contest, including 35 yards in one second-quarter series that cost the Red Dragons a scoring opportunity. A 28-yard pass from Smith to freshman tight end Kevin McGuigan (Penfield) – his first catch of the season – moved the ball to the Rowan 13-yard line. After a 1-yard Davis run, however, Cortland was assessed a 15-yard personal foul penalty, followed by a 5-yard false start and, two plays later, a 15-yard clipping penalty to move the Red Dragons out of field goal range.

Cortland moved the ball to Rowan's 39-yard line on its next possession before Smith was forced to scramble and had his pass deflected by freshman linebacker Randy Tosh (Columbia, NJ/North Warren Regional). Sophomore defensive lineman Keith Heimerl (Sewell, NJ/Clearview Regional) intercepted the ball after the deflection and raced 45 yards down the right sideline for the touchdown, hurdling a would-be Cortland tackler in the process.

Rowan drove for a touchdown on its next possession, covering 76 yards in six plays. Silva made three straight catches to cover the final 45 yards of the drive, including a 20-yard touchdown catch with 32 seconds left. The Profs failed on a two-point conversion pass off a trick play and led 20-7 at the break.

Cortland quickly got back into the game late in the third quarter. Orihel was sacked by Montpetit, forcing a fumble that sophomore defensive lineman Bryan Murphy (Bethpage) snagged in mid-air at the Rowan 32-yard line. Six plays later, Smith lofted a 22-yard pass to sophomore Anthony Morat (Rome/Rome Free Academy) in the right-hand side of the end zone. The catch – Morat's first career TD grab – cut the Rowan deficit to 20-14 with 3:42 left in the third quarter. Rowan started the next drive at its 26-yard line and, following a false start penalty, attempted to throw a screen pass. Freshman Dave D’Aurelio (Rochester/Aquinas Institute), making his first start of the season, read the play perfectly, intercepted the ball at the 12-yard line and ran into the end zone untouched to tie the game at 20-20. The extra point was wide left.

Rowan tried to regain momentum after the D’Aurelio score, driving from its own 32-yard line to the Red Dragon 12-yard line. Jablonski, however, intercepted a pass at the 1-yard line to halt the drive. After trading possessions, Cortland drove 53 yards in three plays for the go-ahead score. Davis broke loose for a 45-yard run to the Profs' 1-yard line, then scored on the next play to give the Red Dragons a 27-20 lead. Rowan responded with a four-play, 66-yard drive to re-tie the game. Orihel pump-faked and found Jackson open down the right sideline for a 55-yard touchdown pass.

Two Smith-to-DeSantis passes fueled Cortland's scoring drive with 5:53 remaining. A 21-yard pass move the ball to the Rowan 39-yard line, with a 35-yard connection on the next play moving the sticks to the 4-yard line. Smith was nearly intercepted on a second-down, play action pass, but Davis ran in from two yards out on third down to give Cortland the lead.

Cortland finished with 438 yards of total offense to Rowan's 399 and held the ball for 36:12 to 23:48 for the Profs.

The Red Dragons will host William Paterson next Saturday at 1 p.m., while Rowan will travel to Kean for a 7 p.m. kickoff next Saturday.

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