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SPORTS

Monday,
November 22, 2021

OHSAA DIVISION VII, REGION 27 FINAL

Poor second half dooms Shadyside in 35-20 loss

• Newark Catholic takes advantage of Tigers' mistakes

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

NEW PHILADELPHIA -- Shadyside doesn't have to go too far back in its history to find a game in which the momentum and tide turned in the second half and never relented.

Prior to Saturday night, however, the Tigers, and their droves of fans who came to Woody Hayes Quaker Stadium for the Division VII, Region 27 championship game against Newark Catholic, may have to think a little bit harder as to when a game like that went against them.

Coming off a sterling second-half performance to advance past River last week, the Tigers fell victim to the same type of game this time around.

Shadyside went into the locker room with a 20-14 half-time lead, but the Green Wave seemingly turned it up a notch, capitalized on turnovers, hit some big plays in the passing game and scored three unanswered touchdowns en route to a 35-20 victory.

"You make some mistakes against good teams, whether it's a thrown ball, fumble, penalty or something else and good teams are going to capitalize on it," Shadyside head coach Mark Holenka said.

"That's what happened to us. Credit to Newark Catholic. I am not sure they forced us into all of those mistakes because some were self-induced, but mistakes will eventually beat you."

The win sends Newark Catholic to next weekend's state semifinal against Warren JFK, while the Tigers see their season end with the region's silver trophy for the sixth time since 2010.

Shadyside finished 11-2 with the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference Class 2A and MOVL titles.

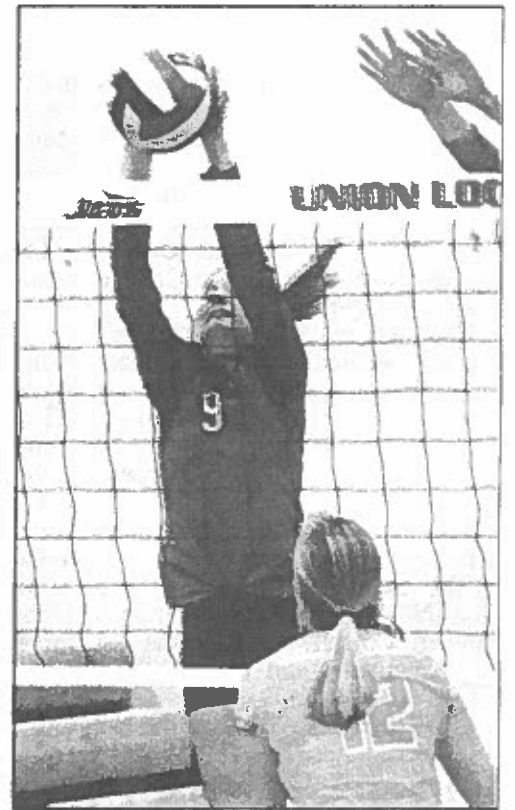
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TOP: Mason VanNest goes up high to try to make a catch during the second half of Saturday's game against Newark Catholic.

LEFT: Shadyside senior Ryan Florence reacts following the Tigers' 35-20 loss to Newark Catholic. Florence had a huge game for the Tigers with three sacks.

T-L Photos/SETH STASKEY



T-L Photo/SETH STASKEY

ST. CLAIRSVILLE'S Alexis Thoburn goes up for a block during Sunday's OVAC All-Star Volleyball match inside 'The Hangar' at Union Local High School.

Ohio wins OVAC volleyball match, sweeps by W.Va.

By **SETH STASKEY**
Times Leader Sports Editor

MORRISTOWN -- During last month's OVAC Volleyball Championships, Ohio schools won four of the five titles.

The Ohio side of the river further cemented its impressive volleyball season by posting a quick and relatively easy sweep of West Virginia during the annual OVAC All-Star Volleyball Match, which was held Sunday evening at Union Local High School.

The Buckeye State came storming out of the gate to post a 25-7 victory in the first set and really never looked back. West Virginia put up significantly more of a fight in the final two sets, but Ohio still posted the victory by scores of 25-16 and 25-19 to finish the match.

