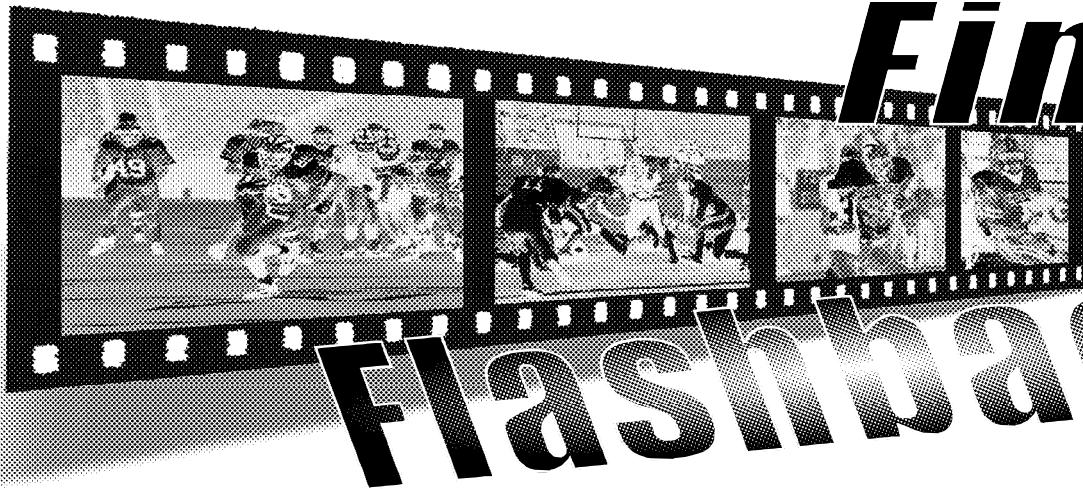


Finals

Flashbacks



1977

Matt O'Connor racked up 124 yards including a 13-yard touchdown run as Birmingham Brother Rice defeated Portage Central for the **Class A** crown, 17-7 at the Pontiac Silverdome. Trailing 16-3 late in the third quarter, Jackson Lumen Christi stormed back with a pair of fourth-quarter Kip Parker touchdowns to defeat Saginaw MacArthur, 17-16, in **Class B**. MacArthur had a chance to win at the end, but Bruce's 28-yard field goal attempt sailed wide. In **Class C**, Orchard Lake St. Mary's powerful backfield of Jim Paciorek, Barry Riddeck and Tom Sikora ran roughshod over Iron River West Iron County, 48-12. Riddeck ended with 163 yards on 15 carried and three touchdown. A rematch of the 1975 and 1976 **Class D** Final, Flint Holy Rosary notched 21 second-quarter points, including a pair of touchdown passes from Ron Fray to his brother Jeff, en route to a thrilling 21-20 victory over Upper Peninsula powerhouse Crystal Falls Forest Park. The Trojans defeated Rosary 50-0 in their first meeting and again in 1976, by a 14-6 margin.

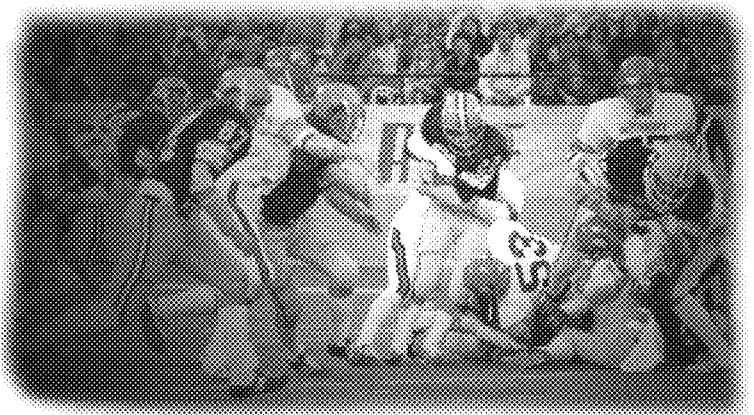
1982

Dearborn Fordson's Kevin Harris made a game-saving tackle of Farmington Hills Harrison tailback John Miller at the 2-yard line on the final play of regulation to force overtime in the 1982 **Class A** contest. Miller scored a TD in the first overtime for Harrison, but Harris matched the effort for the Tractors. Fordson's attempted field goal in the second overtime sailed wide. Kicker Dave Blackmer, the only returning starter for the Hawks, broke the tie with a 24-yard field goal to lift Harrison to their second consecutive MHSAA title, 17-14 in the first double overtime contest in Finals history.

Bobby Morse rushed for 114 yards and kicked a 28-yard field goal as Muskegon Catholic Central edged Dearborn Divine Child, 17-14, before a crowd of over 17,000 at the Silverdome in **Class B**. MCC's defense was stifling, holding the Falcons to 28 yards of total offense in the first half, and a total of 17 yards rushing in the entire contest.

