

2000 IHSAA FOOTBALL STATE FINALS

Class 3A

November 25, 2000

RCA Dome, Indianapolis

HERITAGE HILLS CLAIMS TITLE IN OVERTIME THRILLER

Heritage Hills quarterback Jay Cutler caught a 12-yard pass from Cole Seifrig on the Patriots' second play from scrimmage in overtime to win the IHSAA Class 3A state championship, 27-24, over Zionsville.

Seifrig caught a lateral on the right side of the field and then threw back across the field to a wide-open Cutler who sprinted into the endzone for the winning score giving top-ranked (Associated Press) Heritage Hills its first state championship in any team sport.

Sixth-ranked Zionsville (11-4) had taken the lead on its first overtime possession when Mark Nicolet connected on a 24-yard field goal to give the Eagles a 24-21 lead. Nicolet missed the potential game-winning field goal from 34 yards out with :01 remaining in regulation.

It was just the third overtime game played in state finals history (116 games) and the first in 14 years. The last time it happened was the 1986 Class 5A championship, won by Carmel, 20-17, over Fort Wayne Snider. The 1977 Class 2A game was decided in double overtime when Plymouth outlasted Jasper, 20-14.

The Patriots, coached by Bob Clayton, finished the season 15-0 in their first appearance in the state finals.

After falling behind 7-0 at 4:01 of the first quarter, Heritage Hills responded with three scores to take a 21-7 halftime lead.

Sophomore running back Cole Seifrig ignited the onslaught with a 56-yard run on the third play of the Heritage Hills drive after Zionsville's initial score. After stopping Zionsville on a three-and-out, Heritage Hills scored again on its first play from scrimmage via a 60-yard touchdown run by Matt Hagedorn. The third Heritage Hills scoring drive started when Seifrig picked off a Corey Richmond pass for his sixth interception of the season. The Patriots mounted an 11-play, 69-yard drive that consumed 5:37 and ended with a one-yard run by Jay Cutler.

Zionsville responded with two early scores in the third quarter to tie the score at 21. The Eagles closed to 21-14 at 6:30 of the third quarter when Ryan Wagner capped an 11-play, 78-yard drive to start the second half. Wagner gained 62 yards in the drive, including the one-yard touchdown. Corey Richmond followed with an interception on Heritage Hills' second play, launching an eight-play, 50-yard drive that ended with a three-yard touchdown by Wagner at 2:36, his third score of the day.

Zionsville had a chance to take a 24-21 lead at 8:40 of the fourth quarter, but Nicolet's 28-yard field goal attempt sailed wide left.

The Eagles finished with a Class 3A title game record 424 yards on offense and its defense held Heritage Hills to only 35 plays on offense, another Class 3A game record.

Fifth-year coach Larry McWhorter led Zionsville into the state finals for the second time in five years. Zionsville won the 1996 Class 3A title when McWhorter was a first-year coach.

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|------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Heritage Hills (14-0) | 15 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 | -- | 27 |
| Zionsville (11-3) | 7 | 0 | 14 | 0 | 3 | -- | 24 |

Scoring Summary

1st Quarter

Zionsville -- Ryan Wagner 1 run (Mark Nicolet kick), 4:01.

Heritage Hills ♦ Cole Seifrig 56 run (Ryan Elliott kick), 2:46.

Heritage Hills ♦ Matt Hagedorn 60 run (Eric Kress run), 1:58.

2nd Quarter

Heritage Hills ♦ Jay Cutler 1 run (kick failed), 4:59.

3rd Quarter

Zionsville ♦ Ryan Wagner 1 run (Mark Nicolet kick), 6:30.

Zionsville ♦ Ryan Wagner 3 run (Mark Nicolet kick), 2:36.

Overtime

Zionsville ♦ Mark Nicolet 24 field goal.

Heritage Hills ♦ Jay Cutler 12 pass from Cole Seifrig.

