

Quarterfinals Preview - Shells Hit The Road For First Time This Postseason

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
November 9 2023 9:48 AM



ROXANA - It's been a postseason to remember thus far for the Roxana High School football team.

After a [50-22 win over No. 14 Paris](#) in round one and a dramatic defensive stand to get [past No. 6 St. Joseph Ogden 48-47](#), the Shells now find themselves in the IHSA Class 3A football playoff quarterfinals.

They will be tested on the road for the first time this playoffs when they head north to No. 7 seeded Stanford Olympia on Saturday, Nov. 11 at 2 p.m.

The Spartans are 9-2 this season and have won five straight games.

Their two losses are both against teams that are still alive this postseason. They've been beaten by a couple of Class 2A schools in Athens (9-2) and Maria-Forsyth (11-0).

Both of Olympia's losses came at home.

The Shells remain just the second unbeaten team in Class 3A next to perennial powerhouse Byron. The Shells sit at No. 2 in 3A according to the latest rankings from Max Preps while Olympia is No. 8.

Last week, it seemed as if St. Joe Ogden had Roxana's run game figured out as the Shells were down by one at halftime and losing 41-27 after three quarters. But a 21-point fourth-quarter comeback flipped the script. St. Joe scored a touchdown in the final seconds to bring the score to 48-47.

With seven seconds left, the Spartans lined up as if they were going to attempt a game-winning two-point conversion before Roxana caught on and called a timeout.

St. Joe came back out still lined up to go for the win, but it was Roxana's defense that held tough and earned arguably the most dramatic win Charles Raich Field has ever seen.

Moving ahead to Saturday, although Olympia's seeding may not be that great, they aren't a team to be dismissed.

They just upset No. 2 seeded Greenville by a score of 40-20. The Comets came into that game with a 10-0 record. So, Olympia knows how to end undefeated seasons.

The Spartans beat No. 10 Litchfield 20-17 in round one.

After an aerial onslaught from St. Joe, the ball will be back on the ground more times than not in the quarterfinals.

Olympia has a running back trifecta of their own.

Senior #8 Nic Olson, senior #4 Zach Keedy, and senior #5 Kade Lollar have combined for 2,686 yards rushing and 34 touchdowns.

Keedy is the team's quarterback and is not afraid to keep the ball and move his legs. He's responsible for 14 of those rushing touchdowns and has thrown for another five. He doesn't throw it often but can be effective with a 60 percent completion rate.

The last game was the most points the Roxana defense has given up all season.

Olympia on average only allows 15.8 points per game. The Shells have three shutouts to their name this season and give up an average of 15.6 points per game.

Saturday could easily turn into a defensive chess match if Olympia can stop Roxana's formidable offense.

Roxana rushed the ball for 435 yards last game and six scores. It was the fourth time the Shells have cleared 400 yards rushing in a single game.

Senior Running Back Evan Wells is averaging 127 yards a game while teammates Andrew Ellis and Terrell Graves are averaging 91 and 77 respectively.

To hear an exclusive interview with Roxana head coach Wade DeVries, tune in to Riverbender.com's ['Our Daily Show!'](#). Host CJ Nasello will talk with DeVries on Friday morning (Nov. 10) at 10:30 a.m.