

# Shells Top Oilers In Rivalry Football Game, Become Playoff Eligible After Thrilling Win On The Road

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WOOD RIVER – The Roxana Shells had one thing on their mind when they stepped onto the field against Wood River for Friday night's renewed rivalry game - week seven of last season.

“We had to get back after last season; this is all we wanted. We wanted it so bad,” Roxana junior quarterback Chris Walleck said postgame. “It’s been built up for weeks and we’ve been waiting so long to win this game.”

364 days ago the Oilers topped the Shells 34-0 on their own field. This year Roxana wanted payback and they got exactly that after a thrilling 35-27 road win at EAWR.

The win moves them to 5-3 on the season meaning they are now playoff eligible.

“Let’s go,” Roxana head coach Wade DeVries said postgame. “What else are we playing for right? That’s what we signed up for. You got to get a shot. Once you’re in the tournament, you have a shot and then it’s just the luck of the draw.”

The Shells led this game nearly the entire way. They jumped out to a 7-0 lead five minutes into the first quarter when junior running back Terrel Graves scored a rushing touchdown and then the extra point was made.

The Oilers answered right back with a huge 54-yard rushing TD from junior running back Seth Slayden. The extra point was good to tie things back up heading into the second quarter.

Out of the gate, junior running back Evan Wells scored a 9-yard rushing TD and after another successful kick, Roxana led 14-7. Their following possession they converted on a massive 70-yard passing play that resulted in a TD. Another good kick made it 21-7.

With seven minutes to go in the half, Wood River senior quarterback Miguel Romero threw a 30-yard pass to senior tight end Tyler Robinson for a TD. The PAT was missed so the score stood 21-13. That was the score heading into the locker room at halftime.

The third quarter went scoreless which set up for a roaring final period of play.

Slayden scored another rushing TD, this time from 25 yards out. The Oilers went for two but failed. The score was then 21-19 with 10 minutes to go in the game.

The Oilers gained a ton of momentum on the following play when Slayden recovered a fumble on his own 30-yard line. The drive went unsuccessful, and Wood River had to turn the ball over on downs.

Roxana got the ball back but didn’t come up with anything on that drive, punting it on fourth down.

EAWR got the ball back on their own 42-yard line. On that drive, it was Slayden who ran in another TD, his third of the night. Wood River went for the two-point conversion and was successful after Romero ran it in. The Oilers took their first lead of the game 27-21 with 4:15 left to play.

After a face mask penalty was called against the Oilers, it set Roxana up on the 35-yard line first and 10. Graves ran in his second TD of the night to temporarily things back up. The PAT was good to regain the lead 28-27 with 3:22 left.

The Oilers got the ball back on the 53-yard line after a personal foul against Roxana. They had plenty of time but found themselves staring down a fourth and two play. They made it with 1:07 left to play. They kept going to about the 20-yard line and once again were facing fourth down. This time, they decided to go for the field goal with 17.3 seconds remaining.

The kick was blocked and then ran back to the house. After a successful PAT, the Shells grew their lead to 35-27.

There were still 4.8 seconds left on the clock for the Oilers, but it wasn't enough as they fell to 6-2 on the season, suffering their first and only home loss of the season.

The Shells pick up the win after a 20-13 setback against Breese Central a week ago.

"We're always kind of underdogs in this conference and we've accepted that role," Evan Wells said after the dramatic win. "We came out swinging and it worked."

The Shells have led in all of their away games but haven't found ways to close out those games. DeVries was happy that his team played a full game against their rivals.

Roxana will end their regular season at home next Friday against the Marquette Catholic Explorers at 7 p.m. while Wood River will end things on the road at Red Bud.

No matter how those games shake out, both these teams can look forward to playing week 10 football after both missing out on the postseason last year.