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McDowell County

It's Getting To Be Habit

Gary High School Wins Second AA Championship Oceana's Football Team Gives Tremendous Effort Before Falling

Gary captured their second State Championship under coach Sid Cure Saturday as the Coaldiggers defeated Oceana 28-0 before an estimated 7500 people at Mitchell Stadium in Bluefield.

It was apparent from the outset that Oceana had come to play as the Indians battled the Coaldiggers on even terms throughout the first three quarters before Gary broke the game open in the final period of play.

The playoff win gave Gary their best season since they started playing football with a spotless 11-0 record.

Gary speedster David Callahan took the opening kickoff and raced to the Coaldiggers 45 yard line before being hauled down.

Oceana, showing tremendous pursuit, kept the fast Gary backs bottled up and forced them into a punting situation. A Mike Tolley punt carried to Oceana's 25 yard line but a fumble occurred and Ricky Nogosky pounced on the loose pigskin to give Gary their first big break of the day with only four minutes gone off the clock.

Two quick hits in the line and Gary held a first down at Oceana's 14 yard line. The Indians defensive end Ron Miller recovered a Steve Thornton fumble to kill the first serious threat of the game.

The famed "gravedigger" unit then dug in and forced Oceana into a punting situation with Chester Thomas returning the kick to his own 49 yard line.

Gary's offensive machine then went to work and marched goalward with Phil Dillon carrying the ball for 24 yards in three times. Callahan on a quick opener sped to Oceana's three yard line to set up the TD. Thornton fumbled the snap of the ball, but then picked up the football and raced in for Gary's first score of the day. Callahan, on a pitch out from Thornton, added the conversion try and Gary led 8-0 with 14 seconds left in the first quarter.

Both teams settled down in the second quarter with both defensive units playing aggressive football. Oceana kept Gary in the hole several times during the second quarter with some fine punting. Midway through the second period Gary was held inside the five yard line for four plays. Three times Gary gained ground only to have a flag thrown and have the ball brought back.

Gary punted out to Oceana and on the second play recovered an Indian fumble but the play was nullified due to a penalty against the Coaldiggers.

An exchange of punts then ended the first half of play with Gary holding a slim 8-0 lead going into the dressing room.

Again Gary failed to capitalize on a break early in the third quarter as Oceana's Tom Tyree fumbled and Eddie Reeves came up with the football for Gary on the 15 yard line. Oceana dug in and held Gary just outside the 10 yard line.

The Indians punted out to Gary after failing to pick up a first down and Thomas hauled in the punt on Oceana's 39 and carried it back to the 23 yard line.

Oceana's defensive unit again almost stopped the Coaldiggers from crossing the goal line but Callahan raced around end on a pitchout from Thornton to cap the 23 yard drive which took seven plays. The PAT failed and Gary held a 14-0 lead with less than three minutes to go in the third quarter.

Both teams then exchanged hands with the football going into the final 12 minutes of play. A Tyree punt put Gary in the hole once again on their own 9 yard line.

Reeves picked up eight yards but Thornton was thrown back six yards and Gary had a third and eight situation on their 11 yard line. Thornton dropped back into the end zone and hit Reeves standing on the 11 yard line and the fleet speedster showed his deceptive moves as he raced goalward. Oceana's Gary Philpott was the last man to have a chance of overtaking Reeves but failed to catch the fleet footed youngster as he crossed the goal line with less than four minutes to play in the game. The PAT failed and Gary led 20-0.

Oceana was forced to kick out with 1:25 left in the final period but defensive end Steve Swayne broke through and

blocked Tyree's punt and a host of Coaldiggers fell on the pigskin at Oceana's 9 yard line.

Thomas broke straight up the middle on the first play to up Gary's lead to 26-0 with 44 seconds showing on the clock. Dillon took a pitchout and added the two point conversion try to give Gary their 28 point spread.

Gary recovered another Oceana fumble on the kickoff on the Tribe 21 yard line. Thornton threw a bomb to end Steve Swayne but the big end was called for offensive interference and the ball moved back to the 36 yard line. Thornton on the last play of the game again threw an aerial into the end zone but it fell short and the buzzer sounded ending the game.

Oceana's Stacy Keys was hurt on the opening kickoff but returned to play sparingly throughout the contest. Also, Tommy Tyree, Oceana's hard running halfback was cut on the chin but continued to play.

This game marked the first defeat for Coach John Beckleheimer's crew after ten straight victories. The Indians played real good football for being outmanned. Their pursuit and hitting was extremely noted in the defeat.

Gary's defensive unit again came up with a super ballgame. The "gravediggers" held Oceana to 56 yards rushing in the game and came up with several big plays when they had to.

For coach Sid Cure this marked the best record he's had at Gary, also that this is the second State Championship Gary has won under his fine coaching. But for a

matter of three points going back to last year's game with Welch, this might have been Gary's third State Championship.

Oceana had given up only 18 points over a ten game span until the title bout with the Coaldiggers.

Gary was led in tackles by Rick Nogosky with eight, Mike Tolley had seven and Phil Dillon chalked up six.

The game was close until the fourth quarter when Oceana had to gamble and Gary took advantage of mistakes.

Gary finished the game with 134 yards rushing and 86 passing. Thornton completed 3 of 8 pass attempts.

Jackie Repass, Oceana's fine little quarterback also put in a good effort along with Branham, Tyree and Philpott in the Indians backfield.