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See, **OVAC**, Page B2

Ohio State jumps past 'Bama, UC; No. 2 in AP poll

By **RALPH D. RUSSO**
AP College Football Writer

Ohio State is No. 2 in The Associated Press college football poll, surging three spots Sunday past No. 3 Alabama and No. 4 Cincinnati in a close vote.

Georgia is a unanimous No. 1 in the AP Top 25 presented by Regions Bank for the seventh consecutive week, but for the second week in a row, No. 2 has changed.

Alabama slipped past Cincinnati last week and then Ohio State leapfrogged them both after routing Michigan State 56-7 on Saturday. The Buckeyes received 1,434 points from the media panel. The Crimson Tide had 1,423 and the Bearcats got 1,416.

Notre Dame is up to a season-high No. 5 and Michigan will go into its game against Ohio State next Saturday.



The Game: High stakes as Michigan, Ohio State meet again as Top 6 teams

COLUMBUS (AP) — This year's version of The Game could hardly be bigger.

The annual clash between Ohio State and Michigan on the day after Thanksgiving is already juiced by a century of tradition, mutual hatred and fanaticism.

A lot more than bragging rights are at stake this year in Ann Arbor for the No. 2 Buckeyes and No. 6 Wolverines.

The winner clinches the Big Ten East and advances to the conference championship game Dec. 4 — and stays alive for the College Football Playoff.

The loser picks up a second loss and will consider the season ruined.

"We've just been preparing for that team all winter, all summer," Ohio State senior defensive end Tyreke Smith said. "Got that game always on our minds."

For the 24th time, The Game will be a top-10 matchup.

The Buckeyes (10-1, 8-0 Big Ten, No. 4 CFP) have dominated the series of late, winning the last eight matchups and 15 of the last 16.

Ohio State also has won the last

four Big Ten championship games. The Wolverines (10-1, 7-1, No. 6 CFP) are looking for their first ever appearance in the Big Ten title game, which was first played 11 years ago. Michigan hasn't won the conference since 2004.

A glaring subplot in all this is that Jim Harbaugh has never beaten Ohio State in five tries as the Michigan coach, a continuous source of frustration among Wolverines fans and gleeful schadenfreude in Columbus.

This may be Harbaugh's best team and best chance yet. The Michigan defense is among the top 10 in the FBS and might have a chance to slow down the Buckeyes and the nation's most prolific offense (560 yards, 47.2 points per game).

Redshirt freshman quarterback C.J. Stroud was 32 of 35 for 432 yards and school record-tying six touchdowns — all in the first half — in last Saturday's 56-7 rout of Michigan State, a week after he threw for five TDs in a blowout of Purdue.

The Ohio State defense had one of its best games of the sea-

son, neutralizing Michigan State's Heisman hopeful running back Kenneth Walker III, who gained just 26 yards.

The Buckeyes' loss to Oregon in Week 2 is a distant memory.

"The chemistry has been built on the field," Ohio State defensive tackle Haskell Garrett said. "Each week we've gotten better."

Michigan also enters the game on a high note. Cade McNamara threw for two touchdowns and Hassan Haskins ran for two in the Wolverines' 59-18 win over Maryland last Saturday.

"We're a confident team. We know what we're capable of," McNamara said. "We're fired up and we're ready. This is the week."

The only blemish on the Michigan record is a 37-33 loss to Michigan State on Oct. 30.

"Everything that was planned, built for, all the energy that was put in since way back in early 2021 - January, February - all the things that the guys have done, the coaches have done, has put us in this position," Harbaugh said. "That's the position we wanted to be in, and we want to finish it."

Florida fires coach Dan Mullen, completing stunning fall from grace for Gators program

By MARK LONG
AP Sports Writer

Florida fired coach Dan Mullen on Sunday, a day after his sixth loss in nine games, two months after the Gators went toe to toe with defending national champion Alabama and a year after they had a chance to make the College Football Playoff.

