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West Chester Univ. Golden Rams @ Clarion Univ. Golden Eagles

Saturday, October 12, 2002 - Kickoff 2 p.m. - Memorial Stadium, Clarion, PA

WEST CHESTER, PA - The Golden Rams of West Chester University (2-3) will visit the Golden Eagles of Clarion University (3-2) on Saturday afternoon in WCU's final Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Western Division cross-over for 2002. Kickoff at Memorial Stadium is 2 p.m.

The Golden Rams are coming off a hard-fought 31-24 Homecoming victory against Kutztown University last Saturday night, while the Golden Eagles were beaten by IUP 28-14.

Golden Rams thrill Homecoming crowd

WEST CHESTER, PA - West Chester University red-shirt freshman defensive back **Walter Lee Pittenger (Greeley/Wallenpaupack)** stopped Kutztown quarterback Rob Flowers at the WCU five-yard line with 0:04 left in regulation to preserve a 31-24 Homecoming victory for the Golden Rams on Saturday night.

The win lifted WCU's record to 2-3 on the season and pushed the Golden Rams to 1-0 in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Eastern Division. Kutztown fell to 1-4 overall and 0-1 in the East.

WCU junior RB **Mike Eckmeyer (Glendora, NJ/Triton)** rushed for his 11th straight 100-yard game and a career-best three touchdowns in the victory. Eckmeyer extended his WCU all-time consecutive 100-yard rushing record to 11 games by carrying the ball 30 times for 153 yards. He averaged 5.1 yards per attempt and scored on runs of four, one and 10 yards. He gave WCU a 14-0 lead with touchdown jaunts in the first and second quarter, then pushed the Golden Rams ahead 31-17 in the third with his 10-yard run.

Sophomore WR **Cory DeForrest (Wycombe/Council Rock)** also caught a seven-yard TD pass from sophomore

quarterback **Bob Findora (Downingtown/Coatesville)**, while sophomore kicker **Dan Wilbourne (Doylestown/Central Bucks East)** hit a 22-yard first-quarter field goal.

The Golden Rams led 17-0 and 24-3, but Kutztown ended the first half with a 10-yard touchdown throw from Flowers to Mike Conner, then started the third period with a Flowers-to-Trevor Smith 32-yard score on fourth and three.

Andre Davis pulled Kutztown within seven points at 8:06 of the fourth quarter when he picked off a Findora pass and raced untouched 35 yards for the score.

Then late in the fourth, Kutztown drove down to the WCU five where Flowers was tackled one-yard short of a first down and five yards shy of the game-tying touchdown.

Spreading the offense around

Findora finished the game 19 of 24 for 213 yards and one touchdown, while Flowers led Kutztown with a 19-for-37 performance, 274 yards and two scores. Smith caught eight of his passes to lead Kutztown with 128 yards.

The Golden Rams produced 381 total yards but surrendered 405 in the victory. Still, WCU's defense allowed just the two touchdowns and a field goal in the win.

WCU junior wide receiver **Matt Chambers (Pennsauken, NJ/Holy Cross)** was one of eight different Golden Ram pass catchers on the evening as he grabbed five balls for 54 yards. Senior tight end **Ryan Koch (Muncy/Muncy)** had four grabs for 51 yards, while DeForrest finished the contest with three for 35 yards and his touchdown.

DeForrest now has seven touchdown catches on the season, already surpassing senior **Brian Bradley's (Philadelphia/South Philadelphia)** 2001 team-high of five.

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Sophomore receiver/kick returner **Omar Harris (West Chester/Henderson)** produced 106 all-purpose yards in the game. He had a three-yard catch, but his biggest damage came on kick returns where he averaged over 25 yards per return while piling up 103 yards.

The Defense

Defensively, the Golden Ram secondary produced eight pass breakups in the contest, including a pair of key knockdowns by sophomore backup free safety **Eric Engstrom (Phoenixville/Spring-Ford)**. He also registered an assist.

