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**TAYLOR, WHITE, THOMAS RUSH FOR 100+ YDS EACH**

# Raiders Shock Ridge, 51-48, On Taylor's TD on Final Play

By ALEX LOWE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Trailing 48-45 with four seconds remaining, Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School quarterback Marques Taylor, on fourth and goal from inside the Ridge one, knifed through a pile of bodies and into the end zone to emerge with a shocking, 51-48, victory in Basking Ridge on September 26.

"I just read my blocking," said Taylor. "I knew I'd be able to find a way to get that ball across the end zone. We got a little bit of a push and I followed it."

The two teams combined for 99 points and would have exceeded 100 had it not been for several missed extra points. There were over 900 yards of total offense from the two schools. The Raiders accounted for over 500 yards on the ground alone and produced not one, not two, but three 100+ yard rushers in Taylor, and backfield mates Kobe White and Emendo Thomas.

White, a senior, carried 13 times for 208 yards and three touchdowns (TD). Thomas, also a senior, who has been working himself back into the lineup after suffering a knee injury, carried the ball 12 times for 188 yards and three TDs. Taylor managed 123 yards on 19 carries with two TDs. Numbers like these are not often seen in high school football games.

"I never coached in a game like this one before," said Raider Head Coach Jon Stack. "Thank goodness we don't play an offense like this one again. Ridge plays a Wing T, and they were killing us all night with the play action passing."

For all of the gaudy numbers the 2-1 Raiders posted running the ball, 1-2 Ridge was equally effective passing it. Junior quarterback Duncan Roberts lit up the Raiders' pass defense for four touchdown passes from distances of 30, 14, 53 and 41 yards, respectively.

The two teams combined for nine TDs of greater than 30 yards on the night.

White got the scoring started on the Raiders' second play from scrimmage, by bursting through the line and sprinting 60 yards for a TD in the opening quarter. The point after was successful.

Ridge answered with a 28-yard TD run from Kermit Hoffman to tie the game with 7:29 remaining in the first quarter. The Ridge defense then forced a punt on the Raiders' next offensive possession. But Andrew Ciccarino recovered a Danny Phillips fumble at the Ridge 35. Eight plays later, Thomas slipped through the middle for a 14-yard TD on the final play of the quarter.

Ridge retaliated, taking just two

plays to tie the game after being set up at the Raider 32 yard line on a long kickoff return by William Vogt. From there Roberts found Brian Vigliante wide open down the right sideline for a score.

"I think our kids were playing overly aggressive against the run to-night," said Stack. "We had gotten burned last week against Westfield and I think they were selling out to stop the run. The play action fakes were a big problem all game for us."

Ridge grabbed the lead later in the quarter, capping a seven-play 63-yard march with an 18-yard TD run on an inside handoff by Hoffman.

The Raiders responded with a seven-play, 72-yard march concluded by Thomas' 40-yard TD sprint. Thomas started to his left on a sweep then reversed field completely and went around the right end, outracing the defense to the end zone. The Raiders trailed 21-20 after missing the extra point.

"I knew I had to make plays to-night," said Thomas. "This was my first game back in which I really saw a lot of action. I played a little bit last week against Westfield and that game was decided by four plays. So I knew I wanted to make plays out there when given the opportunity to do so."

Scotch Plains forced a Ridge punt on the next series and took over at the Red Devil 27 after an 18-yard return by Jordan Jones with 3:27 remaining until the half. Two plays later, Thomas scored from 26 yards out to give the Raiders a 26-21 lead at the half.

The Raiders scored on their first offensive play after taking possession of the third quarter kickoff at their 41 yard line. Taylor took the snap, headed around the left end and soared into the end zone 59 yards later to make the score 32-21.

Roberts again torched the Raider secondary, this time hooking up with Erik Zima for a 53-yard TD strike down the left sideline on the first play from scrimmage.

The Raiders snapped back in two plays when White swept left and raced down the sideline for a 51-yard TD that put the Raiders up 38-28 less than two minutes gone in the third quarter.

Ridge cut it to 38-35 after a beautiful 14-yard lob from Roberts to Hoffman in the right corner of the end zone. Ridge then took a 41-38 lead when Danny Phillips bulled into the end zone from the one with 9:41 to play, capping a 68-yard drive.

Then White performed his magic. He took a handoff and cut inside of the left tackle then stumbled through traffic, broke a tackle, spun out of another then weaved his way through the rest of the defense on his way to a

55-yard TD.

"The line did a great job opening the hole," said White. "I just kept trying to high step through and power past tacklers. I know at one point I got horse collared, but I was able to break free of it and keep my legs moving. I attribute that to all the time I spent in the weight room."

Leading 45-41 with 9:17 to play and considering that neither defense could stop the other, Raider coach Stack called for an inside kick and was rewarded when Kyle Coupe recovered at the Ridge 48.

"Credit our special teams coach Kyle Banghart with that," said Stack. "He noticed in film study that they [Ridge] back off before the kick, so we decided that we were going to try it at some point in the game."

