

# Eagles thrive on adversity in decking Plymouth

By ED FOX  
Staff Writer

MONROEVILLE — Monroeville battled adversity on more than one occasion Friday night before notching a 27-14 win over Plymouth in Firelands Conference play.

The Eagles, unbeaten in five outings, relied on the pinpoint passing of Dave Keszei and the bone-crunching running of Roger Smith to dispell any thoughts Plymouth might have entertained of winning.

Keszei, in his fourth year as the starting quarterback for the Eagles, threw a school-record four touchdown passes while completing 14-of-21 for 152 yards.

And, Smith battered his way to 171 yards rushing in 27 carries.

The dynamic duo might have stolen the spotlight.

But, a goalline stand by the Monroeville defense might have been the deciding factor in the outcome.

The Eagles, 2-0 in the Firelands Conference, were clinging to a 20-14 advantage when they were forced to punt while facing a fourth-and-eight situation at their own 31.

A low snap from center spelled disaster for the Eagles as punter Brett Colahan was tackled by Bill McVey at the Eagles' 19 with 4:07 left in the third quarter.

Sophomore Steve Hall ripped off an 11-yard gain around left end and the Big Red were first-and-goal at the hosts' 8.

Three running plays later, Plymouth was sitting on the Eagles' 1. On fourth down, senior Scott Ryman tried the middle but was stopped short by the Monroeville defensive front.

Thus, Monroeville took over at its' own 1.

And, it took the Eagles just nine plays to go the length of the field for an insurance score, a four-yard pass from Keszei to Dean Wise at the 10:27 mark of the fourth quarter.

"We should've got that one in," said a dejected Plymouth head coach Dick Roll as he solemnly looked toward the end zone.

"We had the opportunities but just let them slip away. On that fourth down play, we gave it to our best kid and he ran behind our best linemen but it just wasn't to be," added Roll.

Monroeville head coach Steve

Ringholz agreed it was a crucial play.

"Our whole interior defensive front really rose to the occasion to make the stop. I couldn't see who made the first hit but it looked like everyone was in on the stop including (Scott) Ryan, (Scott) Jones, (Brian) Liedorff and (Roger) Smith.

"This is the second time this season that our special teams have put pressure on us. But, the defense was equal to the task and was able to slam the door shut," added Ringholz.

Almost as equally impressive as the goalline stand was the ensuing 99-yard drive to paydirt by the Eagles.

And, both Keszei and Smith played a major role in the scoring drive. Smith carried the ball five times for 46 yards during the 9-play drive.

Keszei, meanwhile, fired a 19-yard strike to Scott Jones to keep the drive alive when the Eagles were faced with a third-and-seven at the Monroeville 47. Following an incomplete pass, the 170-pound Keszei dazzled the crowd with a 30-yard dance down the sideline to the Plymouth 4 and he hooked up

with Wise for the touchdown on the next play.

Plymouth, 2-3 overall and 1-1 in the conference, jumped out in front following a turnover.

Under a hard rush, Keszei coughed the ball up and McVey pounced on the loose ball at the Monroeville 29.

On the very next play, junior quarterback Troy Keene lobbed a pass to Jamie Brown who juggled the ball and held on for the first score of the game at the 7:14 mark of the first period. Randy Myers booted the conversion and the Big Red led, 7-0.

Later in the period, Monroeville drove 80 yards in just seven plays to get on the board.

Keszei went up top to Jones for the final 41 yards and the touchdown. Jones, who hauled in three passes during the drive and caught five for 86 yards on the night, went high in the air to take the ball away from the Plymouth defender at the 2:43 mark of the quarter. The PAT try failed and the Big Red led, 7-6.

Plymouth fumbled on the ensuing series and Tom Schafer recovered for the Eagles at the

Big Red 41 as the final seconds of the period ticked off.

The drive resumed in the second period and was culminated by a 19-yard scoring strike to Mark Stacey, who went high in the air like Jones to take the ball away from two defenders in the left corner of the end zone. Again, the PAT failed but Monroeville was in front, 12-7, with 8:52 left before halftime.

"Those two catches by Jones and Stacey were also very crucial. Both players came up with outstanding receptions and our receivers did a fantastic job all night. This was definitely a total team effort. Plymouth was the defending champions and had beaten us last year (17-14) and the kids knew the importance of this one," noted Ringholz.

Roll couldn't fault his defense for the touchdowns.

"On both of those early touchdowns, we had perfect coverage. It was just a case that our kid was much shorter and couldn't get up with their receivers. But, I was pleased with our defensive effort especially our pass rush with McVey and (Terry) Mansfield," noted Roll.

