

# Carterville eliminates Roxana from Class 4A football playoffs

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Logan Reardon looks for yardage in the second quarter of the Roxana-Carterville Class 4A state football playoff game at Charlie Raich Field Saturday. Roxana lost the contest 49-22. Reardon carried 23 times for 158 yards, giving him a school single-season rushing record of 1,761 yards.

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ROXANA – Eleven years had passed between home football playoff games for Roxana.

Carterville made sure the Shells' dreams wouldn't go much farther.

The Lions, getting four touchdown runs from senior running back Brayden Bisallion and two more from junior quarterback Blake Hicks, eliminated the Shells from the IHSA Class 4A Football Championship with a 49-22 second-round win at Charlie Raich Field Saturday afternoon.

The Lions (11-0) will host Herrin, who ousted Belleville Althoff 21-14 in Belleville, in the quarterfinals next week. Roxana finished the season at 8-3, capping off a season with their first playoff appearance since 2003.

“They (Carterville) is a good football team for a reason,” said Shells coach Pat Keith. “We knew that they were going to be tough going in. We struggled early and couldn't execute when we needed to, but we didn't quit and I'm proud of the kids.”

Four lost fumbles didn't help the Roxana cause, and Keith recognized it. “Those turnovers were tough to overcome,” Keith said. “Fumbles, drops, those hurt.”

Carterville, making its 19<sup>th</sup> postseason appearance in the last 20 years, brought plenty of playoff experience into the game, and it showed. “We had four or five seniors who have started for us for the last couple of years, and they had seven games of playoff experience going in,” said Lion coach Dennis Drust. “That's a lot of experience, and that leadership really showed itself today.

“We knew Roxana was going to go into the game really excited; it's a good football town and school and it was going to be difficult coming here.”

The Lions, though, didn't waist much time getting on the board; on their first possession, they went to the running game early and ground out yardage, culminating in Bisallion's (13 carries, 152 yards) first score with 7:10 left, a 3-yard burst. Following a recovered fumble, Hicks called his own number, found an opening and scored from 49 yards out with 5:55 left in the opening term.

Basillion and Hicks then scored again just 32 seconds apart in the second quarter to extend the lead to 28-0, Hicks hitting pay dirt from 3 yards out and Hicks from 9 yards. The Shells finally got on the board when Seth Chester took a pass from Chance Foss and ran it in from 27 yards out with just 55 seconds left in the half, but the Lions scored with no time left when Austin Swalls hauled in a 15-yard TD pass from Hicks to make it 42-6 at the long break.

Basillion made it a running-clock game with a 51-yard TD run early in the third quarter, and Carterville soon put in their subs. A pair of TD runs from Logan Reardon, from 1 and 3 yards out, made it somewhat close in the final quarter. Reardon had 23 carries for 158 yards on the day, giving him a school single-season rushing record of 1,761 yards.

“We had our first winning season since 2003,” Keith said, “and while we're losing a good group of seniors, we had kids who believe in each other too. We're opening up a new chapter in Roxana football.”

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