Junior starting free safety **Jim McCullough (Laurel Springs, NJ/Triton)** turned in three hits (2 tackles, 1 assist) and a pair of breakups, while junior strongside line-backer **Tim Garman (Leola/Conestoga Valley)** topped the club with six solo tackles and a two-yard tackle for loss.

Senior captain and MLB **Brandon Neely (Willow Grove/Upper Moreland)** produced four solo tackles and two assists, while junior DE **Jake Walker (Doylestown/Central Bucks East)** registered four tackles, an assist and 1.5 tackles for loss (-4 yards).

Junior CB **Travis Blomgrem (Hatboro/Central Bucks West)** recorded a leaping interception, a pass breakup, a half TFL for -2 yards, two tackles and two assists. Blomgrem made his way to WCU from Penn State then Delaware before starting on Saturday vs. the Golden Rams.

Sophomore DE **Graham Eggleston (Mechanicsburg/Mechanicsburg)** recorded the team's lone sack vs. Kutztown as he pulled down Flowers for a two-yard loss. He had that tackle and two assists on the day.

This Week's Opponent: Clarion

INDIANA, PA - Brian Eyerman threw three touchdown passes, including two in the second half, as IUP broke away from a 14-14 halftime tie for a 28-14 victory over Clarion in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference Western Division opener for both teams Saturday.

The win was the fifth in a row for the Indians (5-1, 1-0 PSAC West) after dropping their season opener to Findlay. Clarion (3-2, 0-1 PSAC West) saw its three-game winning streak come to an end and fell to 3-2 overall and 0-1 in the PSAC West.

Eyerman completed 12 of 19 passes for 197 yards and broke the tie with a 38-yard touchdown pass to Carmelo

Ocasio just 1:52 into the third quarter. His 29-yard hookup with LeRon McCoy with 4:50 left in the game put the finishing touches on the mistake-filled victory for IUP.

Eyerman also threw a 12-yard touchdown pass to Dave Davis in the second quarter to give him an NCAA Division II leading 21 scoring aerials on the season. The senior signal caller now has at least two touchdown passes in 12 straight games dating back to last season.

IUP also had a pair of 100-yard rushers in the game, with Elice Parker gaining 129 yards on 18 carries and Aaron Cochran picking up another 110 on 11 attempts.

Brandon Sweeney led the Clarion ground attack with 83 yards on 10 carries, but he had 64 of those yards on two attempts during the first Golden Eagle drive of the game. That drive culminated in a three-yard touchdown run by Robert Walker and a quick 7-0 Clarion lead with 12:15 left in the first quarter.

The Golden Eagle option attack stormed through the IUP defense on the opening drive, gaining 80 yards on only seven plays, including gallops of 23 and 41 yards by Sweeney. But the Indians held Clarion in check after that point, limiting the nation's third-ranked rushing offense (298.8 yards per game entering the contest) to only 154 yards on the ground following the opening drive.

IUP finished the game with 427 yards of total offense and Clarion had 281. The Golden Eagle defense did sack Eyerman five times, including three by Jabari Weatherspoon, who also had a game-high 14 tackles, forced two fumbles and intercepted a pass on IUP's first play from scrimmage on the day that set Clarion up at the IUP 20. But the Indian defense held on downs, keeping it just a seven-point game.

IUP tied the game 34 seconds after the start of the second quarter when defensive end Andrew Battle scooped up a Walker fumble that was forced by Kris Griffin and raced 16 yards to the end zone to make it 7-7.

On Clarion's next possession, Ken Crawford, the nation's seventh leading punter, boomed a 68-yarder that took a great roll and was downed at the IUP one-yard line. But the Indians then embarked on their second 99-yard scoring drive in the past three weeks, overcoming a 1st and 28 from the Clarion 30 and tying the game on the Eyerman-to-Davis connection for a 14-7 IUP lead.

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Backup quarterback Frantz Charles, who saw the majority of the playing time in relief of starter Adam Almashy, carried 13 times for 64 yards. His five-yard touchdown run with 1:24 left in the first half tied the game at intermission.

