

Indiana High School Athletic Association, Inc.

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Blake Ress, Commissioner

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EVANSVILLE REITZ WINS FIRST FOOTBALL STATE CHAMPIONSHIP

Evansville Reitz won its first IHSAA state football title, defeating Lowell, 33-14, in the Class 4A state championship game at the RCA Dome in Indianapolis. ♦ It was the first state title by a boys team in school history, the second overall and the first since the girls basketball team won it all in 1981.

Evansville Reitz took a 26-0 lead and senior quarterback Paul McIntosh had a hand in all four of the Panthers (15-0) first half touchdowns, running for three and throwing for another. He ran it in from seven yards, one yard and 21 yards and then connected with brother Ryan from 22 yards. Reitz scored on four of its first five possessions but had an extra point blocked and a two-point conversion halted.

Lowell (13-2) finally answered with 3:18 left before halftime when senior wide receiver Eric Roadruck found senior wide receiver T.J. Lukasik for a 4A championship game record, 77-yard touchdown on a reverse pass, narrowing the deficit to 26-7 at halftime.

The Panthers came out strong in the second half as well scoring on the opening drive when sophomore wide receiver Jeff Hudson caught McIntosh's second touchdown on the day on an 8-yard pass. The Red Devils were forced to punt on their next possession but the punt was muffed and Lowell recovered at the Reitz 14. Lowell found the end zone four plays later when Lukasik caught his second touchdown of the day, this time on a 6-yard pass from junior quarterback Kurt Monix, cutting the lead to 33-14 which turned out to be the final margin.

The Panthers, coached by John Hart, were led on the day by McIntosh's 255 total yards and five touchdowns (three rushing, two passing) and Hudson's 4A state finals record eight receptions. ♦ Lukasik led the way for the Red Devils, finishing with 95 yards on three receptions and two touchdowns. The Red Devils were severely hampered when their top ground gainer, Brandon Grubbe, was lost to injury early in the game. Lowell came in averaging nearly 218 yards per game on the ground but were held to only 77 for the day. Kirk Kennedy was the Lowell coach.

Evansville Reitz's Zak Kissel was named the winner of the Phil N. Eskew Mental Attitude Award following the game.

REITZ'S ZAK KISSEL NAMED MENTAL ATTITUDE AWARD WINNER

Zakary Kissel of Reitz High School was selected by the IHSAA Executive Committee as this year's winner of the Phil N. Eskew Mental Attitude Award in Class 4A football.

He is the second student-athlete from Reitz High School to earn an IHSAA mental attitude award and the first since Bob Stephenson won the honor for Class 3A football in 1977.

Kissel maintains a 3.8 GPA, ranks 40th in his senior class of 317 students and is a member of the National Honor Society. He gives back to the community through several volunteering efforts, mission trips and church activities.

He intends to study engineering at either Purdue University or Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology.

Athletically, Kissel is a three-year varsity letterwinner in football and has been an Academic All-City honoree each of those three years. He also has played basketball for the Panthers earning two varsity letters in the sport and was selected for his team's mental attitude award the last two years.

He is the son of Rick and Jody Kissel of Evansville.

The award is presented annually to a senior participant in the state finals who was nominated by his principal and coach and has demonstrated excellence in mental attitude, scholarship, leadership and athletic ability. It is named in honor of the IHSAA's third commissioner who served the association from 1962-76 and who helped initiate the state tournament in 1973.

Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance, the IHSAA's corporate partner, presented a \$1,000 scholarship to Evansville's FJ Reitz High School in the name of Kissel.

Class 4A Game Quotes

Evansville Reitz coach John Hart

On senior quarterback Paul McIntosh

"As far as I'm concerned Paul McIntosh is Mr. Football. ♦ Anyone who can't figure that out is just not very smart. ♦ He's one of the best football players in the state of Indiana in a long time. ♦ We have a lot of great football players on this team, but I think Paul McIntosh is the best football in Indiana since James Banks (Ben Davis '01)."

On the Reitz Defense

"I thought our defense played well and really stepped it up and played great team football. ♦ I really thought on offense we were diversified and that gave them (Lowell) some problems." ♦

"Other than the trick play and a dropped punt, we shut them (Lowell) out. ♦ They (Lowell) came back at us a little before half, but we were able to bounce back and take control in the second half. ♦ I thought our linebackers played downhill and were able to stop their (Lowell) running game."

"A little piece of this win goes with everyone who has played football at Reitz. ♦ At Reitz, we have had several mythical state championships, now we can say we've just got a state championship."

Lowell coach Kirk Kennedy

On Reitz's Effort

"They definitely came to play today. ♦ We picked our effort up in the second half, but they are obviously state champions. ♦ They were in a whole different gear than us. ♦ We fell in a hole and then you have to crawl out, but they are the state champs. ♦ We were up against it today and didn't have any answers for it. ♦ We worked on it all week and our game plan just didn't come to fruition."

On Senior Leadership

"It's great to be here again. ♦ I am just disappointed in our effort, that we came this far, only to have this kind of disappointment. ♦ That's kind of tough to handle, we have a great group of seniors. ♦ It will be tough to say goodbye to them. ♦ They will be Red Devils forever, and they know that. ♦ We will get back in the weight room with next year addition in a couple of weeks."

Lowell Fans

"Our fans have been tremendous all year, and today was no different. ♦ There was great spirit on both sidelines. ♦ We are blessed to have some great fans. ♦ It says a lot for our football program."

On Halftime Speech

"I just challenged their pride. ♦ I asked them, 'Is this the way you want to go out? ♦ Is this the way you want to be remembered?' ♦ We didn't do much in the first half. ♦ With the right combination of things, the game could still have been a win. ♦ We just had to take advantage of opportunities. ♦ The later it got in the game, the more desperate we got. ♦ My hats off to them, they played a great game."

On Brandon Grubbe

"I'm sure it took some of the wind out of our sails, but we have other football players. ♦ We made our adjustments, and didn't make plays. ♦ I feel bad for him, I hope it's not his last trip to dome (Finals)."

VSN MEANS ACTION PHOTOGRAPHY

Visit our friends at [Visual Sports Network](#), the IHSAA's official photographer for all state championship events and one of the leading action photographers in the Midwest. VSN, which was on site Saturday, has captured hundreds of images from this year's State Finals and will have them ready for viewing and purchase beginning Monday.

CHAMPIONSHIP MERCHANDISE STILL AVAILABLE

For t-shirts and other merchandise commemorating this year's tournament or for any of our events, visit our friends at [Morris, Inc.](#)

STATE FINALS PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

Couldn't be there for the state finals? You can still purchase a copy of the official souvenir program while supplies last! Programs are \$3.00 if you purchase in person at the IHSAA Office (9150 N. Meridian Street in Indianapolis) or \$5.00 by mail (postage included). To order, have your Visa or MasterCard ready and call us at 317-846-6601 during business hours (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. EST).