

Burden Returns Two Punts For Touchdowns, Parchmon Adds Two More As Flyers Defeat Crete-Monee 54-13, Advance To Class 6A Final

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CRETE - East St. Louis star receiver and kick returner Luther Burden III returned a pair of punts for touchdowns, caught a pass for a third, and running back Kuron Parchmon

scored twice in the fourth quarter as East St. Louis won its IHSA Class 6A football playoff semifinal game over Crete-Monee 54-13 Saturday afternoon in Crete.

The win advances the Flyers to the championship game, their 13th appearance in an IHSA final since the playoffs began in 1974. East Side is 9-3 in state championship games, and won the 2019 Class 6A title 43-21 over Crystal Lake Prairie Ridge.

The Flyers scored first late in the first quarter when Burden took a very good Warrior punt back 91 yards for his first touchdown of the game with 1:54 left in the period to give East Side a 6-0 lead after a two-point convert was missed. Crete-Monee took the lead early in the second quarter when Terry Elias scored the first of his two touchdowns on a two-yard run, with the Warriors taking a 7-6 lead with 10:32 left in the half.

East Side took the lead for good on the next drive, with quarterback Robert "Pops" Battle throwing 25 yards to Burden in the end zone to give the Flyers the lead for good at 12-7, then Burden ran in his second punt return for a touchdown, this one from 75 yards out, with 4:22 left until halftime, with Ryan Boyd catching a two-point pass from Battle to give East Side a 20-7 lead. TaRyan Martin then ran in from one yard out 32 seconds before halftime, with a two-point run being stopped, giving the Flyers a 26-7 halftime lead.

Battle opened up the second half with a seven yard run just 1:53 in, with a two-point run missing, leaving the score at 32-7. On the next Flyer possession, Marquise Palmer scored on a nice 33 yard run with 7:27 left in the third quarter, a Battle pass to Parchmon being good to make the score 40-7. Elias scored his second touchdown of the game on a three-yard run with 2:40 remaining, but the conversion kick missed. leaving the score 40-13 after the third quarter.

Parchmon scored the game's final two touchdowns, the first on a five-yard pass from Battle 56 seconds into the final quarter to make it 46-13, then scored the final touchdown of the game on a 21-yard pass from Battle, then connected with his quarterback again on a two-point pass play with 9:25 left in the game to make the final score 54-13.

Battle was 14-of-20 passing for 135 yards and three touchdowns, while running for 12 yards and another score. Martin led the Flyers in rushing with 158 yards on 20 carries and a touchdown, while Palmer carried nine times for 34 yards and a touchdown. Parchmon caught eight passes for 73 yards and a touchdown, while Burden caught three balls for 32 yards and a touchdown.

The Flyers are now 11-2 and move on to the Class 6A final, going up against Cary-Grove, a 40-7 winner over Lake Forest in the other semifinal, at Huskie Stadium at

Northern Illinois University in DeKalb Saturday afternoon at 1 p.m. The Warriors end their season 9-4.