

2004 MIAC Football Athletes of the Week

November 15, 2004

Offensive

Carleton first-year running back R.J. Jackson (Roseville, Minn./De La Salle HS) rolled up a Carleton rookie record of 228 yards on 32 carries, leading the Knights past Hamline, 14-7, in the season finale. Jackson's total was the second-best in school history and the most yards by a Knight back in more than 40 years. On Carleton's first scoring drive of the afternoon he set the tone by breaking off runs of 17, 23 and 17 yards. On Carleton's eventual game-winning drive, he accounted for 29 of the drive's 30 yards.

Defensive

Bethel defensive back Brandon Carr (Fergus Falls, Minn.) led a Royals defense which had seven interceptions against Gustavus on Saturday. Carr recorded three interceptions, had six tackles and one sack on the day in his first collegiate start.

November 8, 2004

Offensive

Concordia College senior wide receiver Andrew Passanante (Hawley, Minn.) caught five passes for 154 yards and two touchdowns in Concordia's 50-7 win over St. Olaf on Saturday. His 30.8 yards per catch average was the highest of the season for Passanante and it was the fourth highest yards per catch average in school history. It was his fifth game of the season with more than 100 receiving yards and third multiple touchdown game. His first touchdown covered 40 yards, and he had to out jump and then outwrestle the St. Olaf defensive back for the ball. His second TD of the game went for 80 yards. It is the longest play of the season for the Cobbers and fourth longest play from scrimmage in school history.

Defensive

Gustavus Adolphus senior linebacker Isaac Sieling (Watertown, Minn., Watertown-Mayer HS) recorded 17 tackles, including three quarterback sacks, recovered a fumble and intercepted a pass to help the Gusties defeat Carleton 40-27 in Northfield. With Gustavus trailing 13-3 in the second quarter, Sieling intercepted a pass and returned it 30 yards to the Carleton 25. The Gusties scored five plays later to cut the lead to 13-10. Two possessions later, Sieling recovered a fumble at midfield and the Gusties would score on their next possession to take the lead for good at 17-13. In the game, Sieling broke the school record for tackles in a season. The old record was 136 set in 1999. Sieling now has 148 tackles with one game left to play. He leads Division III in tackles with an average of 16.4. The Gusties are currently 2-7 overall and 2-5 in the MIAC.

Special Teams

Bethel College freshman Brandon Carr (Fergus Falls, Minn.) recorded 3 tackles on special teams, had an interception while in on defense, and caught a 50-yard touchdown pass on a fake punt attempt in the third quarter to give Bethel the lead over Augsburg 14-10. This was the turning point of the game as Bethel then scored the next 10 points to win 24-10.

November 1, 2004

Offensive

Bethel University sophomore running back Phil Porta (Cambridge, Minn.) carried 37 times for a school record 264 yards and three scores, all in the second quarter, as the Royals held off host Carleton College. Porta's total broke Jeremy Tvedt's 1995 record of 243 yards. The total leaves Porta with 1,415 yards on the season, only 48 yards shy of breaking Mike Johnson's single-season Bethel record of 1,462 yards, set during the 2001 season.

Defensive

St. Olaf College sophomore lineman Craig Botnen (Billings, Mont.) had 11 solo tackles, including one for a loss, and added an interception that led to the deciding touchdown in the Ole's 21-19 win over Saint John's Saturday. With St. Olaf clinging to a one-point lead in the third quarter, Botnen intercepted Alex Kofed and returned the ball 11 yards to the Saint John's 13. Botnen and the St. Olaf defense forced eight turnovers and stopped the Johnnies on three consecutive drives in the fourth quarter and four-of-seven fourth downs in the game. Botnen's stats: 11 solo tackles, one assisted, TFL, INT that led to winning score, broke up two passes.

Co-Special Teams

St. Olaf College senior punter Nate Johnson (Menomonie, Wis.) play was essential in St. Olaf's 21-19 win over Saint John's. The senior punted 11 times, collecting a 39.2 yard-average, had two punts inside the Johnnies five yard line, a 65-yard punt, and most importantly fielded two consecutive snaps out of the mud in the fourth quarter and turned them into 42- and 35-yard punts to help St. Olaf preserve their first home win over the Johnnies since 1995.

