

Robert "Pops" Battle Tosses Three TD Passes, Flyers Clip Washington 34-18 In State Semis

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IHSA PLAYOFFS --- CLASS 6A SEMIIFNALS

EAST ST. LOUIS 34, WASHINGTON 18

Senior quarterback Robert "Pops" Battle threw for three touchdowns, but it was his 57-yard touchdown run late that clinched the IHSA Class 6A semifinal for East Side in their win at Washington to advance the Flyers into the final next week.

Battle threw twice to Rico Bond, from 16 and eight yards, and five yards to Jesse Watson for scores, and ran in from 57 yards out with 2:50 left in regulation after the Panthers' Kainon McQueary scored twice from one and eight yards out to pull Washington to within 26-18 in the fourth quarter. Battle's run put East Side into its third straight Class 6A final.

The Flyers started out strongly when Jaion Jackson took the opening kickoff back 82 yards for a touchdown to start the game off.

Battle was 10-of-19 passing for 75 yards and three touchdowns, also running five times for 76 yards and a score. Larevious "Fresh" Woods led the Flyers with 80 yards rushing, Christopher Bennett, Jr. led in receiving with four receptions for 17 yards, John Daily had three catches for 25 yards and Bond caught his two touchdown passes for a total of 24 yards.

The Panthers end their season 11-2, while the Flyers are also 11-2 and meet Cary-Grove, who won the other semifinal over Lake Zurich 28-10, in a rematch of the 2021 final won by the Trojans 37-36, at Illinois State University's Hancock Stadium in the final next Saturday at 1 p.m.

The game will be televised on the IHSA Network, both on live stream via the NFHS Network online and on KNLC-TV's subchannel 24.5 in St. Louis.