FINALE SCORE: Cortland 31, William Paterson 0

WAYNE, N.J. – Cortland's defense held recorded nine sacks and limited William Paterson to 68 yards of total offense as the Red Dragons defeated the Pioneers, 31-0, in a New Jersey Athletic Conference matchup. Cortland (5-2, 4-1 NJAC) posted its first shutout since a 32-0 win over William Paterson at home in 2002. The Pioneers are 2-5 overall and 0-5 in the NJAC.

Junior safety Stef Sair (Huntington) scored two touchdowns for the Red Dragons, but neither came on defense. He returned a punt 40 yards for a touchdown late in the first half – Cortland's first punt return for touchdown not involving a blocked kick since Erick Bernard versus Kean in 1998. Sair also saw his first-ever action on the offensive side of the ball with a handful plays at wide receiver. He caught a 15-yard pass deep in William Paterson territory to set up a first-quarter Matthew Mintz (Atlantic Beach/Laurence) 25-yard field goal and ran 10 yards on a reverse for a touchdown late in the third quarter.

Sophomore Alex Smith (Niagara Falls/Niagara-Wheatfield) threw two touchdown passes. He connected from 19 yards out with freshman Zak Carter (Fayetteville/Fayetteville-Manlius) late in the first quarter for Carter's first collegiate touchdown. He also threw a 26-yard scoring pass to junior Anthony Morat (Rome/Rome Free Academy) midway through the fourth quarter to complete the scoring. Junior tailback Matt Rickert (Holbrook/Sachem) rushed for 127 yards on 21 carries. He gained 102 yards in the first half. Cortland ran for 211 yards on 44 carries and finished with 323 yards of total offense.

Defensively, junior linebacker Matt Montpetit (Westhampton/Westhampton Beach) recorded 11 tackles, including a sack, and picked off a pass. Sophomore linebacker Dave D'Aurelio (Rochester/Aquinas Institute), starting for the first time this season, made 10 tackles and broke up two passes. He registered a team-high two sacks. Junior defensive tackle Adam Haas (East Aurora/St. Francis) added seven tackles, including 1.5 sacks.

Sophomore safety Mark Schaller (Rochester/Greece Athena) and sophomore cornerback Jeff Beck (Middlehope/Marlboro) each intercepted passes. Schaller also forced a fumble and shared a sack. Sophomore defensive end Charles Johnson (Riverhead) finished with 1.5 sacks. Cortland held William Paterson to a net 12 rushing yards on 41 attempts and 7-of-21 pass completions for 56 yards. The Pioneers did not move the ball into Cortland territory until their final drive of the game. Of William Paterson's 15 drives, 12 were four plays or less and 10 gained seven yards or less.

Andy Howell led the Pioneers with 10 tackles, eight solo, and a pass breakup. Dan Casanovas intercepted two passes and broke up another, while all seven of Harold Green's tackles were solo stops.

Cortland marched 54 yards on 14 plays on its opening drive, including three Rickert rushes of 10 or more yards and Sair's 15-yard catch on 3rd-and-11 at the William Paterson 22-yard line, before settling for Mintz's field goal. A 19-yard punt by the Pioneers later in the quarter gave Cortland the ball 39 yards from the end zone. Smith ran 20 yards, then threw the touchdown pass to Carter to complete a two-play scoring drive that took only 16 seconds.

Midway through the second quarter, Beck's 20-yard punt return set the Red Dragons on the hosts' 36-yard line. Cortland eventually faced 4th-and-goal at the 1-yard line, but a quarterback sneak by Smith was stopped by Chris DiNapoli and Alan Peek. Paterson was only able to move the ball four yards, however, and Sair took the ensuing punt, broke free down the left sideline and scored from 40 yards out to give Cortland a 17-0 lead with 1:11 remaining.

With just over two minutes left in the third quarter, Haas deflected a pass that Montpetit intercepted at the William Paterson 37-yard line. He returned the ball 10 yards, and two plays later Rickert ran 17 yards to the 10-yard line. Sair entered the game and lined up wide left, then took a reverse handoff and ran untouched around right end for a touchdown. Cortland's final score came with 7:29 left in the game. On 4th-and-14 at the Cortland 45-yard line, Brad Robison (Groton) took the punt snap as an upback and rushed 29 yards to the William Paterson 26-yard line. Four plays later, Smith found Morat open in the end zone from 26 yards out for his team-high fifth touchdown reception of the season.