University of St. Thomas freshman kicker/punter Adam Valenta (Cedar Rapids, Iowa/Xavier HS) kicked a 24-yard field goal in overtime in windy, slippery conditions provided the winning points in UST's 10-7 victory over Gustavus. It was the Tommies' first game-winning field goal since October 1993. Valenta added one PAT. On the season he's 4-of-7 in field goals and 16-of-18 in PATs. St. Thomas is 6-1 overall with five consecutive wins.

October 25, 2004

Offensive

University of St. Thomas senior running back Peter Ridley (Mendota Heights, Minn./St. Thomas Academy) broke a 35-year-old MIAC rushing record with 314 yards on 28 carries Saturday in the Tommies' 38-7 Homecoming win over Carleton. He had 244 first-half yards including TD runs of 1, 88 and 79 yards. It was just the second career start for Ridley, and the 314 yards was the sixth-best rushing performance of all

NCAA divisions thus far in 2004. Ridley now has 1,113 all-purpose yards and eight touchdowns in six games. The Tommies have won four in a row and are 5-1 overall and 4-1 in the MIAC.

Defensive

Concordia College senior cornerback Jordan Talge (Moorhead, Minn.) had two interceptions, returning one for a touchdown in Concordia's 34-23 win over Bethel. Talge also had two solo tackles and three passes defended in the game. He was part of a defense that helped force three turnovers and limited the Royals to only 108 yards of total offense in the game-deciding second half. His first interception of the game, which he returned 24 yards for a touchdown, came at a pivotal point in the game. The Cobbers had just turned the ball over on the Bethel 1-yard line. The Royals recovered the fumble and had a chance to tie the game with a touchdown. On third down, Talge made the interception at the 24-yard line and ran it back for his first collegiate touchdown and increasing Concordia's lead to 34-21. Talge's second interception came late in the game helping the Cobbers seal the victory. It was Talge's second two-interception game of the season.

Special Teams

University of St. Thomas senior punter Chris Husby (Plymouth, Minn./Robbinsdale Armstrong) had four excellent punts for a 46.3 ypp average in the Toms' 38-7 Homecoming victory over Carleton. He had punts out of his end zone of 65 and 51 yards and also pinned the Knights with punts that were fair caught at the Carleton 10- and 15-yard lines. In his first year starting, Husby is second in the MIAC in punting average and first in net punting. He's had no punts blocked and nine downed inside the 20 in six games. UST is 5-1 overall, 4-1 in the MIAC.

October 18, 2004

Offensive

Concordia College junior quarterback Brian Schumacher (Thompson, N.D.) ran for a game-high 114 yards, threw for one touchdown and engineered two scoring drives in the fourth quarter to help Concordia beat fourth-ranked St. John's in Collegeville 21-20. He was also 7-for-18 in the passing department, threw for 74 yards and did not throw an interception. All told, he accounted for 188 yards of total offense and did not turn the ball over once as the Cobbers beat the Johnnies for the first time since 1990 - and the first time since 1988 at Saint John's. Trailing 20-11 in the fourth quarter, Schumacher drove the team 84 yards in ten plays for a touchdown, and then led them on a 14-play, 75-yard drive for the winning field goal. The two drives accounted for over 11 minutes of the final period. On the game-winning drive, he ran for 25 yards including a pivotal 17-yard gain on a third and six situation. He also completed the only pass of the drive facing third and four from the St. John's 30-yard line.

Defensive

Concordia College junior defensive end Brody Clarke (Buffalo, Minn.) came up with one of the key plays in the Cobbers' 21-20 victory over St. John's. Trailing 6-3 in the second quarter, Clarke was able to rid himself of the St. John's offensive line and tackle the Johnnie running back in his own end zone for a safety. The two points gave the Cobbers the ball and on the ensuing drive, Concordia scored a touchdown to take the lead at 11-6. Clarke's tackle for a three-yard loss was one of two solo tackles he had on the day. More importantly, he was part of a defense that limited St. John's to a mere 60 yards on the ground, 165 yards below their season average. Also Concordia only allowed 309 yards in total offense - the lowest offensive total for the Johnnies since November 8, 2002.

