



CM narrowly loses to Highland on wet night for football

by Jeff Allsman

September 30 2016 11:53 PM



HIGHLAND – The **Civic Memorial Eagles** lost their composure just enough Friday night to lose their grip on the top spot in the Mississippi Valley Conference. In a back-and-forth battle to remain atop the conference heap, Highland outlasted CM 26-21 on a brutally wet night for football.

Highland improved to 5-1 on the season and 3-0 in the MVC. CM dropped to 4-2 and 2-1 in conference play.

As rain, sometimes very heavy, fell off and on throughout the game, CM constantly had to paddle upstream. The Eagles never led, despite the fact that Highland was playing with its backup quarterback and lost starting running back Trent Rakers to injury in the first quarter.

Second-stringer Brady Feldman gave the Bulldogs a 7-0 lead after one quarter on a 3-yard run. CM tied the game when Corey Price rushed in from 1 yard. But 55 seconds later, Highland answered back as backup quarterback Sam LaPorta connected with Jacob Willis on a 77-yard touchdown pass to make it 14-7.

Highland took the second half kickoff and rambled into Eagles territory. The Bulldogs got help on the drive as the Eagles momentarily lost their cool. On a designed running play, LaPorta raced into the line, but was dragged down from behind at the CM 30-yard line. The Eagles were flagged for a questionable horse collar tackle to move the ball to the 15. Then, another flag flew near the CM sideline and the Eagles were called for an unsportsmanlike foul from the coaching staff.

As the officials discussed the call with CM, another flag was tossed into the air and a second unsportsmanlike foul was called. The end result gave Highland a first and goal from the CM 4 yard line. Feldman scored on third down on a 1-yard run to make it 20-7. The extra point snap was fumbled.

Despite the setback, the Eagles struck back when Cameryn Gearhardt scored the first of his two touchdowns on a 55-yard run. The Eagles also missed on their PAT attempt and it was 20-13. Feldman scored his third touchdown from 7 yards out in the fourth quarter to make it 26-13. The Eagles would come back again when Gearhardt scored on a 40-yard run. Corey Price converted the two-point play to make it 26-21, but CM couldn't get any closer.

Gearhardt gained 146 yards on 15 carries to lead all runners. Quarterback Brayden Pierce was only 1 for 4 passing with two interceptions as the weather wreaked havoc with the passing game.