

# Shells Win Big And Capture Cahokia Conference Crown

by Nathan Tucker, Sports Reporter  
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**ROXANA** - In as big a game as Charles Raich field has seen in recent memory, the undefeated Roxana Shells hosted perennial area power Breeze Central in what was a defacto Cahokia Conference championship game on Friday night.

It was the first Friday of the season that truly felt like football weather, with temps in the 50s at the 7 pm kickoff. The high-powered Shells showed exactly why they're ranked #5 of all 3A schools in Illinois, scoring early and often on their way to a 52-28 win.

This was a game dictated by high-powered offenses of very different stripes. Roxana employs a rush-heavy attack, with three backs they can hand the ball off to on a regular basis: Evan Wells, Andruw Ellis, and Terrel Graves.

Breeze Central can run the ball plenty, but play a bit of a less-smashmouth style, spreading the field and using screens to their advantage to create space for their skill players.

There were sixty points scored in the first half alone. Breeze took four minutes to score the game's first TD, a drive that would feel long in comparison to many other scoring drives in the half.



“We want to be on the ball, fast, fast, fast,” said Roxana head coach Wade DeVries postgame. “We try to get out there and put pressure on the defense instead of letting them dictate the game.”

That pressure was apparent throughout Friday evening. Roxana answered Breese with a quick score, Andruw Ellis rushing home for six, but multiple false starts and a botched extra point kept Breese in front 7-6.



Breese responded with a fairly short touchdown drive of their own, a short Preston Baker pass that Griffen Becker took the rest of the way. They would go for two after a Roxana offsides on the extra point, leading 15-6 at the time

The biggest offensive play of the half came from senior Shells running back Terrel Graves, who took a handoff just about 50 yards to make it a 15-13 game.

The pace was frenetic. And that was just one quarter.

“We’ve really faced that now, the past three weeks where the other team is kind of matching us,” said DeVries. “We feel our goal is to be able to do it for 48 minutes, and we’re going to make other teams line up for 48 minutes and play.”

Breese scored again as they were driving to start the second frame, Kaden Rakers with a long rushing score to extend the visitors lead, 22-13.

As you'd expect, the Shells had another retort, and Chris Walleck and Aidan Briggs connected for a passing TD. Roxana converted the two pointer, making it a 21-22 game.

That's when the Shells defense woke up. It took until the second quarter, but the Shells forced the first three-and-out drive from Breese of the night. They managed to hold the Cougars in check for the rest of the half, and largely, for the rest of the game.

Roxana scored 17 more before the halftime break. Aidan Briggs caught another pass for six, this one tip-toeing along the sideline of the endzone as he caught the ball. Evan Wells found paydirt from short range, and the Shells tacked on a field goal for good measure.

After a first quarter that went the way many predicted, a back and forth affair between two high-scoring offenses, Roxana's defense came to the party, and the Shells kept their foot on the gas with the ball as well.

Tight end Kael Hester took a break from blocking for the Shells' rushing trio to catch the first Roxana touchdown of the second half. Charles Raich Field was electric.

The defense locked up a tough Breese team, the offense was scoring at will. After a Jordan Carter interception set the Shells offense up in plus territory again, Andruw Ellis polished off a short drive with another touchdown. It was 52-22.

The only scoring in the fourth quarter was a short QB keeper for a Breese TD, for their first points since the second quarter. The Shells put up 39 unanswered points throughout the heart of the football game. This wasn't just a Shells win, this was a huge win, one that will live long in the memory of Shell Nation.

In 2021, the Cougars of Breese Central came to Roxana, and beat Wade DeVries's Shells team 42-35, in what was the highlight of Roxana's season, fighting with a local powerhouse.

In 2023, the Shells are the powerhouse, beating Breese Central 52-28.

After the game's conclusion, Breese head coach Brian Short came over to the Roxana Shells huddle and offered some words of encouragement. Not often is there a team that can beat his Cougars the way Roxana did Friday night.

“Breese is a really good program, they’ve been the ‘King of the Castle’ since I’ve been in this league,” said DeVries of his opposition Friday night. “We talked about it all week, in order to be the best, you have to beat the best. (Breese) is a heck of a program.”