Special Teams

Concordia College junior kicker Brian Halverson (Fargo, N.D./North HS) kicked the game-winning field goal with 24 seconds left to go in the game as Concordia beat St. John's to remain the only undefeated team in the MIAC. The field goal was one of two Halverson made on the day. In the second quarter, he connected on a 40-yard attempt - his longest of the season and second longest of his career. On the game-winning field goal, St. John's called timeout to try and put pressure on Halverson, but he calmly stepped up and drilled a 30-yard attempt straight through the middle of the goal posts. For the day, Halverson accounted for seven of the team's 21 points. He now has 48 points on the season and leads the MIAC in field goals and scoring by a kicker.

October 11, 2004

Offensive

Concordia College senior wide receiver Andrew Passanante (Hawley, Minn.) caught 12 passes for 206 and two touchdowns in Concordia's 42-0 victory over Hamline on Saturday. He becomes the first receiver since Concordia head coach Terry Horan to break the 200-yard receiving barrier in a single game. Horan amassed over 200 yards back in 1987 - also against Hamline. During the course of the game, he was also a part of the team's longest play from scrimmage this season when he caught a 62-yard strike. Passanante has now caught 25 passes for 347 yards and four TD's in the last two games. He currently leads the MIAC in receptions per game (8.0), receiving yards per game (112.8) and is tied with teammate Shawn Reile for the lead in receiving touchdowns (4).

Defensive

Gustavus Adolphus College sophomore safety Jon Horbacz (Hinckley, Minn.) recorded seven tackles (one solo, six assists), and intercepted two passes, returning one for a touchdown to help Gustavus defeat Augsburg 34-21. In the first quarter, Horbacz halted an Augsburg scoring drive by intercepting a pass at the Gustavus 19-yard line and returning it five yards to the Gustavus 24-yard line. In the third quarter, Horbacz came up with the defensive play of the game as he intercepted another Augsburg pass at the Auggie nine-yard line and returned it for a touchdown giving the Gusties a 26-14 lead. The interceptions were the first of Horbacz's young Gustavus career. The Gusties are currently 1-4 overall and 1-3 in the MIAC.

Special Teams

Saint John's University junior defensive back Mike Zauhar (Brainerd, Minn.) returned five punts for 91 yards, including a 63-yard return for a touchdown in a 37-0 win over Bethel on Saturday, Oct. 9, in Collegeville. Zauhar took a Bethel punt for a touchdown with 45 seconds left in the first quarter to give SJU a 10-0 lead. Zauhar also had two total tackles and two pass break-ups on defense for SJU. Zauhar is averaging 12.6 yards per return this year in 30 punt return attempts. SJU is 5-1 overall and 4-0 in the MIAC.

October 4, 2004

Offensive

Augsburg College junior quarterback Marcus LeVesseur (Minneapolis, Minn./Bloomington Kennedy HS) was a part of all six Auggie touchdowns on Saturday, setting a school record with four rushing TDs and throwing for two more as Augsburg gained its first victory of the season with a 42-10 triumph at Carleton. LeVesseur was part of 295 of Augsburg's 350 yards of total offense, rushing for 158 yards on 26 carries and completing 12-of-20 passes for 137 yards and two TDs. He rushed for TDs of five, 11, 10 and three yards and threw scoring strikes of seven and two yards.

Saint John's University junior running back Corey Weber (Glenwood, Minn./Minnewaska) rushed the ball 29 times for 182 yards and five touchdowns in a 41-6 win over Hamline on Saturday, Oct. 2, in St. Paul. The five touchdowns ties a SJU single-game record for rushing touchdowns and total touchdowns scored. Weber scored on touchdown runs of one, two, 15, 19 and 22 yards.

Concordia College junior quarterback Brian Schumacher (Thompson, N.D.) threw five touchdown passes in Concordia's 42-27 win over Gustavus on Saturday. That mark sets a new school record, and is the most thrown by a quarterback in an MIAC game this season. For the game, Schumacher threw for 274 yards, was 24-for-32 and did not throw an interception. Individually he accounted for over 300 yards of total offense and finished the game with a quarterback efficiency rating of 198.49. He was part of the offense that gained 511 total yards. In the second half, Concordia outscored the Gusties 28-6, Schumacher was 9-for-9, threw for three TD's and had 106 yards in passing. Overall he completed 14 of his last 15 passes. Schumacher also ran the ball 15 times for 34 yards.

