



CLASS MM

NORTH HAVEN 21

WILTON 0

By GERRY deSIMAS, Jr.
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NEW BRITAIN, Dec. 9, 2023 – The North Haven High football team got some big plays on offense, some big plays on defense and on special teams to shutout No. 3 Wilton, 21-0 and win their second straight Class MM championship Saturday at Central Connecticut State’s Arute Field.

Two big defensive plays in the fourth quarter put the No. 5 Nighthawks (11-2) in control of the contest.



Leading by seven, North Haven’s Carmen Thompson intercepted Wilton quarterback Francis Hagerty on the Wilton 38-yard line. Two plays later, North Haven was facing a third down and one play on the Warrior 29-yard line.

North Haven QB Joey Mastroianni fired a 29-yard pass to Ryan Bernardo just over the outstretched hand of a Wilton defender to give the Nighthawks a 14-0 lead with 11:18 remaining in the game. It was the only pass that the Nighthawks threw in the game.



On Wilton’s next possession, North Haven’s Michael Moran sacked Hagerty on the 29-yard line and stripped the ball loose to enable his twin brother, Brian, to scoop up the ball and run the fumble into the end zone for a commanding 21-0 lead with 10:03 left in the fourth quarter.

“Our goal every year is to strive and be the best team we can be and try to have the best performance we can,” North Haven head coach Anthony Sagnella said. “Today, I think we did that on the biggest stage and you can’t do better than that. Everyone played their ‘A’ game.”

Added Thompson, “When we play together, we’re at our best and our best is tough to stop.”

North Haven took a 7-0 lead in the second quarter on a 23-yard run around the left side by Adam Pandolfi with 8:37. Eric Vetrano kicked the extra point.

Wilton (10-3), looking for their first state championship win since 1985, drove to the North Haven 21-yard line in the final minute of the second quarter.

But North Haven’s Brendan Ryan tackled Hagerty for a one-yard loss on first down and Michael Moran sacked Hagerty for a six-yard loss on second down. After a three-yard gain on third down, Hagerty’s fourth down pass to the end zone was incomplete.

“They kept their focus and their drive and were unbelievable,” Sagnella said.



North Haven 21, Wilton 0
At New Britain
North Haven (11-2) 0 7 0 14 -- 21
Wilton (10-3) 0 0 0 0 -- 0
Second quarter
NH: Adam Pandolfi 23 run (Eric Vetrano kick), 8:37
Fourth quarter
NH: Ryan Bernardo 29 pass from Joey Mastroianni (Vetrano kick), 11:18
NH: Brian Moran 26 fumble recovery (Vetrano kick), 10:03

Individual statistics
RUSHING: North Haven – Carmen Thompson 10-45, Joey Mastroianni 6-6, Trysten Dos 8-31, Adam Pandolfi 13-59, Chris Cretella; Wilton – Francis Hagerty 17-77, Charles Calabrese 1-minus 2, Todd Woodring 5-33, Peter Reyes 5-17, Nicholas Stevenson 1-minus 3, Dennis Dustin 1-minus 2
PASSING: North Haven – Joey Mastroianni 1-1-0, 29; Wilton – Francis Hagerty 12-25-1, 93
RECEIVING: North Haven – Ryan Bernardo 1-29; Wilton – Ryan Smith 3-14, Nicholas Stevenson 2-22, Peter Reyes 1-minus 1, Jason Costa 2-17, Luke Umphred 3-33, Cael Dexter 1-19