

# Catholic Central stands tall in 27-26 win over Canton



(TIMOTHY ARRICK - For The Oakland Press) Novi Detroit Catholic Central picked up a key stop on a 2-point conversion in the final minute of play, lifting it to a 27-26 win over Canton in the Division 1 regional final on Friday.

Friday night's Division 1 regional championship football game between Novi Detroit Catholic Central and Canton had big hits and big plays, but in the end, everything came down to a two-point conversion attempt by the Chiefs with thirty-four seconds left in the game and Canton down by one.

Canton had just scored on a 9-yard touchdown pass to the back of the end zone and was looking to end the Shamrocks season, but the CC defense had other ideas. The play went off tackle and was met with a host of Shamrock tacklers giving Catholic Central the 27-26 victory and a trip to the Division I semifinal game.

CC called a time out prior to the two-point conversion attempt. When asked what he talked about in that time out, CC head coach Dan Anderson replied “We figured they might be coming off tackle. They had really been hurting us off tackle and we stuffed it up.”

Neither team was able to do much with their first possessions, but on the Chiefs’ second drive, they took the ball 74-yards for a score. The drive was capped it off with an 11-yard touchdown run by Noah Brown for a 7-0 lead.

Canton put a quick stop to the next Catholic Central drive but the Shamrock defense came up big, forcing a Chiefs fumble which was recovered by Carson Kovath.

On the first play of the second quarter, Cam Ryan found a seam and rumbled 16 yards for a CC touchdown, making it 7-6 in favor of the Chiefs after a missed PAT.

Catholic Central took the lead with 6:08 left in the first half when Noah Shanlian busted out a 33-yard touchdown run. A two-point conversion increased CC’s lead to 14-7.

The Shamrock defense looked primed to send the game to the half 14-7 when they picked up a pass interference call, giving Canton a first down. The Chiefs capitalized on this extra opportunity on the next play as Nick Polyodras went 41 yards for the Canton score. The Shamrocks blocked the PAT sending the game into that half 14-13 in favor of Catholic Central.

The second half opened with Catholic Central taking possession of the ball on their own 41-yard line. The first play was a give up the middle to Ryan who took the ball 59-yards for the score. Another missed PAT however left the game at 20-7 with nearly two full quarters to play.

Canton added another square in the third quarter on an 11-yard touchdown run by Colin Troup and the PAT made it 20-20 headed into the fourth quarter.

The fourth quarter saw only two possessions, both of which ended with touchdowns. To start the quarter, CC took the ball on its own 35-yard line and with 6:20 left in the contest, Ryan once again punched the ball across, this time from the 2-yard line to give the Shamrocks a 27-20 lead.

Canton then got the ball back with just over six minutes left in the game. The Chiefs moved the ball consistently up the field but it looked like the drive would stall at the Shamrock 21-yard line as they faced a fourth-and-1 with just 1:43 left in the game. The Shamrock defense couldn't hold however and the Chiefs scored a little more than a minute later on an 8-yard pass from Conner Engel to Noah Brown to make it a 27-26 game.

When asked if he was surprised that Canton went for two, Anderson said, "I guess I would have gone for two as well. You have to give it to them. They were going for the win. You can't take anything away from that."

Anderson's advice was spot on as the Shamrock defense collapsed on the ballcarrier ending the Chiefs' season and moving Catholic Central into the semifinal game next week against the winner of the Holland West Ottawa and Clarkston game today.