Defensive

University of St. Thomas senior defensive end John Kaiser (Mora, Minn.) had an interception return for a touchdown, two forced fumbles, and two sacks among his 3.5 tackles for loss in the Tommies' 24-21 victory over St. Olaf. With the Oles' facing 4th-and-4 at the UST 45-yard-line and just over 1:00 remaining, Kaiser sacked Ole QB Jason Wilsey and stripped the ball to end the St. Olaf comeback bid. Kaiser's 25-yard interception return was his first career TD and the 71st touchdown involving brothers Greg, Andy and John Kaiser at UST over the last eight seasons. St. Thomas is 3-1 overall and 2-1 in the MIAC and has a bye Oct. 9.

Special Teams

Carleton College first-year R. J. Jackson (RB/KR, Roseville, Minn. /De La Salle) scored his first collegiate touchdown on a 95-yard kickoff return for a TD and racked up 195 all-purpose yards against Augsburg. The rookie's return tied the game at 7-7 late in the first quarter when he fielded a kickoff on the far side, turned it upfield and broke through a number of would-be tacklers. The 95-yard return was the second-longest in school history and the longest in 37 years at Carleton. Jackson tallied 45 yards rushing on 13 carries, caught three passes for 50 yards and added 102 yards in kickoff returns.

September 27, 2004

Offensive

University of St. Thomas sophomore quarterback Ryan Jansen (Foley, Minn.), in his first collegiate varsity start, had no turnovers and led a late-game 69-yard scoring drive that broke a 21-21 tie and let the Tommies escape with a 28-21 road victory over Augsburg. Jansen had a 45-yard completion on first down that set up the go-ahead points. Jansen was 21-of-34 passing for 258 yards including a 45-yard TD pass in the second quarter.

Defensive

University of St. Thomas senior cornerback Steve Groth (Apple Valley, Minn./Eastview HS) intercepted two passes in the final 4:00 to turn the momentum and let the Tommies escape with a 28-21 road victory over Augsburg. Groth also had a forced fumble, eight tackles and one pass defended. With the game tied 21-21 and the Auggies in UST territory, Groth's first pickoff at the UST 31 preceded a 69-yard, winning TD drive. Trailing 28-21 Augsburg drove to the UST 48 in the final 90 seconds but Groth added his second interception to ice the win. The UST defense has held teams to 37% passing and no pass completion of more than 26 yards this season.

Special Teams

University of St. Thomas senior KR-RB Peter Ridley (Mendota Heights, Minn./St. Thomas Acad.) had two game-turning plays in the fourth quarter that rallied UST from a 21-14 deficit in a 28-21 road victory over Augsburg. His 62-yard punt return for a TD with 10:07 left tied the game at 21-21. With the score tied and just over 2:00 to play, he added a 16-yard gain on 3rd-and-12 that kept a drive alive and preceded the game-winning 10-yard TD run. Ridley finished with 182 all-purpose yards.

September 20, 2004

Offensive

Hamline University senior quarterback Andy Gagnon (Waverly, Minn.) passed for 138 yards and two scores and rushed for 109 yards on seven carries and a touchdown to lead Hamline to a 20-18 win over Gustavus Saturday in St. Peter. With the Pipers trailing 18-14, Gagnon found wide receiver Dan Ryks for the game-winning touchdown as time expired. On the Pipers' first possession of the game, Gagnon scampered 70 yards for a score. Later in the first quarter, Gagnon found tight end Jeff Hanger for a 44-yard touchdown strike. Gagnon went 13-for-20 passing on the day. The Pipers have started 2-0 for the first time since 1994.

Bethel University sophomore running back Phil Porta (Cambridge, Minn.) rushed for 225 yards and two touchdowns while playing for only three quarters in Bethel's 42-6 win over St. Olaf. Porta fell just 18 yards short of the Bethel single game rushing record.