Detroit St. Martin dePorres grabbed its third MHSAA football crown in as many attempts with a 44-0 thumping of Rogers City in **Class C**. The Eagles rolled up 402 yards on the ground, including 261 for senior tailback Kevin Bozeman. Bozeman scored a pair of touchdowns on runs of 81 and 71 yards, while Dwain Love collected three TD receptions of 68, 9 and 47 yards.

Eric George, Tim Jones, Rich Truckey, Jerry Batten and Doug Cupp each found the end zone for Mendon, as the Hornets rolled to a 12-0 season with a 44-8 victory over Rudyard in the **Class D** title game. Tony



Rice's James Allor (53) stuffs Todd Lipschultz in 1977

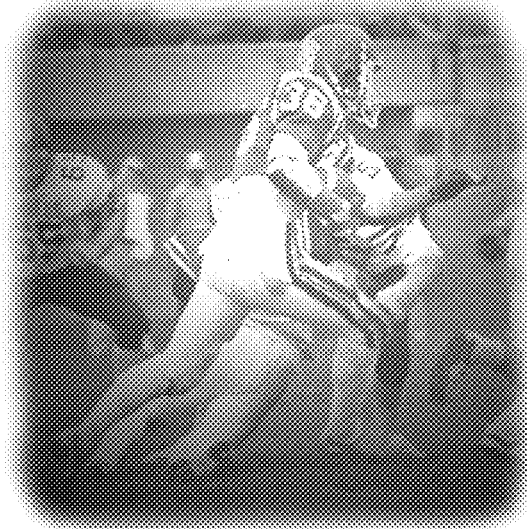
Ceccacci scored the lone touchdown for Rudyard on a 15-yard run. Ceccacci ended his career as the MHSAA leading scorer with 268 points, a total which now ranks fourth.

1987

Chris Moore's 35-yard field goal in the second quarter accounted for all the points in the lowest scoring contest in Finals history, a 3-0 win for Ann Arbor Pioneer over Detroit Catholic Central in **Class A**.

Second-half touchdown receptions by Dan Tietema, Brad Mathis and Darby Spielmaker broke open a scoreless contest as the Cougars of Grand Rapids Catholic Central downed Farmington Hills Harrison, 19-7, in the **Class B** title game. Catholic Central limited the Harrison offense to seven yards rushing on the evening. The Cougars contained Harrison's Mill Coleman, holding the quarterback to 8-of-16 passing for 138 yards and two interceptions, and sacking the sophomore sensation on four occasions.

In **Class C**, Erie-Mason slipped past Saginaw Nouvel, 14-7. Eagle quarterback Darin Bowman opened the scoring with a



Mendon's Truckey was truckin' in 1982

21-yard touchdown run over left tackle in the third quarter. Nouvel rebounded, tying the game on a Dan Bourcier to James Debaradelaben 42-yard touchdown reception with 8:59 left. Derek Bowman, Darin's brother, carried 11 times for 79 yards, including a 38-yard gain late in the fourth quarter to setup Ed St. Bernard's winning TD from a yard out.

Tight end Jeff Crosby scored on pass plays covering 55 and 65 yards, while teammate Randy Hunt broke a 67-yard touchdown run as Martin shocked Beal City, 21-0 in **Class D**. It was the beginning of a stellar year for the

1992

Trailing 20-14 at the half, the Shamrocks of

Detroit Catholic Central converted Paul Nemzek's third-quarter fumble recovery into seven points, then hung on for a 21-20 win over Saginaw Arthur Hill in a classic **Class AA** rematch. The win avenged a 13-12 loss to the Lumberjacks in the title game one year previous. The Shamrocks marched 91 yards following the fumble recovery, scoring on a 37-yard touchdown reception by Brady Pankow – the first of his career – from half-back Fred Taylor. Adam Borchert added the PAT for the slim one-point lead with 1:09 remaining in the third quarter.

It immediately became known as "The Catch." Muskegon Reeths-Puffer's desperation play against a strong Walled Lake Western squad resulted in a spectacular touchdown reception and a 21-18 victory in the **Class A** contest. With 32 seconds to play, quarterback Geoff Zietlow pitched to Demarkeo Hill, who handed the ball to Luke Bates on the reverse. Bates pitched back to Zietlow who lofted a pass down field. Tipped at the 10-yard line, the ball landed in the hands of an alert Stacey Starr. Starr dashed into the end zone for the game-winning touchdown.



Gary Shook, Otsego

The 1992 finish left both teams seeing Starr

Carl Reaves scored a pair of 1-yard touchdowns, including one in the overtime period to lead Oxford to a 20-13 **Class BB** title victory over Grand Rapids Kenowa Hills. The game was marred by turnovers. Oxford fumbled on five occasions, losing three, and was intercepted twice. The Knights, fumbled twice, and were intercepted twice.