Cochran took the opening kickoff of the second half 50 yards to the Clarion 43, and Eyerman hit Ocasio from the 38 three plays later to give IUP the lead for good. Ocasio now has at least one touchdown reception in each of the past 10 games.

The game was marred by a combined 13 fumbles, including five that were lost, and 19 penalties. The most costly fumbles for Clarion came on its first two possessions of the fourth quarter. Both were recovered by IUP linebacker Walt Mosteller. Walker lost the ball at the IUP five just 30 seconds into the final period, and Mosteller then forced and recovered a Charles miscue at the IUP 24 with 12:02 left in the contest.

Two drives later, IUP marched 66 yards on nine plays and added an insurance touchdown on the Eyerman pass to McCoy from the Clarion 29.

The Last Meeting: November 10, 2001

WEST CHESTER - Wilbourne booted a 26-yard field goal with 10:26 left in the fourth quarter, elevating the West Chester University Golden Rams to a 16-14 victory over Clarion University on Saturday, November 10, 2001.

The Golden Rams capped the season with four straight wins, finishing the year 5-4 overall. Clarion finished 4-7.

Wilbourne atoned for a missed extra point try late in the third quarter when the Golden Rams closed to within one on Eckmeyer's three-yard touchdown dive. Eckmeyer finished the game with 119 yards on 23 carries, extending his 100-yard game streak to six. The record of seven, set by Derrick Price in 1988, would be broken by Eckmeyer in 2002.

Wilbourne pushed the PAT wide right, but made up for the miscue with the game-winning field goal.

West Chester scored the game's first touchdown in the opening quarter when Findora ran 35 yards for a 7-0 Golden Ram lead. Findora engineered his fifth straight win as a starter.

His touchdown was set up by then-senior RB Don DeFilipo's 42-yard burst. DeFilipo carried the ball 11 times for 71 yards, averaging 6.5 yards per rush.

Clarion countered when Demetric Gardner tied the game at 7-7 with his 29-yard catch from Adam Almashy, then helped give Clarion a 14-7 lead with his eight-yard scoring run in the third.

Neely and then-senior OLB Brian Kersey each reached double-figures in tackles. Neely had 10 tackles, four assists and a one-yard TFL. He also recovered a fumble. Kersey posted seven tackles, four assists and two tackles for loss (-10 yards).

Then-senior CB Shariff Blackwell made a leaping interception to stall a Clarion drive, while junior DB ***Donovan Reifinger (Germansville/Northwestern Lehigh & a 2002 red-shirt)*** also had a pick. Reifinger finished off the day with a pass breakup, a 17-yard sack and an assist. Blackwell batted down two pass attempts.

Current junior CB ***Calvin Braxton (Philadelphia/Central)*** posted seven hits on the afternoon, including three tackles and four assists. He also caused a fumble and had a pass breakup.

James Brazill (Coatesville/Coatesville), a freshman in 2002, saw the most significant action of his rookie campaign. He had three hits on two tackles and an assist. McCullough posted two tackles and an assist, while Eggleston recorded three tackles, two TFLs (-3 yards), a forced fumble and a pass breakup.

Eckmeyer finished the year as the team's leading rusher with 988 yards. His 7.3 yards per carry average ranks second all-time for a single-season in school history.

Success when the leaves fall

Much had been made of the Golden Rams lack of victories in late August and September...since 1997, the Golden Rams have produced a 4-19 record during the first full month of the season...however, since 1997, the Golden Rams are 25-9 in the months of October and November...of the 23 games played before October 1, the Golden Rams have competed against NCAA I-AA clubs seven times and NCAA Division II perennial playoff powerhouses IUP, UC-Davis, New Haven and Bloomsburg on 10 different occasions.