Defensive

Concordia College junior Tanner Radermacher (Bellingham, Minn.) had two interceptions and recovered a fumbled blocked punt in the Cobbers 20-3 win over St. Thomas on Saturday. He also made three tackles on the day. Radermacher was part of a defense that held St. Thomas to only 14 rushing yards and 181 total yards.

Bethel University sophomore defensive back Jon Evans (Johnston, Iowa) made two interceptions on the day including one that he returned 83 yards for a touchdown as the Royals limited St. Olaf's offense to just 113 yards through the air. The Royals posted a convincing 42-6 win over the Oles.

Special Teams

Concordia College junior kicker Brian Halverson (Fargo, ND) connected on field goals of 24 and 36 yards in helping Concordia beat St. Thomas 20-3. He also totaled eight points against the Tommies. In the game, Halverson set a new school record for consecutive field goals made with 10. On the year, Halverson has made five field goals in two games and has 20 of the team's 50 points.

September 13, 2004

Offensive

St. Olaf College first-year wide receiver Horace Gant (Pensacola, Fla./Pine Forest) caught nine passes for 222 yards and two TD's, including the 76-yard strike that tied the game at 31 with 1:17 to play. Gant's performance, in his first collegiate game, left him just 19 yards shy of the St. Olaf school record for yards receiving in a game. He helped St. Olaf overcome a 31-point deficit and beat Luther 32-31.

Defensive

Hamline University junior defensive back Tyler Schultz (Rolingstone, Minn.) picked off three UM-Morris passes and made eight tackles (two solo, six assists) in Hamline's 29-7 win over UM-Morris to open the new Klas Center. Schultz made the biggest defensive play of the game with the Pipers leading 14-7 and UM-Morris threatening to tie the game with the ball at the Hamline 17-yard line, Schultz came up with his third interception at the Hamline 3-yard line to stop the drive. Hamline countered with a 97-yard touchdown drive to put the game away.

Special Teams

St. Olaf College first-year kicker Paul Fortman (Stillwater, Minn.) connected on two crucial field goals, including a 44-yarder to close the first half to propel St. Olaf to a 32-31 win over Luther College Saturday. Fortman also kicked two extra points, including the game-winner with 1:17 to play in the game.

September 7, 2004

Offensive

Carleton College sophomore running back Wade Thompson (Rushford, Minn./Rushford-Peterson HS), in his first career start, rolled up 152 yards rushing on 25 carries and one touchdown in Carleton's 16-10 loss to Lake Forest. Thompson's 1-yard plunge with 55 seconds remaining appeared to be the game winner before the Foresters struck back with 24 seconds left for the win. Thompson outgained the entire Forester squad by nearly 100 yards, as he averaged 6.1 yards per carry, keying a Carleton ground attack which rolled up 185 yards. He added 3 receptions for 12 yards and two kickoff returns for 50 yards, giving him 214 all-purpose yards on the day. Stats: 25 carries, 152 yards, 1 TD, 3 rec., 12 yds., 2 KO returns, 50 yards.

Defensive

Concordia College senior linebacker Josh Dietz (Glencoe, Minn./Glencoe-Silver Lake HS) had 16 tackles (9 UA/7 A) in Concordia's sparkling 30-7 win over MSU-Moorhead. Dietz was named the game's Most Electrifying Defensive Player of the Game. Dietz was part of the defense that held the Dragons to only 85 yards in the first half of play and a total of only 182 for the entire game. His ability to stop the run and also drop into coverage helped Concordia intercept two passes and limit MSU-Moorhead's passing attack to only 93 yards. The seven points scored by MSU-Moorhead is the least amount of points given up by a Cobber defense in the storied series since 1997. Last season Dietz led Concordia in tackles and was named to the MIAC All-Conference First Team.

Special Teams

Carleton College junior punter Luke Muellerleile (White Bear Lake, Minn./Mahtomedi), despite punting into the wind for much of the day, averaged 44.7 yards on seven punts in Carleton's 16-10 loss to Lake Forest. Three of his seven attempts died inside the 20-yard line and two were more than 50 yards, with a long of 58. His final punt pinned the Foresters inside the 20, eventually setting up Carleton's go-ahead score on its next possession. His average came despite three of the snaps taking one or more bounces before getting to him. Stats: 7 punts: 313 yards, 44.7 avg., 3 inside 20, Long 28.