

# Finals Flashbacks



1983 Finals

**1978** In the MHSAA **Class A** Final, the eighth-ranked Traverse City Trojans registered a 20-14 upset of No. 2 North Farmington. Following a Tim Squires touchdown, Traverse City built a 14-0 lead at the half when Jon Hildorn returned a Raider fumble 23 yards with 43 left in the second quarter. The Raiders knotted things up with a pair of scores by tailback Mike Miller in the third quarter, including a 46-yard ramble on a beautifully executed fake punt. With the score tied at 14 late in the game, Traverse City's Dennis Provins recovered a Raider fumble on the North Farmington 16-yard line to set up fullback Bill Rossetti's winning touchdown with 2:46 remaining. Provins then picked off a pass on the TC 4-yard line to halt the Raiders final drive with 1:45 left.

Warren Woods quarterback Mike Landru emerged as the hero in the **Class B** game, the first overtime contest in MHSAA Football Finals history. Landru's 10-yard pass to Mike Jarema tied the game, and his extra-point kick gave the Warriors their first-ever MHSAA championship, a thrilling 13-12 victory over the Grand Rapids Catholic Central. GRCC sophomore Ted Hollern scampered 10 yards around the right end to open the scoring in overtime, but the Cougars could not convert the conversion. Landru's QB sneak with 1:48 remaining in regulation tied the game, 6-6.



Falls Forest Park in the 1978 Class D tilt.

## **Class A: Birmingham Brother Rice 15, East Lansing 12**

*Key Play: Facing a fourth-and-nine situation at the East Lansing 28-yard line, Allen Szydlowski hit Mike Farr for a 14-yard gain, setting up a 3-yard touchdown run by his brother, Mel Farr Jr., with a minute to play, giving the Warriors the win.*

## **Class B: East Grand Rapids 35, Battle Creek Lakeview 0**

*The Leaders: Quarterback Dan Clark passed for one touchdown and ran for another, and running back Derek Smith ran for two touchdowns.*

## **Class C: Detroit St. Martin dePorres 28, Traverse City St. Francis 26**

*The Winner: Senior Keith Harris' spectacular diving catch in the left corner of the end zone with 1:07 remaining gave dePorres the win.*

## **Class D: St. Ignace 15, Mendon 12**

*The Drive: Trailing Mendon, 12-9, with 7:47 remaining, St. Ignace marched 90 yards in 12 plays, capped by a Rich Frazier to Chris Yshinski TD pass with 3:16 to play for the win. The victory ended a 25-game winning streak by Mendon.*

Catholic Central had a chance to win in the final seconds of regulation, but a 34-yard field goal attempt by Tim Tierney was wide right.

Grand Rapids Forest Hills Northern standout Kerry Smith established a Finals record with 278 rushing yards as the Huskies topped Bad Axe, 18-16, in **Class C**. Smith's total smashed Midland Dow's Scott Alexander's record of 230 yards set in 1976. The Huskies jumped out to an 18-0 lead before Bad Axe junior Jim Howard crossed the goal line to break the shutout. Steve Moore added the final touchdown and Howard grabbed the conversion pass from quarterback Craig Thygesen to pull the Hatchets within two with 1:51 remaining.

Tracy Hall scored on runs of 20, 26 and 57 yards to lead Detroit St. Martin dePorres to its first MHSAA crown, a 38-14 upset of Crystal Falls Forest Park in **Class D**. The contest marked Forest Park's fourth consecutive appearance in the Class D Final. Three minutes into the game dePorres tailback Vernon Lynch opened the scoring with a 59-yard run. The Upper Peninsula squad countered with a 68-yard scoring pass from quarterback Mark Morkin to John Casanova, and then took the lead early in the second quarter, but from there it was all dePorres.

