

First Round of 2006 Playoffs
Chicago Mather Rangers VS Prospect
October 27, 2006

The stage is set for the Knights first round playoff game. Prospect is attempting to claim back to back State Championships. It is clear the Prospect lads are anxious to get the playoffs started although Mack and Dazzo are sidelined for the game. The Chicago Mather bus rolls into Prospect; their team unloads and marches into Gattas Stadium. Prospect fans are already settled into the pre-game ritual of a tailgate party. The discussion focuses on what do you know about the Rangers, John Matzek reports that his travels during the day takes him past Mather High School. He senses Mather is focused on the upcoming match up. But the conversation moves on to which is the best brat, what a great fire, and does the game start at 7:00 or 7:30 – local papers carried both times.

Shortly after 6:30 the Knights start their pre-game warm-ups. They look sharp and poised for the game. The band enters the stadium performing for the first time since their 23rd consecutive State Championship at the U of I Band Competition. The fanfare and pre-game hoopla comes to an end.

Ziegenfuss kicks off for Prospect it's an end over end kick into the end zone. Mather starts their possession from their 20 yard line. A penalty places the ball at their 15 yard line. First play is up the middle for no gain. Richardson makes a tackle with for only one yard gain. Third down is an incomplete pass. Mather is now set to punt. Kosac breaks throw and blocks the punt. Prospect ball on the nine yard line. Two plays later O'Mara scores. Prospect 7- Mather 0. On the kickoff Mather returns the ball to the 21 yard line where Hennig makes the tackle. On second down Prospect forces a fumble and Richardson recovers the ball at the Mather 5 yard line. Two plays later Sobey carries it into the end zone Prospect 14 – Mather 0 with 7:51 to go in the first quarter.

Mather returns the next Ziegenfuss kickoff to the 17 yard line where Scanlan and Pack make the tackle. On the next three plays, Baratti, Scanlan, and Kosac team up for tackles leaving the Rangers facing fourth and 13. The snap eludes the Mather punter who recovers the ball and throws a pass to the 40 yard line. He completes it to O'Mara who returns it back to the 22 yard line. On the next play Sobey finds OBrill alone in the end zone. Prospect 21 – Mather 0 with 5:19 to go in the quarter.

One might think Ziegenfuss' leg is getting weary as he makes the kickoff. But the ball sails into the end zone for a touchback. On first down Cherwin throws the Rangers for a 5 yard loss. On the next two plays Scanlan and Ziegenfuss stop the Rangers for no gain. Mather is back to punt. Kosac finds another opening to the punter and gets another block. The ball bounces into the end zone where Munz smothers it for a touchdown. Prospect 28 – Mather 0 with 2:56 to go in the first quarter. Cherwin gives Ziegenfuss a partial rest on the kick-off as Mather returns the ball to their 27 yard line where Ziegenfuss makes the tackle (so much for the rest).

On first down Baratti and Richardson combine on a tackle and drop the Rangers for a 2 yard loss. Rangers go airborne and complete a pass to the Prospect 42 yard line. Richardson and Hamman make tackles but the Rangers are able to gain 8 yards on the ground. On third down they run for a first down. On first down Kosac and Baratti make a tackle resulting in a 2 yard loss. The quarter ends Prospect 28 – Rangers 0.

The Rangers then go back to the air. On third down the pass goes deep but this time Munz picks it off and returns it 20 yards back to the Prospect 34 yard line.

On first down Sobey hits Cherwin who takes it to the Rangers 40 yard line. From there O'Mara takes off for a 40 yard touchdown run, Prospect 34 – Mather 0.

Rangers' next possession starts at the 24 yard line. Tackles by Scanlan and O'Mara result in the Rangers being in a punting situation. O'Mara returns the punt to the Prospect 44 yard line. After a QB sack O'Mara runs the ball to midfield with Prospect facing 3rd and 4 yards to go. O'Mara takes the handoff from Sobey and sees that the O-Line has opened a massive hole; he runs 50 yards for his third touchdown, Prospect 40 – Mather 0.

On the kickoff the Rangers were waiting for the ball to go out of bounds, but Munz had other ideas as he recovers the kickoff at about the Mather 35 yard line. The Snap back to Lazarz is high and Prospect is dropped for a 5 yard loss. The ball is returned on downs to Mather.

Mather's next play is a flea flicker. As the pass goes up three Prospect defenders go for the interception. One problem occurs, no one catches the ball, it careens off their hands and the Mather receiver is heading for a score. Cherwin makes the touchdown saving tackle at the four yard line. The next two plays result in a one yard loss as Kosac and Maratea make tackles. Third down is an incomplete pass. On fourth and goal the quarterback rolls out with Kosac and Maratea in pursuit. Kosac strips the ball and Maratea recovers it, Prospect ball. Beyer runs two times for short gains, but Prospect is forced to punt. Mather starts their drive at the Prospect 26 yard line. They try a combination of run and pass but after 4 plays have only gained 1 yard. Prospect takes over with about one minute left in the half. Lazars completes two passes to Smith and Osei for 24 yards as time runs out in the half, Prospect 40 – Mather 0.

Prospect as the gracious host kicks off to begin the second half. On third down Maratea almost intercepts the shuffle pass. Mather is four and out. Beyer and DiCaro combine for 24 yards on two runs for a first down. They then combine for another 12 yards and another first down. A low snap has Prospect facing 2nd down and 16. Cohen now at QB runs two plays for a gain of 3 yards. Beyer then takes the handoff and comes up a yard short on his 12 yard gain; the ball goes back to Mather. As the third quarter comes to an end, it's Prospect 40 – Mather 0.

Lewis and Sawicki share a tackle. Mather runs again and garners a first down with the tackle by Fernandez and DiCaro. Mather goes back to the air with Przespolewski making the interception at the Prospect 46.

Cohen hits Smith twice and Harris once for a total of 13 yards but penalties prevent the first down, the ball is back to Mather. Prospect defense stop the Rangers with tackles by Fernandez and Sawicki. Hennig returns the punt 11 yards to the Prospect 40 yard line. DiCaro has a 20 yard run and the clock runs out. Final score is Prospect 40 – Mather 0.

In another opening round game Jacobs upsets Belvidere and the second round game will have the Knights taking the game on the road to Algonquin. We hope to see you there.