

Civic Memorial suffers first loss of season against now 6-0 Highland Bulldogs

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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BETHALTO - As a flood of purple and gold filled the Eagles' Nest at **Hauser Field** in Bethalto for their homecoming game, fans of the **Civic Memorial High School football team** had expected another win from the team in Friday's matchup against the **Highland High School Bulldogs**.

Unfortunately for the Eagles, the similarly undefeated Bulldogs came out ready to put up a great fight. Their fight and determination resulted in a close game that ultimately ended with a CM loss of **35-27**.

CM Head Coach Justin Winslow was extremely proud of his boys, despite the loss they experienced.

“It was a hard fought and great football game,” Winslow said.

Civic Memorial’s offense got the game started with the first touchdown of the evening by senior **John Whitworth (#34)** with just slightly over five minutes left of the first quarter. A successful field goal earned CM the extra point, and the score became **7-0**. The Eagles’ defense did an excellent job of making sure that Highland stayed out of the end zone for the rest of the quarter.



Highland really took control during the second quarter of the game. Bulldogs junior running back **Trent Rakers (#25)** scored two back-to-back touchdowns for his team. The first extra point attempt yielded unsuccessful results; however, the attempt at a two-point conversion after Rakers’ second touchdown allowed the Bulldogs’ score to raise to **14**.

Civic Memorial senior **David Lane (#6)** earned his team another touchdown. After a fair kick, the score was tied **14-14**.

The tie was short-lived. A reception by Highland senior **Jimmie Smith (#8)** brought their score to 20. With a good kick point, Highland was winning with a score of **21-14**.

After the halftime introductions of the **2015 Homecoming Court** and performances from the **Pazzazz Dance Team** and **CMHS Marching Eagles**, the third quarter was underway. However, after a lot of push and shove from both sides, the teams failed to earn any points in the scoreless third.

When the fourth quarter got underway, Highland scored an interesting touchdown before the officials blew their whistle. As one of CM's players rolled out of the dog pile tackle that should have ended the play in the end zone. The referees caught sight of the ball in the hands of one of the Bulldogs. The fair touchdown and good free kick resulted in the score raising to **28-14**.

CM's offensive line shined as junior **Zach Williams (#5)** scored his first touchdown of the game. With the a good field kick, the Eagles seemed to be focused on catching up with the Bulldogs with a score of **28-21**.



Highland quarterback and sophomore **Garrett Marti (#18)** took a hard hit to the head in a play that occurred as there were around four minutes left of the fourth quarter. Coaches and athletic directors from both teams rushed to the fallen player on the Eagles' sidelines. Marti seemed to be responding to the athletic directors' questions and could move his hands and feet but reportedly felt a burning and stinging in his neck. An ambulance from **Alton Memorial Hospital** arrived at the scene to take Marti for testing.

With both of the teams clearly rattled, the Bulldogs used their worry of their teammate to score another rushing touchdown by Rakers. After a good field kick, the score was now **35-21**.

"You have to credit Highland for coming out after that long delay and making a play," Winslow said, "Safety is our number one concern for all of the players."

The Civic Memorial Eagles used every single second of the remaining two minutes to push the Bulldogs down the field. As the final buzzer hit zero, the Civic Memorials threw their final touchdown pass to Williams. After conversation between the officials, the pass was declared good; however, the opportunity for a free kick was unavailable and unfortunately, the Eagles fell to the Bulldogs **35-27**.

"made a couple more plays than we did, but we had great effort tonight," Winslow said, "We have to take the things we did wrong and figure out how to get better."

[Watch the entire Highland Bulldogs @ CM game.](#)