Mullen's stunning downfall and not-so-surprising departure ends a tumultuous two seasons that included mounting losses, numerous public relation missteps, NCAA sanctions and a victory against lower-division Samford that didn't seem like much for Gators fans to celebrate.

Mullen finished 34-15 over four seasons at Florida that included a trip to the Southeastern Conference championship game last year and three New Year's Six bowls.

His final game was a 24-23 loss in overtime at Missouri that spotlighted Florida's flaws: inconsistent quarterback play, a porous offensive line, a lack of playmakers on both sides of the ball and an inability to win close games. The Gators (5-6, 2-6 SEC) have dropped seven consecutive one-possession games, all in the last two seasons.

Florida hosts rival Florida State (5-6) on Saturday, with the winner becoming bowl eligible. They'll do so without Mullen, who also served as the team's offensive coordinator and play-caller.

Special team coordinator and running backs coach Greg Knox will serve as interim coach.

Athletic director Scott

Stricklin wanted to give Mullen every chance to turn things around — especially since the team was ranked sixth in the CFP standings just a year ago. He even rewarded Mullen with a raise and a three-year contract extension in the offseason — but it became clear Mullen was losing support of top administrators, key boosters and even the program's most loyal fans.

Stricklin was scheduled to hold a news conference later Sunday.

The Gators will pay Mullen a \$12 million buyout spread over seven installments, with a \$6 million payout coming within 30 days. Mullen will then get \$1 million every July 15 through 2027. Six of Mullen's assistants have expiring contracts, making the timing of the coaching change relatively ideal from that standpoint.

The Gators also have an \$85 million standalone football facility opening next year, a long overdue upgrade that's been years in the making. That and being surrounded by Florida's fertile recruiting pool should make the Sunshine State's best college football job even more attractive.

Florida is likely to be linked to most of the top coaches who have been speculated as candidates to fill coaching vacancies at LSU and Southern California, including: Oregon's Mario Cristobal, Cincinnati's Luke Fickell, Penn State's James Franklin, Mississippi's Lane Kiffin and Louisiana's Billy Napier as potential replacements. What about making another run at former Okla-

homa coach Bob Stoops, a former Gators assistant under Steve Spurrier?

Florida has lost nine of its last 11 games against Power Five opponents, including four straight, and its current recruiting class ranks 34th in the country, according to Rivals.

Mullen fired two close friends and top assistants following a 40-17 drubbing at South Carolina earlier this month, but parting with defensive coordinator Todd Grantham and run game coordinator John Hevesy did little to get Florida back on track.

The Gators responded with a 70-52 victory against Samford that felt more like a loss than any outcome in Mullen's four years in Gainesville. They gave up a season-high 530 yards and the most points ever at Florida Field for an opponent, and it came against a middle-of-the-pack team from the Southern Conference and the Football Championship Subdivision.

It's the most points an FCS opponent has ever totaled against an SEC team.

The Gators rallied in the second half and Mullen celebrated in the locker room like nothing was wrong, another strange look for a guy who's provided way too many for Florida's brass since replacing Jim McElwain in 2017.

The Gators ended 21-13 in league play under Mullen.

His offensive acumen made him one of the best play-callers in the SEC for the past 15 years — four as Florida's offensive coordinators, nine as Mississippi State's head

coach and then four more in Gainesville issues — but his recent issues overshadowed all his prowess.

Mullen's recruiting has been the root of his on-field problems. He surely stuck with Grantham and Hevesy longer than he should have and was in discussions with Stricklin last week to make even more staff changes had he won out and saved his job.

His strong-willed ways landed him in hot water last year after he doubled down on wanting to pack Florida Field during a pandemic.

He also got Florida on NCAA probation for the first time in 30 years, dealt a show-cause penalty for recruiting violations. He was also fined and reprimanded by the SEC for his role in a benches-clearing fight, and was widely criticized for tone-deaf comments following two losses.