Plymouth battled back to take the lead again at 14-12 as Keene scooted around left end for 13

	MON	PLY
First Downs (total)	18	7
net yards rushing	164	101
passes attempted	21	19
passes completed	14	7
had intercepted	1	0
net yards passing	152	72
Total Net Yards Gained	316	173
Fumbles (number)	2	3
ball lost	1	1
Penalties (number)	5	10
yards penalized	44	97

	MON	PLY
Plymouth	7	7
Monroeville	6	14
Scoring: Plymouth — Jamie Brown, 29 pass from Troy Keene, (Randy Myers, kick).		
Monroeville — Scott Jones, 41 pass from Dave Keszei, (pass failed).		
Monroeville — Mark Stacey, 19 pass from Keszei, (pass failed).		
Plymouth — Kenne, 13 run, (Myers, kick).		
Monroeville — Tom Schafer, 12 pass from Keszei, (Keszei, run).		
Monroeville — Dean Wise, 4 pass from Keszei, (Chris Pfeiffer, kick).		

yards and the go-ahead score with 3:35 left before intermission.

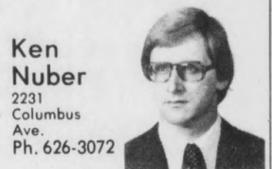
Like the first drive, the Big Red took advantage of a Monroeville mistake on a punt. This time there was a high snap to Colahan and Tracy McVey blocked the kick with Plymouth taking over at the hosts' 20. And, three plays later they reached the end zone on the run by Keene.

But, the Eagles again battled back with a 61-yard drive to go up by a 20-14 lead at the half. A 12-yard pass from Keszei to Schafer climaxed the drive and Keszei ran the conversion with just 10 seconds left in the half.

Monroeville goes to New London Friday while Plymouth is home to Ashland Crestview the same night.

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# North continues to dominate in FC

The North Division continued to flex its' muscle at the expense of the South in the Firelands Conference.

Friday night, the North won all three meetings with its' counterparts.

And, the North has now decided the South in seven of eight head-to-head meetings between the two.

There are two more contests between the two divisions tonight when Edison entertains South Central and Norwalk St. Paul hosts Mapleton.

Two teams, Monroeville and Western Reserve, were able to keep their record perfect Friday night.

The Roughriders, 5-0 overall and 2-0 in the FC, battled back

from a 13-0 deficit to trim Black River, 22-13. Monroeville, likewise, was forced to rally for a 27-14 nod over defending champion Plymouth.

And, New London squared its conference record at 1-1 and climbed to 2-3 overall with a 12-7 nipping of Ashland Crestview.

Black River, 1-4 overall and 0-2 in the FC, had been experiencing problems in reaching the end zone and had scored just 23 points in four previous outings.

However, the Pirates jumped into a 13-0 advantage by halftime as Mike Pfeiffer scored on a 35-yard run in the first period and Jim Fokey plunged in from one yard away in the second quarter with Dave Savick adding the conversion.

Cochair Dick Taylor's squad

finally got untracked when Russ Logan falled from five yards out in the third period, trimming the deficit to 13-6.

Early in the fourth period, Shannon Wolfe rambled in from the 11-yard-line and Logan ran for the two-point conversion which gave the Roughriders a 14-13 lead.

And, they added a later score when Jeff Smith hauled in an 8-yard pass from Greg Mullins who also ran the two-point conversion for the final 22-13 count.

Both teams stuck primarily to the ground with Western picking up 234 yards compared to just 118 for Black River.

New London, like Western and Monroeville, was forced to rally for its' victory.

Winless Ashland Crestview, 0-

	WR	BR
First Downs (total)	13	11
Rushes (total)		
net yards rushing	234	118
passes attempted	8	6
passes completed	2	2
had intercepted	1	1
net yards passing	16	14
Total Net Yards Gained	250	132
Fumbles (number)	2	2
ball lost	1	1
Penalties (number)	8	4
yards penalized	80	40

	WR	BR
Western Reserve	0	0
Black River	6	7
Scoring: Black River — Mike Pfeiffer, 35 run, (kick failed).		
Black River — Jim Fokey, 1 run, (Dave Savick, kick).		
Western Reserve — Russ Logan, 5 run, (pass failed).		
Western Reserve — Shannon Wolfe, 11 run, (Logan, run).		
Western Reserve — Jeff Smith, 8 pass from Greg Mullins, (Mullins, run).		

	NL	Cres
First Downs (total)	11	5
by rushing	8	3
by passing	3	1
by penalty	0	1
Rushes (total)		
net yards rushing	170	96
passes attempted	8	4
passes completed	3	1
had intercepted	1	1
net yards passing	72	13
Total Net Yards Gained	242	109
Fumbles (number)	3	3
ball lost	2	3
Penalties (number)	9	2
yards penalized	105	20

	NL	Cres
New London	0	12
Crestview	0	7
Scoring: Crestview — Mark Hershiser, 49 run, (Sonny Gee, kick).		
New London — Steve Kozel, 1 run, (kick failed).		
New London — Jeff Romine, 2 run, (pass failed).		