**1988** In **Class A**, Traverse City notched a 24-14 win over Detroit Catholic Central. The Trojans took the opening kick and drove 80 yards on 20 plays en route to their first touchdown of the day. A 46-yard field goal by Josh Wuerfel, breaking the championship record of 42 yards by Jeff Fisher of Ann Arbor Pioneer in 1984, gave TC a 10-0 lead at halftime. The Shamrocks cut the lead to 10-7 late in the third on a 3-yard run by Dave Owens. However, a pair of fourth quarter interceptions by Trojan linebacker Andy Baillie set up Traverse City TDs. Mike Nadlicki paced the winners with 85 yards on 27 carries and two touchdowns.

Quarterback Mill Coleman threw for four touchdowns, including a 71-yard scoring strike on Farmington Hills Harrison's first play from scrimmage, to lead the Hawks to a 44-9 win over the Bears of St. Joseph in **Class B**. Coleman, a junior, tallied 238 yards on 12- of-16 passing to establish a then-MHSAA Finals mark. Harrison's Brian Wauldron also set a championship record with five receptions for 177 yards, including touchdowns of 71, 72 and 15 yards.

In **Class C**, veteran coach Ron Thompson and his Detroit St. Martin dePorres squad celebrated its sixth MHSAA championship with a 22-14 win over the

## 1993 Finals

**Class AA: Dearborn Fordson 12, Westland John Glenn 7**  
*Fourth Time's a Charm:* After three trips to the Silverdome without a crown, freshman Kamal Jaafar's 1-yard plunge with 3:08 remaining capped a 12-play, 72-yard drive and gave Fordson the win.

**Class A: Farmington Hills Harrison 12, Midland 9**  
*The Workhorse:* Harrison's Nick Williams ran for 168 yards and the Hawks' lone TD of the game.

**Class BB: East Grand Rapids 28, Oxford 25 (OT)**  
*The Hero:* Dylan Karczewski rolled up 153 yards on 18 carries, including a 10-yard TD romp in overtime to end the game.

**Class B: Kingsford 35, Imlay City 14**  
*The Formation:* Running the wing-T, the Flivvers busted the game open in the second half, scoring 21 unanswered points. Mike Olson's 109 yards and Mike Raketich's 54 yards and three touchdowns led Kingsford.

**Class CC: Hartford 43, Onsted 14**  
*First to Four:* Hartford's Dewey Sweat scored four touchdowns to establish an MHSAA championship game record (since tied by five others) in leading the Indians.

**Class C: Iron Mountain 28, Manchester 8**  
*Playing Keep-Away:* The Mountaineers opened up a 14-0 lead in the first half, then consumed much of the third quarter with an 86-yard drive, capped by a 7-yard TD run by Jeff Angeli.

**Class DD: Mendon 7, McBain 0**  
*No Trespassing:* Mendon became only the fourth team in MHSAA history to hold its opponents scoreless throughout the playoffs.

**Class D: Fowler 17, Frankfort 0**  
*Super Sub:* Senior Ryan Koenigsknecht replaced injured all-state QB Greg Hungerford and guided the Eagles offense to a pair of second half touchdowns and a two-point conversion.

Ravenna Bulldogs. Cameron Moss notched the game-winner on an 8-yard touchdown run with 2:01 to play in the contest. Dante Watson added the two-point conversion to give dePorres the final margin of victory.

Brad Johnson scored twice, including a Finals record-setting 87-yard punt return, to lead the Schoolcraft Eagles (13-0) to a 42-7 victory over Frankfort in the **Class D** title game. Eagles quarterback Larry Hoskins completed 9-of-13 passes for 180 yards including one touchdown toss.

**1998** Detroit Catholic Central quarterback Dave Lusky's 70-yard touchdown pass to Derek Anderson with just over five minutes to play propelled the Shamrocks to a 27-23 victory over Rockford. It was the fifth MHSAA **Class AA** crown and sixth title overall for the school and Head Coach Tom Mach.

In **Class A** action, the Hawks of Farmington Hills Harrison downed Hudsonville, 35-13, behind a stellar performance by Ricky Bryant. Twenty-one seconds into the contest, the senior split end caught a pass from quarterback David Pesci, then sprinted to the end zone for a 65-yard scoring play and a 7-0 lead. Bryant finished with six receptions for a Class A finals record 146 yards and two TDs as the Hawks grabbed their second consecutive title and ninth overall en route to a perfect 13-0 mark.