His failure to publicly take ownership of losses carried into this season and was at the forefront following a 20-13 stunner at Kentucky last month. Asked whether he was outcoached, Mullen started reeling off numbers from the stat sheet.

"We outtrused them. We out-passed them. We out-total-gained them," Mullen said. "The time of possession. We were better on third downs."

Despite Mullen's many missteps, Stricklin gave him a raise and a three-year contract extension in May.

The 49-year-old Mullen made \$7.6 million this year, up from \$6.07 million in 2020, and had been under contract through 2026.

• OVAC

Continued from Page B1

Ohio's stats were evenly distributed.

Dunkle, who recorded more than 1,000 career kills for the Huskies, led the Buckeyes with six kills. Thoburn, who plans to play at Muskingum next season, posted four kills.

Wellsville's Paige Green, who helped lead her team to the Division IV Elite 8 earlier this month, handed out 12 assists. Indian Creek's Jordan Hiles posted 11 digs.

West Virginia was led by the Oak Glen duo of Gracie Wright and Emma Renfro. Renfro had seven digs, while Wright had nine digs.

Morgantown's Grace Washburn had six kills.

John Marshall's Isabella Linton handed out 12 assists.

Along with the all-star match, the OVAC handed out the player and coach of the year plaques for the 2021 season.

The players of the year were 1A: Presley Stokes (Wellsville); 2A: Gentry Brown (Shadyside); 3A: Mya Leach (Shenandoah); 4A: Torre Kildow (Union Local); 5A: Taylor Luneborg (Dover).

The overall coaches of the year were Stokes of Wellsville and Morgantown's Erica Manor.

• Shadyside

Continued from Page B1

"I am proud of this team because even though we lost this game, (Newark Catholic) knew and we all knew we could play with them," Holenka said. "I hope these seniors, and this whole team, holds their heads up high. We didn't accomplish the biggest goals out there, but we accomplished a lot of other goals that many other teams didn't accomplish."

The Shadyside list of mistakes included three second-half interceptions. The biggest occurred on first drive of the second half when talented junior Mason Hackett went under a route, picked off the pass and ran it back 44 yards for the touchdown. The ensuing PAT by senior Warren Knowlton gave the Green Wave the 21-20 lead.

On top of those turnovers, Shadyside was victimized by a couple of defensive breakdowns that led to Cole Canter touchdown passes of 36 and 56 yards in the second half, which pushed the game out of reach.

"They beat us on a wheel route and the switch, but when you get beat (for a touchdown pass), it's a combination of things," Holenka said. "It's a team game and I am not going to point fingers at anyone because without these young men, we would have never been on the ride."

Shadyside played very well in the first half, especially in the first quarter. Every time Newark Catholic made a play, the Tigers had an answer.

After the Green Wave struck first, the Tigers responded when senior Mason VanNest fielded the kickoff at his 12, weaved through some traffic and was gone for an 88-yard touchdown.

• AP

Continued from Page B1

No. 25 Arkansas fell four spots after losing at Alabama by a touchdown, narrowly keeping Clemson from returning to the Top 25 for the first time since the last weekend of September. The Razorbacks received 105 points to Clemson's 101.

CONFERENCE CALL

SEC — 5 (Nos. 1, 3, 8, 14, 25).

Big Ten — 5 (Nos. 2, 6, 12, 17, 18).

ACC — 3 (Nos. 20, 21, 24).

Big 12 — 3 (Nos. 7, 9, 10).

Pac-12 — 2 (Nos. 11, 16).

Gooch sails to first PGA Tour championship

ST. SIMONS ISLAND, Ga. (AP) — Talor Gooch was playing

flirting with 59. Gooch ran off three birdies in

Gooch tied the tournament record of 22-under 260 set by Kev-

Wheeling Captures MEC Championship Over WVSU

INSTITUTE, W. Va. — Ever since the formation of the Mountain East Conference (MEC) back in 2013, the Wheeling University Volleyball team (26-5, 15-1) has been the top dog in the division. For the ninth year in a row, the Cardinals are MEC Champions as they defeated West Virginia State 3-1. They are the second Wheeling University team to capture the MEC title after Women's Golf won a championship earlier this season.