Team Statistics

| Heritage Hills | | Zionsville |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 11 | First Downs | 22 |
| 18/157 | Rushes/Yards | 60/316 |
| 114 | Passing Yards | 108 |
| 10/17/3 | Passing Comp./Att./Int. | 8/14/1 |
| 35/271 | Plays/Total Net Yards | 74/424 |
| | | |

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|---------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| 47 | Return Yards | 81 |
| 2/35.0 | Punts/Avg. | 2/36.0 |
| 2/10 | Penalties/Yards | 5/42 |
| 2/0 | Fumbles/Lost | 0/0 |
| 16:19 | Time of Possession | 31:41 |

Individual Statistics

Rushing

Heritage Hills ♦ Matt Hagedorn 4-63; Cole Seifrig 2-60; Eric Kress 4-17; Jay Cutler 6-16; Andy Seifert 1-2; Team 1-minus 1.

Zionsville ♦ Ryan Wagner 39-215; Corey Richmond 5-38; Austin Smith 5-35; Chris Ransdell 9-28; Ben Laviolette 1-1; Bill Slama 1-minus 1.

Passing

Heritage Hills ♦ Jay Cutler 9-16-102-0-3; Cole Seifrig 1-1-12-1-0.

Zionsville ♦ Corey Richmond 8-14-108-0-1.

Receiving

Heritage Hills ♦ Eric Kress 4-45; Cole Seifrig 3-31; Matt Hagedorn 1-16; Jay Cutler 1-12; Tim Ash 1-10.

Zionsville ♦ Chris Ransdell 3-21; Bill Slama 2-44; Ryan Wagner 2-28; Kyle Hall 1-15.

Tackles

Heritage Hills ♦ Jay Cutler 19; Adam Kress 15; Jeff Meunier 12; Cole Seifrig 10; Eric Kress 9; Tim Ash 8; Adam Beasley 6; Zach Goldsberry 5; Dave Fromme 4; Matt Hagedorn 4; Nathan Hancock 3; Eric Brown 3; Eric Elliott 2; Caleb Knies 1; Andy Seifert 1.

Zionsville -- Bobby Carnicella 4; Mark Shortz 4; Scott Martin 4; Aaron Davis 3; Corey Richmond 3; Austin Smith 3; Damien Decker 3; Ben Brown 2; Nathan Slavens 2; Bill Slama 2; Matt Oxenrider 1; Blain Bryant 1; Dan Schultz 1; Nick North 1; Andy White 1.

Sacks

Heritage Hills ♦ None.

Zionsville ♦ None.

Interceptions

Heritage Hills ♦ Cole Seifrig 1.

Zionsville ♦ Bill Slama 2; Corey Richmond 1.

Fumble Recoveries

Heritage Hills ♦ None.

Zionsville ♦ None.

CLASS 3A GAME NOTES

HERITAGE HILLS ♦ FIRST STATE TITLE IN TEAM SPORT ♦ Heritage Hills claimed its first state title in a team sport in the school's history with the overtime victory over Zionsville.

THIRD OVERTIME GAME IN STATE FINALS HISTORY ♦ Today's Class 3A overtime battle was the third in the 28-year history of the IHSAA Football State Finals (116 games). The last overtime shootout came 14 years ago when Carmel nipped Fort Wayne Snider, 20-17, in the 1986 Class 5A contest. Prior to that, the 1977 Class 2A championship game went to double overtime before Plymouth outlasted Jasper, 21-14.

ZIONSVILLE'S SECOND CONSECUTIVE OVERTIME GAME ♦ Zionsville played an overtime game for the second straight week. The Eagles thwarted host NorthWood's two-point PAT attempt to win 21-20 in last week's semi-state game to advance to today's championship contest.

ZIONSVILLE SHATTERS OFFENSIVE RECORDS ♦ Zionsville finished with 424 yards, breaking the total offense record in Class 3A state championship games. The previous record was 375 by Indianapolis Cathedral against Northwestern in 1992. Zionsville recorded 316 rushing yards and 108 passing yards. The Eagles also set a Class 3A record for offensive plays with 74. The previous best was 68 by Hobart in its 1979 contest against Columbus East. Also, Zionsville's 60 rushing attempts bettered the previous Class 3A mark by one carry set by Indianapolis Washington in 1974 against Mishawaka.

