

# Warren's 39-Yard Field Goal With 3.8 Seconds Left Gives Triad Dramatic 36-35 Win At Collinsville, Officially Clinches Playoff Berth For Knights

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer  
October 21 2023 6:22 AM





COLLINSVILLE - Cory Warren's dramatic 39-yard field goal with 3.8 seconds left in regulation gave Triad a big 36-35 win over Collinsville in the final game of the regular season Friday night at Kahok Stadium.

Warren's game-winning field goal climaxed a late drive, where quarterback Issac Ackerman passed the Knights down the field and completed a key fourth down pass, good for 12 yards to Ian Dempsey to set up the winning kick.

The game was a very well-played affair by both teams, where the Knights finished the regular season 6-3 and officially clinched an IHSA playoff berth, while the Kahoks finished 5-4, playoff eligible. Still, both will await their fate when the playoff pairings are announced Saturday night.

"I'm feeling phenomenal," said first-year Triad coach Calvin Potthast after the game. "Hats off to our players. They put the work in, they had a great week of practice. We went out to Troy Titans the other night, had the best practice of the year and it showed tonight. They put it all on the field tonight. Hats off to Collinsville, that's a heck of a football team, but we somehow came out ahead tonight."

The game-winning drive was set up by an interception in the end zone on a fourth down pass, and Ackerman took the Knights down and put Triad into the position of kicking the winning field goal.

"We missed a few big plays," Potthast said. "They were getting pressure, (Amari Berry) and (Devin Habermehl) are great (defensive ends), they were getting after our quarterback, but we made enough plays to get down the field. And our kickers came through big and we put them into that situation. I told them before we went on the field, whenever you win a regional championship and kick a game-winning field goal on the same night, you did it."

Potthast was referring to the Knights' soccer team, who won their Class 2A regional final earlier that day and also serves as kickers for the football team. And with the football team officially clinching the playoff berth with the win, Potthast knows where the Knights will be going in the playoffs.

"We'll be a (Class) 5A team," Potthast said, "and then, it's just who we're going to get. We'll be ready for them, we'll put the work in and try to win a playoff game next week."

And a final regular season mark of 6-3 for Potthast's first year as head coach means a lot to him.

"Oh, it means phenomenal," Potthast said. "I have a great coaching staff that we put in a lot of time together since January. People don't realize how many hours we've spent together as a coaching staff. And then, these players, the amount of hours they put in during the spring and during the summer and all the buy-in they had. We've had good days and bad days, and tonight was a good day."





The Kahoks struck first on the opening possession when Darius Williams intercepted an Ackerman pass and took in eight yards into the end zone to give the Kahoks an early 7-0 lead after only 54 seconds. The Knights came right back on their next possession, as Ackerman hit Dempsey for a 70-yard touchdown pass with 7:02 left in the first to tie the game 7-7 after the first quarter.

Near the end of the first and going into the second, the Knights drove 80 yards in 15 plays, taking 5:33 off the clock and climaxing with Colin Qualls going in from one yard out to give Triad a 14-7 lead. Near the end of the first half, the Knights drove again, this time 63 yards in seven plays and resulted in a 29-yard touchdown pass from Ackerman to Tashon Cockarell, but the conversion kick was blocked, leaving the Knights with a 20-7 lead. The Kahoks stormed back and got a one-yard touchdown run from Ryan McIntyre with 7.5 seconds left to put Collinsville to within 20-14 at halftime.

The Kahoks took the second-half kickoff and went down the field, with quarterback Darren Pennell, who had a magnificent game, going in from two yards out to give Collinsville the lead back at 21-20. Collinsville's next possession resulted in a seven-yard touchdown pass from Pennell to Habermehl to extend the lead to 28-20. On the Kahoks' next possession, Donny Becker intercepted a Pennell pass and took it to the Collinsville five, where two plays later, Qualls went two yards up the middle to score, but a two-point pass play was broken up, cutting the Kahoks lead to 28-26.

It didn't take long for Collinsville to come back, as Pennell went on a brilliant 32-yard run for a touchdown with 9:50 left in regulation to increase the lead to 35-26. The Knights then came right back when Ackerman and Dempsey connected again, this time from 40 yards away, for another touchdown that cut the lead to 35-33 with 8:21 to go in regulation.

The Kahoks then took possession and were certain to have locked up the game with a pair of key first downs. But on a fourth down play, Triad intercepted and took over with just over two minutes left. Ackerman steadily led the Knights with pass completions, then facing a fourth-and-10 on the Collinsville 35 in the final minute, hit Dempsey for 12 yards for the all-important first down. The Knights elected to try the field goal on the next play and Warren hit from 39 yards out with 3.8 seconds left to give Triad a 36-35 lead. The Kahoks were stopped on the ensuing kickoff to end a highly-entertaining and exciting game

Both teams now await their playoff opponents, when the IHSA announced the playoff teams and first round pairings in its annual show Saturday night at 8 p.m., and will be livestreamed on the IHSA website and the NFHS Network, along with being televised on KNLC-TV, channel 24.5, also on channel 252 for Spectrum cable TV subscribers.







[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)