In set one, Wheeling was the team that would jump out to the early lead, scoring six of the first nine points in the set. However, State would battle back to tie the game just three points later and the back and forth continued until the set was tied at 14-14 halfway through the set. West Virginia State would slowly take the lead with short two and 3- runs to gain an advantage over the Cardinals. The set got to as high as 24-21, and the Cardinals were faced with a match-point situation. Gabrielle Bullock would finish out the set for West Virginia State with a kill and the Yellow Jackets took a 1-0 lead.

As the second set began, State started to once again pull ahead, scoring nine of the first 13 points to take a 9-4 lead in the set. Wheeling was able to battle back and make it a three-point deficit halfway through the set before they hit their stride. Lexi Smith got a kill, and that started a 7-2 run that got Wheeling back in the lead 19-17 towards the end of the set. State tied the game 23-23 and it was looking like a win-by-two scenario was coming. However, Wheeling got kills from Lexi Reinert and Tylah Yoemans got the kills

that would end the set and give Wheeling a 25-23 set two win and tie the match at 1-1.

Set three would tie 17 times, including sitting at 24-24. Wheeling needed the two-point advantage to win the set, and senior Kayla Bekier would give them the two points they needed. She registered back-to-back kills, and have Wheeling the 26-24 set three win. With a 2-1 advantage on their side, Wheeling looked to close out the match in set four and did just that. The Cardinals used a combination of kills and errors to build a 7-1 lead early in the set. The lead extended the 14-9 late in the set before State started battling back.

A 5-2 run had brought the score to 17-14 and got the Yellow Jackets to within striking distance. As the set went on, State continued to battle and tied the game at 22-22. Kills by Reinert and Bekier brought the score to 24-23, and the Cardinals would close out the championship with a block assist by Reinert and Winters. The Cardinals captured their ninth straight MEC Championship with the victory, and continue to play well in conference play.

Two of Wheeling's top hitters, Bekier and Winters, were once again at the forefront of Wheeling's MEC Championship. Bekier led the way with 18 kills on the day, while Winters followed right behind her with 17 kills.

The Wheeling University Volleyball team has now won a bid to the NCAA Atlantic Regional tournament. They will await their fate, with the tournament set to run from December 2nd through December 4th.

Ohio Tops W.Va. In OVAC All-Star Volleyball Match

By SETH STASKEY
For The Intelligencer

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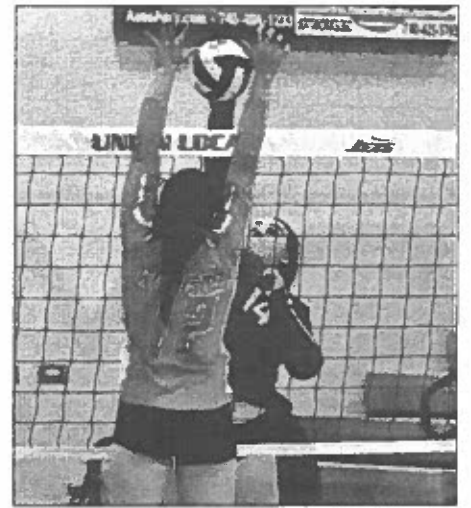


Photo by Seth Staskey
Paden City's Madison Kline hits around Fort Frye's Julia Zalmanek during Sunday's OVAC All-Star Match at Union Local High School.

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CENTRAL

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The Titans' big chance came right before half-time when they reeled off a 16-play drive but a touchdown pass was called back due to an illegal man downfield. Gilmer settled for a field goal try that came up empty heading into the break.

Central made the Titans pay for that missed opportunity as Lorenzo Ferrera found paydirt from 13 yards out to start the second half and he followed that up with a 52-yard punt return to the house to extend the lead to 35-0 less than 4 minutes into the third quarter.