The Coaches

Clarion University head coach Malen Luke (Westminster '76) is in his ninth season with the Golden Eagles...he is 44-48 at Clarion...he is in his 15th season as a collegiate head coach with a career mark of 81-69...Rick Daniels is in his 14th year as the head coach of the Golden Rams...he is 83-60-1 all-time...Daniels is second on the all-time win list behind the legendary Dr. W. Glenn Killinger.

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WCU vs. Clarion - The History

The Golden Rams hold a commanding 13-2 advantage over the Golden Eagles...the teams first met in 1960 when WCU beat Clarion 49-14...the Golden Rams won again in '61 51-20...Clarion's first win over WCU occurred in the PSACAC Championship Game in 1966 (28-26)...the Golden Rams defeated Clarion 27-7 in the 1967 State Game and 41-34 in the 1969 title contest...the most lopsided game took place in 1988 when WCU won 55-7...in 1998, WCU rallied from a huge deficit in the first half to beat the Golden Eagles 44-40...WCU also won 62-20 in 1999 - the end of the Mike Mitros era...this marks the fifth straight year that the two teams have met in the PSAC Crossovers.

Milestones & Honors

Eckmeyer was named the **PSAC East Offensive Player of the Week** for his stellar performance on Saturday...he was also selected to the **National Honor Roll for Division II by D2.Com**...Eckmeyer has extended his consecutive 100-yard game streak to 11 straight...he is fifth all-time in career 100-yard games at WCU with 11...he needs one to tie Scott Eberly and Ron Perkins (12 each) for third.

Ramblings

The Golden Rams entered the season as the second winningest Division II program in the nation behind Texas A&M Kingsville...WCU needs just four wins to reach 500...the Golden Rams have finished first or second in the PSAC East in 30 of the 36 years they have competed in the league...WCU has won 18 PSAC East crowns.

Individual PSAC Leaders

Eckmeyer is the leading rusher in the PSAC with his 137.8 yards per game average...he is first in all-purpose yards as well (166.2)...Findora is 4th in passing yards per game (231.0), 4th in total offense per game (228.0) and 5th in pass efficiency (131.3 rating)...DeForrest is tied for 6th in receptions per game (5.0), tied for 2nd in scoring (8.4 ppg.) with Eckmeyer, and 10th in receiving yards per game (73.0)...sophomore **Joe Brooks (Clark Summit/Abington Heights)** leads the PSAC in fumble recoveries...he has three...all three came at Delaware to tie a school record for most recovered fumbles in a single game.

NCAA II Individual Leaders

Eckmeyer is ranked 6th in the country in rushing and 13th in all-purpose yards...Findora is 32st in total offense...DeForrest and Eckmeyer are tied for 26th in scoring.

Team PSAC Leaders

West Chester is 3rd in passing offense (239.0 y/g) and 6th in rushing offense (158.8 y/g)...WCU is third in total offense (397.8 y/g)...WCU's 108 first downs ranks as the third best in the PSAC...WCU is the least penalized team in the league...the Golden Rams are penalized an average of 35.0 yards per game...WCU is the best in the league at converting third downs (39 for 76 for a 51.3% rating)...WCU's defense is second-best in the PSAC at stopping teams in the red zone...opponents only score 68.4% of the time (13 for 19).

NCAA II Team Leaders

West Chester is ranked 30th in total offense.

Internet Broadcast

All 11 Golden Ram football games will be broadcast on Red Zone Media this season...fans may access Red Zone Media through the WCU webpage: <http://iws.wcupa.edu/athletics/>...on the main page will be a link to the football games...seniors **Sean Kane (Guthriesville/Bishop Shanahan)** and **Chris Rudolph (Mortonville/Bishop Shanahan)** will handle this week's broadcast at Clarion beginning at 1:45 p.m. EDT.

Radio Broadcast

All seven day games will be broadcast on WCHE 1520 AM...Saturday's game at Clarion will be simulcast with the internet broadcast and begin at 1:45 p.m.

The Next Game

The Golden Rams will visit neighborhood rival Cheyney University on Saturday, October 19, at 1 p.m. in a PSAC East matchup.