

Defense Keys Metamora over Pontiac

For the fifth consecutive year, Metamora is in the semi-final game of the IHSA state championship tournament. The Redbirds used an outstanding defensive effort to defeat the Pontiac Indians 34-7 in last weekend's quarter-final game.

"This was a huge game for our defense.", said Metamora coach Pat Ryan. Pontiac coach Dave Young said, "Their line did an excellent job of just dominating our offensive line." of Redbird's defensive line. That line, lead by junior Ryan McGowan (#62), senior Drew Cullett (#36), Preston Butner (#53) and Andrew Jones (#45) played what many are describing as their best game of the season. Metamora linebacker David Tracy (#46) lead the team with eight tackles followed by linebackers senior Tom Bieneman (#11) and sophomore Blake Mason (#44) with stellar performances. The Bird's defensive backfield allowed just three pass completions for 33 yards while intercepting Pontiac twice. Senior Beau Geier (#12) stopped the Indians with a key interception just before the half. Junior Adam Parr (#14) halted Pontiac on their second play from scrimmage with an acrobatic interception to regain possession for the Redbirds early in the game.

Metamora held Pontiac's all-state nominee running back Chase Alford to just 50 yards on the day, 10 yards short of the elusive 2,000 yard mark on the season. Pontiac's offense could generate only a 146 yards for the game - 257 yards short of their season average. 40 of those yards were on a single quarterback draw play in the third quarter. Overall, a terrific defensive effort by a team that appears to be improving every week.

Offensively the Redbirds held a 14-0 halftime lead. Quarterback Michael Fay (#15) scored from 4 yards out with 1:15 left in the first quarter. Late the second quarter, Charlie Nowotnik (#34) found the end zone from 2 yards out as Birds began wearing down the Indian's defense. In one of the more exciting moments of the game, kicker Brennen VanMieghem (#26) attempted a 57 yard field goal with 1.6 seconds left before halftime. VanMieghem kick fell just a few yards short as the quarter came to a close.

Early in the third quarter, McGowan blocked an Indian punt while Tracy picked it up and carried it down to the Pontiac's 3 yard line. On Metamora's ensuing play, Fay rushed in for a 21-0 Redbird lead. Pontiac responded with their only scoring drive of the game to bring it to 21-7 with 3:45 in the third. Metamora scored two additional touchdowns in the fourth quarter. Fay scored his third rushing touchdown of the game and completed a 41 yard TD pass to senior Brett McKinney (#21) to close out the game at 34-7.

In a rematch of last year's semi-final game, the Redbirds will travel to Rochester to continue their quest to another state championship. Rochester enters the game undefeated after a hard fought victory over Quincy Notre Dame last weekend. Rochester also defeated Metamora memes Springfield Sacred Heart during the regular season. As of this writing, the game date and time had not been announced. Please check with Metamora Township High School later in the week to get the official game time.

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