"Lorenzo had a great game," Young said. "We did some different things that make or break a team and that definitely made our team (Saturday). I'm awfully proud of them."

The highlights continued for the Knights and perhaps none bigger than Caleb Ratcliffe, who used one hand to secure a 24-yard touchdown reception from quarterback Payton Hildebrand for a 42-0 advantage heading into the fourth quarter with a running clock.

Braden McWreath turned on the jets in the fourth with a 46-yard TD scamper on fourth-and-5, before Grant McCabe jumped on a fumble in the end zone for a touchdown with over 5 minutes to play.

"I can't say enough about our kids and how they are playing aggressively," Young said. "They were balanced. I've said this numerous times — I don't really care who gets the points.

It's a team effort. We're not caught up on individuals, we're caught up on the team. That's the key to our success. These kids are stepping up and doing a super job."

Hamrick threw for 190 yards on 17 of 24 passing and ran for 23 yards on 13 carries.

Watkins, Ferrera and Martos each handled seven carries gaining 139, 86 and 73 yards, respectively.

"We have to continue to get better at blocking and tackling," Young said. "It's the fundamentals that make a difference in a game. That was huge how we played (Saturday) and we're going to continue to work on fundamentals."

RITCHIE CO. 34, MOUNT VIEW 6
ELLENBORO — Sat-

urday afternoon in a Class A state quarterfinal at Chuck Schofield Memorial Stadium, No. 5 Mount View failed to take advantage of early opportunities and watched a 6-6 game at the half turn into a 34-6 setback to No. 4 Ritchie County.

The Rebels lost full-back Brandon Riddle to an ankle injury early in the first quarter, but Seth Hardy came through with career-highs of 20 rushes and 142 yards.

On its first trio of drives, Mount View (10-2) had possession first-and-goal at the 2, first-and-goal at the 5 and also first-and-10 at the RCHS 18, but came up empty each time.

Ritchie County got on the board following the second goal line stand. Marlon Moore had an ac-

robatic, juggling 35-yard grab from Ethan Haught, who hit Hardy out of the backfield for an 18-yard TD strike with 7:29 left in the half.

The Golden Knights responded before the break when signal-caller Ryan Long, who went 22 of 39 for 205 yards, connected on four straight passes. The final trio went to Tony Bailey, which included a leaping 14-yard touchdown catch with no time on the clock. Jonathan Huff's extra point drilled the top of the left upright.

Ritchie County scored on its first four possession of the second half. Hardy started it with a 1-yard plunge. Gus Morrison, who toted 16 times for 106 yards, added a pair of 1-yard rushing TDs. He

also capped the scoring at 4:51 of the fourth via a 37-yard TD catch from Haught.

Mount View, which trailed 173 to 107 in total yards at intermission, ended up allowing 464 and produced 237.

Bailey led the visitors with game-highs of six receptions for 101 yards.

DODDRIDGE CO. 14, JAMES MONROE 0

Jared Jones scored on a 1-yard rush with 9:04 to go in the fourth quarter and Seth Richards tacked on a 24-yard TD with 4:13 left as the Bulldogs wore down the Mavericks in the quarterfinals of the Class A playoffs at Cline Stansberry Stadium.

Dylan Knight led Doddridge County (11-1) with 27 carries for 125 yards.

James Monroe (8-4) ran just 29 plays for 60 yards in the loss.

Their best chance to score came in the third quarter when Eli Allen intercepted a Jones pass in the end zone and returned it 74 yards, but a penalty and two negative rushes led to a turnover on downs.

CLASS AA POCA 56, FRANKFORT 49

Quarterback Jordan Wolfe threw for 365 yards and five touchdowns and ran for another score Saturday afternoon to lead No. 5 seed Poca to a shootout victory against visiting Frankfort in the Class AA quarterfinals.

The game was an offensive showcase from start to finish, as neither team punted nor faced a fourth down.

The win moves Poca (9-2) into the semifinals at home next Friday at

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