

State Champions! Metamora Redbirds

The Metamora Redbirds football team picked up the ultimate prize last Friday evening in Memorial Stadium at the University of Illinois – the Class 4A State Championship trophy. Metamora Township High School will add some hardware to their showcase as the Redbirds dominated the Geneseo Maple Leafs with a 41-7 victory.

549 schools started the football season in 2009 with one goal in mind, a state championship. This year, the Metamora Redbirds achieved that goal in near miraculous fashion. These Birds had to overcome an early season upset that cost them the Mid-Illini Conference championship. These Birds saw approximately 20 players miss games due to injuries. These Birds played three gut wrenching games that went down to the final tick of the clock for victories. And, these Birds had to overcome many of the doubters that questioned the caliber of this team early in the 2009 season. In the end, these Birds met the playoff challenges head-on to become state champions.

This state championship game between Metamora and Geneseo was billed as high school power football at its best. Both teams deploy traditional running first offenses and hard hitting defenses. A rich high school football tradition followed these teams to Champaign with 17 title game appearances between them. This year, it was all Metamora as the Birds made their third consecutive appearance in the state championship title game.

The first quarter went as expected as the Redbirds and the Maple Leafs played it even as both teams failed to score. The second quarter was all Metamora as the Birds scored 3 touchdowns. As Maple Leafs defense keyed on the Redbirds leading rusher Aaron Peters (#47), quarterback Michael Fay (#15) ran free. Fay collected all three 2nd quarter touchdowns on rushes of 4, 9 and 3 yards. Metamora took a commanding 21-0 lead into the halftime break.

To start the second half, Geneseo showed everyone why they made it to the title game. The Maple Leafs took the 3rd quarter opening possession 78 yards to close the score to 21-7. Metamora responded as Peters rushed in from 48 yards out. Later in the quarter, Fay picked up his fourth TD of the game on a 24 yard scamper giving the Redbirds a 34-7 lead to start the 4th quarter. Senior Zach Garber (#5) took an inside handoff 17 yards for the Redbirds final touchdown of the game to complete the 41-7 romp.

Metamora celebrated their second state title in three years after the runner-up finish in class 5A last season. The Redbirds became the first public school to win a state championship in class 4A since the IHSA went to the eight class system. Metamora set a state record in a title game by rushing for 447 yards. Peters lead the rushing statistics with 168 yards on 18 carries while Fay had 21 rushes for 165 yards. Senior Garber added 50 yards of his own as the Birds easily outpaced the Geneseo defense. Coach Pat Ryan praised his offensive and defensive line play as one of the keys to victory for the Birds. Metamora had to defeat private school foes Bloomington Central Catholic, Champaign

St. Thomas More and Breese Mater Dei before facing #1 state rank Rochester in the semi-final game on the road to Memorial Stadium.

Congratulations to the Metamora Redbirds on a remarkable season. The Birds end the year with 13-1 record. Good luck in the future to the exceptional senior group as their high school football careers come to a close. Thanks for the truly amazing memories. And to all the Metamora football underclassmen, the 2010 season begins now in the weight room. Please visit www.LakeVermilionRetreat.com/Football for more Metamora football updates and pictures.