

Metamora, Disappointing End to an Outstanding Season

A few frowns, a few heads down and a few tears. That seems to be the best way to describe the Metamora Redbirds defeat last Saturday in Champaign. The Birds lost to the Wheaton-St. Francis Spartans by a score of 49-35 in the class 5A state championship game.

Metamora headed to Champaign at 6:30am Saturday morning with a caravan of nearly 300 cars loaded with excited Redbird fans. IHSA officials expressed their pleasure with the Metamora fan base that nearly filled the visitor's bleachers. The fans were loud, the band was playing and the cheerleaders were leading the way. Unfortunately, Metamora's normally stellar defense could not contain the St. Francis offense. The Spartans appeared to execute whatever they wanted as the Redbirds rarely contained their potent offense. St. Francis scored on 7 of their 10 offensive possessions in the game.

The Redbirds offense put up some impressive numbers with their 35 points. Aaron Peters (#47) rushed for 109 yards, quarterback Michael Fay (#15) rushed for 130 yards and Kody Kanaga (#49) added 27 rushing yards. Fay completed 9 of 13 passes for 93 yards. Statistically things seemed good for the Birds. But one statistic, 6 fumbles, stood out above all others. Two of the fumbles resulted in turnovers. The numerous miscues halted the Redbird's momentum on several key offensive drives allowing the Wheaton offensive to take over.

The Spartans offensive numbers were even more impressive. Wheaton recorded a total of 441 yards – 289 yards rushing and 192 passing yards. Very impressive numbers that were nearly 3 times what Metamora gives up defensively per game.

All in all it was not one of Metamora's better games but give credit to St. Francis. They utilized their speed, executed well and exploited the few weaknesses in the Metamora defense.

On the plus side, sophomore kicker Brennen VanMieghem (#26) went 3-4 on extra point attempts setting the state record at 82. The previous record was held by Metamora's Anthony Elgers with 81.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank the Metamora coaching staff, MTHS administrators and football players for allowing me to roam the side lines this season. I've had the privilege of being on the sidelines for every freshmen, sophomore and varsity game this year while shooting over 14,000 pictures. I consider it an honor to play a small part in such an outstanding program. Thank you.

Metamora finishes the season with a 13-1 record. Metamora's Head Coach Pat Ryan has taken an impressive six teams to the championship game since 1997. As Metamora principle Greg Christy said during the post game rally, "is there really any better place to

play football than Metamora?" If there is, it's hard to imagine. Congratulations Redbirds. Thanks for the memories. Underclassmen, the next season starts now.