Incredibly, Scotch Plains could not capitalize and turned it over on downs. Ridge made them pay in four plays when Roberts hit Zima with a 41-yard TD pass on a wide open slant route. Ridge led 48-45 with 5:51 remaining.

Hopes darkened for the Raiders after they were forced to punt the ball back to Ridge with 3:39 left, but the defense held and Ridge punted with 2:09 remaining. Jordan Jones fielded the ball at his own 40 then raced round the right sideline all the way to the Ridge 16.

From there, a 10-yard run by Taylor gave the Raiders a first-and-goal at the six. Two plays later it was third-and-goal from the one. After a no gain, the Raiders let the clock tick down to :04 before calling their final timeout and setting up Taylor's game-winning heroics.

Sc. Pl.-Fanwood	14	12	12	13	51
Ridge	07	14	14	13	48

## Hunterdon Cent. Tops Blue Devil V-ballers

The Hunterdon Central High School girls volleyball team defeated the 7-2 Westfield Blue Devils, 25-15, 25-21, in Flemington on September 27. Blue Devil setter Megan Mondon had 11 assists, eight digs, four kills and a service point, and libero Leigh Scarano had 11 digs and nine service points with an ace.

Outside hitter Olivia Manning had two kills, four digs and a block, while Stephanie Borr had five kills and a dig. Lizzie Sottung had five digs and two service points with an ace, Dana Boretz had four digs, and Olivia Meyer had three digs and a service point. Sara Correa and Kelly Dorry each had a kill, a block and a dig, while Rachel Holt added a kill and a block.



Alex Lowe for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
ATTEMPTING TO SETTLE THE BALL...Cougar Siobhan McGovern, right, attempts to gain control of the ball before a Union Lady Farmer can get to it. The Farmers nipped the Cougars, 1-0, at Memorial Field in Cranford on September 23.

## COUGAR GOALKEEPER ACOCELLA MAKES 11 SAVES

# Cranford Lady Cougars Fall To Union Soccer Farmers, 1-0

By ALEX LOWE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

Natalie Caggiano's goal with 25:08 remaining in the game was all the scoring the Union High School girls soccer team would need to take down Cranford, 1-0, on September 23 in Cranford. The senior forward took a pass from teammate Vanessa Leite before spinning around and driving a perfectly placed kick high in the left corner of the net past the outstretched arms of diving Cougar goaltender Dana Acoella. The kick was in the only area where Acoella could not reach it.

"I got an assist from Vanessa Leite on the play," said Caggiano of the decisive goal. "I crossed over my back with the ball and when I turned around I saw the tiniest of openings in which to get a shot off. Fortunately I was able to put it where the goalie could not reach it."

In a defensive struggle where not only goals but shot attempts themselves were hard to come by, Cougar Acoella, a sophomore, kept her team in the contest with 11 saves. Her performance did not go unrecognized by the opponents.

"I think we took a lot more shots than they did during the game," said Caggiano. "Their goaltender was really strong today. She made a lot of saves that kept them in the game."

Acoella was under fire right from the start but proved more than ca-

pable by turning away three shot attempts in the game's first 10 minutes. Unfortunately the Cougars could not muster much offense on the opposite end of the field.

"We've had a couple of rough games of late," said Cranford Head Coach Jen Michewicz. "We are not playing our best soccer right now. I think we possessed the ball well today but in our offensive third we weren't getting off good shot attempts. It seemed like whenever we got the ball into scoring position something would happen like a turnover or an off sides. We've got to finish. We've got to get the ball in the net."

Cranford missed a good opportunity to score 10 minutes into the game when Julia Madsen set up Corinne Savulich beautifully with a pass right in front of the Union goal. But Farmer goaltender Stephanie Rivero smothered a hard kick by Savulich from pointblank range preserving the scoreless deadlock that would last right through the break.

For their part, Union was not finishing either. The visitors had several opportunities to score but could not get anything by Acoella in the net. Finally, Union broke through on Caggiano's brilliant shot midway through the second half.

"This was definitely not our best game today," said Union Head Coach Phyllis Neshimka. "We were coming

off a win against Westfield in which I think we played our best game of the season so far. I don't think we played to that level today. But a win is a win. We got the goal when we needed it and you never complain about a W."

The Union goal seemed to wake up the Cougar players as they dominated the last 20 minutes of the game in terms of possession. Cranford managed to move the ball into the Union side of the field several times the rest of the way but could not come up with the tying goal.

"I think we lacked some urgency throughout much of the game," said Michewicz. "In the final ten minutes, when we were down a goal, that seemed to change. We played the final ten minutes of the game pressing them and in their end of the field. We need to play with more of that kind of aggression throughout the game."

Cranford made several runs at the Union goal in the game's final minutes. Sophomore Lindsay Weilgus broke clear of the field and made a run at Rivero in goal with about 21:00 to play but at the last moment was denied a shot when Union's Adora Moneme swept in from the left side to kick the ball away.

Cranford junior Siobhan McGovern later made a steal and got off a quick shot attempt that was saved by Rivero in front of the Union

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