5 overall and 0-2 in the FC, scored early in the second period when Mark Hershiser rambled in from 49 yards away. Sonny Gee kicked the conversion and the Cougars were on top, 7-0.

And, it held up until the Wildcats were able to push across two scores within 1½ minutes of each other.

With 3:59 showing on the clock, Steve Kozel plunged over from one yard away as the Wildcats pulled to within one (7-6).

Following a turnover by the hosts, Jeff Romine blasted in from the two with 2:36 left before halftime.

New London showed good balance in its' offense with 170 yards on the ground, keyed by Ken Ross' 71 yards in nine carries, and 72 coming through the air on a 3-of-8 showing.

Meanwhile, the Cougars again found their offense inexistent with 96 yards on the ground and 13 through the air.

# Seneca East holds on

TOLEDO - Seneca East (4-1, 2-0) put 10 important points on the board in the opening quarter and then held on to record a 24-13 win over Northwood.

The first score came at the 4:48 mark with Bruce Herman, who finished the game with 84 yards in 11 carries, bursting in from the five. Lars Johannsen booted home the extra point making it 7-0.

The 170 pound senior kicker then made good a 35-yard field goal attempt with 35 seconds left in the period to give the Tigers a 10-0 lead.

Northwood struck just before intermission as quarterback Dave Minarcin hit David Russell with a 20-yard touchdown pass. Jesse Morgan's kick made it 10-7 after 24 minutes of action.

The Tigers cemented their lead in the third stanza with Rick Depinet scoring on a nine yard run with 7:11 on the clock. The PAT made it 17-7. Depinet finished the night as the games leading rusher picking up 185 yards in 33 carries.

The Rangers final score of the night came with 9:04 left in the game. Minarcin dropped back to pass from deep in his own ter-

ritory. He fired upfield only to have Ed Daniels of Seneca East go high into the air between two Northwood receivers and pick it off at the Ranger 35 yard line.

As he attempted to advance the pigskin he fumbled at the 30 with the Ranger's Tim Gercek picking up the loose ball and racing 70 yards for the score.

The conversion attempt failed making it 17-13.

"I was very pleased with our team effort," stated coach Mike Cool. "Our offense never gave up and that defensive unit did a super job especially in the second half. I believe Northwood only had the ball twice in the half with the one time being that unusual touchdown play."

The Tigers then scored on the final play of the game as Jim Reese ran 22 yards into paydirt with no time left on the clock. Johannsen's kick made it 24-13.

"We lost a very important player from our squad this evening (junior guard Irv Heisler left with a broken ankle in the first half) and I told the kids (at half time) we should give our best for him," added the third year mentor. "This they did. I am very proud of them."

# Cook: 2 costly turnovers hurt

BY CHARLES WAGNER  
Sports Editor

Larry Cook hates to lose football games, but he continues to be proud of the way his first Sandusky High School team rises to the challenge.

"Sure, the kids didn't play with poise the first half, and I told them they had two ways to go in the second half. Either they could fall apart or pull themselves together, and they certainly pulled together," Cook said after the disappointing loss to Lorain.

"At the end of the game, we were beating on them and if we had a little more time I'm sure we could have won. However, a football game is only 48 minutes, not 53 or so," Cook said.

Cook also commented on the Sandusky fans. "The fans were our 12th man tonight and gave us excellent support, especially in the second half. I know the kids and coaches appreciate their involvement and it sure helps," Cook noted.

"I'm very proud of the way the kids came back. I can't put my finger on why we played so poorly in the first half, but our defense played a whale of a game in the second half, and our offensive unit did everything it could to pull this one out," Cook said.

Cook also talked about the PAT attempts.

"We put in a special PAT pass play this week to David Belle and it worked and they were called for pass interference. We had only 1½ yards to go the second try and I am a firm believer you should make that kind of yardage. We came up a couple inches short.

"On the second one, Todd Croom didn't pitch the ball soon enough," Cook said.

"We had some kids play different positions in the second half, and they did very well. We moved John Dickman to defensive end without any practice this week and we also put Joe Johnson at linebacker and he also did a good job. He played that spot one day," Cook explained.

"On Lorain's second touchdown, the one in which they had fourth down and 14, we just blew out defensive coverage and that was the reason why the kid (Gerald Laurenti) was wide open," Cook continued.

Cook also talked about the first half problems. "We had 20 offensive plays and we blew the call in the huddle or the play carried into the game 13 times. We keep a chart on all the plays and we screwed up that many times. That shows a lack of poise but I realize 16 and 17-year-old kids are unpredictable. They are still kids," Cook noted.

"Next week I hope we can talk about a win over Marion," Cook concluded.

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