

# Breaking down Friday's Detroit Catholic Central vs Canton MHSAA football playoff game

MHSAA playoff game is Friday, 7 p.m. at Canton;  
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[Dan Anderson](#) calls this “a pain-in-the-butt week.”

The [Detroit](#) Catholic Central football coach isn't saying that because he's fighting a cold.

He's saying that because his Shamrocks have to prepare for Canton's unique, high-scoring offense.

“They are definitely a challenge,” Anderson said a few days before his Detroit Catholic Central team will play at Canton on Friday at 7 p.m. in a Division 1 regional championship game.

Both teams feature offenses that have found a groove.

In particular, Canton -- using its trademark fullhouse, tight-T formation -- has rolled throughout the season, averaging 40.8 points per game en route to a 10-1 record.

The Chiefs boast a pair of 1,000-yard rushers in Steve Walker (1,423 yards, 19 touchdowns) and Colin Troup (1,137 yards, 19 TDs).

Quarterback Connor Engel, who has completed 47 of 69 passed for 992 yards and 13 touchdowns, keeps opponents honest.

Senior Lou Baechler, a three-year starter at middle linebacker, leads the team with 82 tackles and two interceptions. Safety Nick Polydoros has contributed 53 tackles and two interceptions for Canton.

“They’re a great team,” Anderson said. “They have great running backs, and they have a great offensive line.”

The Chiefs have traversed a tough road in the playoffs.

They defeated Saline, the champion of the Southeastern Conference Red Division, in the first round, 42-14.

Canton then knocked off previously unbeaten Belleville 28-25 in the district finals last week.

Against Belleville, the Chiefs didn't turn the ball over and came up with three takeaways.

“We gave up some plays, but made just a few more than they did,” Canton coach Tim Baechler said in an email. “That's how the playoffs work. We don't have to be the best team in the state every Friday, we just have to make a couple more plays than our opponents that night to get it done.”

Troup also had a big game against Belleville, rushing for more than 100 yards and a score.

“Colin didn't buckle,” Baechler said. “He kept running the ball hard and eventually he started breaking off some runs. He just competes hard.”

Detroit Catholic Central also has a hard-working running back in Cam Ryan. The senior rushed for 200 yards and four touchdowns in the Shamrocks’ 35-12 triumph over White Lake Lakeland last week.

“He’s starting to see the whole field from the I-position,” Anderson said. “He’s very patient. When he hits the hole, he goes.”

Anderson also praised the play of the offensive line: center Tommy Turek, right guard Quinn Zacharias, right tackle Nick Carey, left tackle Andrew Paxton, and left guard Kellen Adler. Along with junior quarterback Marco Genrich, they’ve helped the Shamrocks bounce back from consecutive losses to Warren De La Salle at the end of the regular season.

“No one was happy with that,” Anderson said. “De La Salle’s a great team, but we didn’t feel like we played well. We said this is going to be a new season for us.”

Thus far, Detroit Catholic Central (7-4 record) has made the best of it. The Shamrocks opened the playoffs with a 24-7 victory over Livonia Stevenson before beating Lakeland. That win helped DCC reach the regional finals for the third straight year. Anderson believes tradition motivates the Shamrocks, who advanced to the state finals last year and have won 10 state championships.

“I think it’s a driving force,” Anderson said. “They know what last year’s seniors did. They want to do as well as they did if not better. It’s kind of a challenge.”

Similarly, Canton has a proud postseason pedigree. The Chiefs are in the regionals for the third time in four years, and they are in the playoffs for the 17th time in the past 18 seasons.

“Past successes just raise your program's expectation level,” Baechler said. “They -- and we -- expect to win. We expect to be here, and our kids do, too.”