ZIONSVILLE DEFENSE RECORDS FEWEST PLAYS ALLOWED ♦ The Zionsville defense held Heritage Hills to a Class 3A record 35 offensive plays in the game. Previously, Indianapolis Cathedral only allowed NorthWood to run 41 plays in the 1986 game.

ADAM KRESS NAMED CLASS 3A MENTAL ATTITUDE AWARD RECIPIENT

Adam Kress, a senior at Heritage Hills High School, was selected by the IHSAA Executive Committee as the 2000 recipient of the Phil N. Eskew Award for Mental Attitude in Class 3A football.

Kress was a two-way standout for the Patriots in the offensive line and at linebacker. He was named the team's defensive MVP in 2000 and also served as team captain.

Academically, he ranks in the top 20 percent of his senior class of 172 students and is a member of the National Honor Society. He is active in several extracurricular and volunteer activities, including service as a reading role model and motivational speaker to elementary students.

Besides football, Kress has been a two-year letterman in basketball and a three-year letterman in track and field. Kress is being recruited by a number of schools as a student-athlete in football, and has a career interest in engineering.

Farm Bureau Insurance, corporate partner of the IHSAA, presented a \$1,000 check to Heritage Hills High School in the name of Kress.

CLASS 3A QUOTES

Heritage Hills Coach Bob Clayton

"These guys showed a lot of character. We made a lot of mistakes. We made an awful lot of mistakes against a good football team. When you make mistakes, often times your character overcomes that. I think that's what happened tonight."

At the end of the half I felt we made a few dumb plays and that gave them momentum going into the locker room. I don't know if it was the excitement of the week or what, but we did not come out with the enthusiasm and motivation we needed for the second half."

"I addressed the team couple of times on their flatness. I've seen teams do that and lose ballgames on a number of occasions. And Zionsville took it down our throats."

"We were very fortunate they missed two field goal attempts in regulation. But we got them into overtime and Zionsville played us the last time we played an overtime game (1996 Class 3A semi-state). And if they (Zionsville) want to win, they have to get the enthusiasm back."

(On the overtime) "I think Jeff Meunier made the big stop on first down and then we had great pursuit on the quarterback option which we hadn't stopped the whole game. And then Zach Goldsberry came up with the huge tackle on the screen pass to keep Wagner out of the end zone. And we felt all along our offense could score from 10 yards out."

(The winning play) "We call it ace of spades right, quarterback screen. We put everybody over and rely on the defensive team's pursuit and fire it back to Jay (Cutler). We put it in during the Roncalli week (semi-state) and were looking for an opportune time to call it. If it's going to work at all, let's done it right now (on second down). I'm not waiting until third down."

(On the crowd support from Heritage Hills and Southwestern Indiana) "We only played five games out of 15 this season at home. But every time we traveled, we felt like we were at home because of the support we received. It was great to see so many Mater Dei people come back today."

Heritage Hills quarterback Jay Cutler

(On the pregame talk by former Heritage Hills star and current Indianapolis Colts tight end Ken Dilger) "He told us to play for 48 minutes, to leave it all out there. No matter what, this is the last game (of the year)."

Zionsville Coach Larry McWhorter

"It was different halves. We didn't get off to a good start. Unfortunately, from the middle of the first quarter and the second quarter, we really struggled defensively. And I'm not sure why. It's a coaches cliché, but we just didn't get anything done in the first half."

"Our halftime adjustments, we basically thought we'd take advantage with our offensive line. Perhaps, (Heritage Hills) ran out of gas. We might have been a little fresher since our guys were playing just one-way. It came down to a couple of chances. One in regulation, that young man (Mark Nicolet) has kicked well for us all year. It (the missed field goal at the end of regulation) was makeable, but he just didn't get it done. But he came back in overtime and gave us the lead."

"The defense stepped it up for us in the second half and our offensive line played well. We just came up a little short."

(On Heritage Hills' game-winning play) "It was a great call putting quad receivers to the right and throwing back left. That has been something we've been susceptible to this year. But most teams are."

"In the second half, the biggest thing we adjusted was attitude. We came back ready to play in the second half."

"With three minutes to go we thought we'd take anything we could get whether it was a touchdown or a field goal. With the ball on the 20, we realized we didn't have to go the length of the field to win it."