Dennis Delor rushed for 93 yards and a touchdown, while his brother Ben threw for one touchdown, and ran for another in leading Marysville to a 21-12 victory over Kingsford in **Class B**. The win capped an emotion-filled season for Viking head coach Walt Braun. The game represented career-win number 260 for Braun, who spent Thanksgiving of 1990 in a coma following a massive stroke.

Detroit St. Martin dePorres notched its eighth MHSAA championship in eight attempts with a 12-7 win over Montague in **Class CC**. Coach Ron Thompson's Eagle defense held Montague to five first downs and a net 86 yards on the day.

Touchdowns in each frame of double overtime gave Traverse City St. Francis a 28-21 win over top-ranked Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher in **Class C**. Trailing 14-6 with 8:18 to play, the Gladiators faced a fourth and seven at the Gallagher 27. Despite heavy pressure, Paul Gauthier completed the halfback pass to Kevin Endres in the end zone for the touchdown. St. Francis lined up to kick the PAT, but pitched to Gauthier instead. Gauthier's pass to Dan Curtin in the right corner of the end zone tied the game.

Defeated in title games in 1989 and 1991, Lake Linden Hubbell downed Sand Creek, 16-3, in **Class DD**. It was the first win in nine attempts for a team from the Upper Peninsula, dating back to St. Ignace's title in 1983.

Kyle Klein connected with tight end Ben Bates for a pair of touchdowns, but it was not enough as Portland St. Patrick stopped two-time defending titlist Frankfort, 34-13, in a rematch of the 1991 **Class D** contest. Brent Goodman, Dave Fox, Ryan Channell and Matt Meyers all scored touchdowns for St. Patrick.

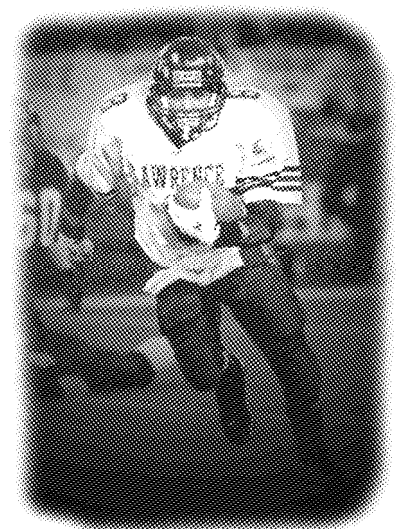
1997

In **Class AA** action, Detroit Catholic Central

capped its eighth Finals appearance with a fifth crown, defeating Ann Arbor Huron, 23-7. DCC quarterback Adam Tubaro bounced back from a pair of first half interceptions with a 34-yard touchdown pass to Nick Brzezinski and a 4-yard scoring run on the keeper to lead his team to victory.

Undefeated Farmington Hills Harrison wrapped up its eighth MHSAA championship with a 21-6 victory over Midland Dow in **Class A**. Ricky Bryant scored Harrison's second touchdown midway through the second quarter on a 26-yard screen pass from quarterback Jared Hopkins capping a 13-play, 99-yard drive that broke Dow's back.

Klint Marshall rushed for 118 yards and



Gary Shook, Otsego

Diaz dazzles the Dome in 1992

a touchdown as Ogemaw Heights downed defending champion Marshall, 19-12, for the **Class BB** title. Jason Buhlman opened the Falcons' scoring with an 87-yard kick return and sealed the win with an interception in the final minute.

Belding coach Irv Sigler and his Redskins picked up their second grid title with a 42-13 victory over Sigler's alma mater, Riverview, in **Class B**. A 1961 graduate of Riverview, Sigler's squad held a 14-0 lead at the intermission behind two Brent Cummings touchdown scampers. Josh McBride finished with 183 yards on 22 carries for the winners.

Big play defense by Muskegon Oakridge gave the Eagles a 6-0 victory over top-ranked Vermontville Maple Valley in a **Class CC** defensive struggle. The lone TD came on a 1-yard run by Ben Mills, capping a 91-yard, 17-play drive.

Willy Rolison became the third player in Finals history to rush for four touchdowns as Ravenna rolled to its third title in four years, 48-26, over Decatur in **Class C**. Rolison ranked up 236 yards while quarterback Jason Helsen added a pair of scoring passes to lead the Bulldogs.

Lawrence running back Ernie Diaz dazzled the Silverdome crowd with long runs and cut-back moves as the Tigers downed Mio-AuSable 28-6 in the **Class DD** game. The 5-7 155-pound senior ripped off 241 yards on 32 attempts, including runs of 56 and 47 yards, and a touchdown.

Making its second consecutive trip to the **Class D** title game, Lake Linden Hubbell trounced Portland St. Patrick, 30-8. Chris Zablocki dashed 77-yards for a touchdown on his first carry from scrimmage for Hubbell. Zablocki finished with 189 yards and two TDs, while teammate Adam Marcotte added 105 yards and a touchdown.

— Ron Pesch

Ron Pesch is the historian for the MHSAA.

To submit story ideas and potential statistical records, write to Pesch at 1317 Lakeshore Drive, Muskegon, MI 49441