Running the 1930s-style single-wing offense, Menominee backs Drew Buyarski, Scott Ries, Josh Tarbox and Nick Thompson confounded the Haslett defense as the Maroons posted a 42-6 **Class BB** victory. Veteran Menominee coach Ken Hofer joined his son, Chris, who won a title with Kingsford in 1993, to become the first father-son coaching duo to win MHSAA gridiron titles.

In **Class B**, Chesaning knocked off defending champion Belding, 41-38, in a wild contest. The two teams combined 50 first-half points and finished with 883 yards of

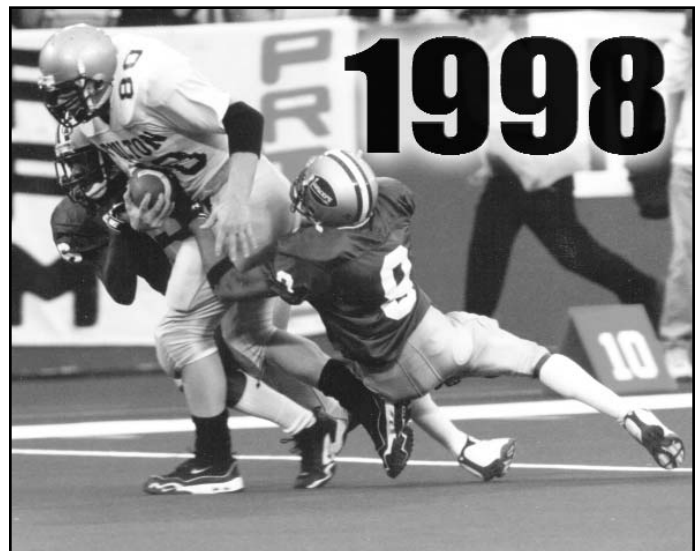
total offense. When all was said and done, Chesaning's option QB, Ryan Brady, ran for 104 yards and two more touchdowns, and passed for 168 yards and three scores to lead the Indians.

Montrose's 21-14 win over Whittemore-Prescott in **Class CC**, the school's first grid-iron crown, culminated the team's long road to the Silverdome. Montrose had compiled an 80-game regular-season win streak between 1988 and 1997, but had never advanced past the Semifinals.

Led by the ground attack of cousins Kevin and Troy Vermeersch, who combined for 181 yards, Unionville-Sebewaing topped Traverse City St. Francis, 16-8, in **Class C** for its first title. Defensively, the Patriots prevented the St. Francis rushing offense, which averaged nearly 400 yards per contest, from crossing midfield in the first half of play.

Fulton-Middleton tight end Joe Yager pulled in a 35-yard scoring pass from QB Matt Wetmore to tie the game with 1:55 remaining, then kicked his third extra point of the contest as the Pirates defeated Harper Woods Bishop Gallagher, 21-20, in **Class DD**.

Three big plays by the Fowler special teams led to touchdowns as the Eagles downed Iron Mountain North Dickinson, 26-8, in **Class D**. Fowler QB and punter Jon Novach hit Brett Thelen for an 18-yard pick-up off a fake punt on the team's opening drive. Novach found Nick Schafer in the end



Gary Shook, Otsego

**Fulton-Middleton's Joe Yager drags a Bishop Gallagher defender toward the end zone in the 1998 Class DD Final.**

zone on the next play, for a quick 7-0 lead. The Eagles' Jeff Rowell blocked a punt, scooped up the ball and returned it for a 15-yard TD with 21 seconds to play in the first half, as Fowler grabbed a 13-8 lead and the momentum. A pair of touchdowns by Jason Feldpausch, the first on the opening possession of the second half, and the second from three yards out following his 62-yard punt return early in the fourth, rounded out the scoring.

— 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